

# Private Timber Owners and Fire Protection

Better Allow Saw Mill or Paper Mill to Burn Than Neglect Insurance of Raw Materials.

By

Ellwood Wilson,

Forester, Laurentide Company, Limited.

Imagine the manufacturer with his whole stock of raw material for his lifetime piled up in one store-house. Would he have it insured? Would automatic sprinklers be installed? Would he have a watchman or so on the premises? Would you if you were that manufacturer? Let me carry the parallel a little further, and ask what you would do if you knew that the destruction of your stock of raw material meant the destruction of the elements from which it could be reproduced and the supply for your children and grand children.

The forest is such a store-house and on it depends our most important industries, the stability and continuity of our water powers, the welfare of our agricultural population, the comfort of our daily lives. The private timberland owner is just as vitally interested in fire protection for his woodlands as any manufacturer. He might far better let his saw-mill, his sulphite plant, his paper-mill go uninsured and spend the money in protecting his forests. In a year or two he can rebuild his mill, he can easily borrow the money for the purpose and go on just as before. But he cannot reproduce his forests. After a bad fire the soil itself is partially or wholly

destroyed and if the fire has been of any extent the distance from the nearest source of seed may be too far away for natural reforestation to take place. Gentlemen, I have seen a tract of land of about ten square miles in extent which after fifty-six years has not a stick of merchantable timber on it although covered with a growth of small birch and aspen, which is already past its prime, and not only is there no merchantable timber but on this whole tract there are but 1,280 spruce and balsam trees not over three inches in diameter. The average percentage of burnt over land which is not reproducing in Quebec is 16% or about 10,597 square miles and that on which reproduction has begun is 12.9%. These figures are based on actual surveys over a large area and when applied to the areas under license rather under than over-state the amounts.

## *Piling and Burning.*

One of the most important questions to be considered by lumbermen for the protection of their forests is an efficient and economical method of slash disposal. Top-logging on operations where large amounts of timber are cut has proved in my experiments to be too ex-