



# THE ILLUSTRATED CANADIAN FORESTRY MAGAZINE



VOL. XVIII,

OTTAWA, CANADA, FEBRUARY, 1922.

No. 2.

## Forest Fires the Plague of the Fur Trade

Enormous Trade Losses Caused to Marten, Fox, Fisher, Ermine and Lynx, unable to take Refuge in Water.

*An Article by Five Experts*

To our readers: This article was prepared at the request of the Canadian Forestry Magazine, by one of the great fur-trading companies of Canada. It is a compilation of opinions of five experts whose duties bring them close to the wild life of the woods.—Editor.

CONSERVATION of the country's resources is a subject that has been widely discussed. Legislation has been enacted by all provincial governments in the form of closed seasons for fur-bearing animals, with a view to perpetuating the fur trade, but in this connection little has been said of a menace more destructive to animal life than the indiscriminate trapper—the depredations of forest fires.

Forest fires have a disastrous effect on fur-bearing animals, and, unless extensive preventive measures are taken, the great destruction of fur-bearing animals which has occurred in the last several years will seriously reduce their numbers.

### Northern Ontario Suffers.

Fur returns of recent years indicate that there are many districts of Northern Ontario almost entirely devoid of those animals that suffer as a result of bush fires. Indeed, were it not for the fur trade derived from such animals as beaver, otter, mink, musquash and bear, which either practically live in the water, or find shelter there while the fires pass over, it is questionable whether the fur trade would endure in those districts.

The onus of responsibility for this destructive agency can be laid directly to the advance of civilization, the carelessness of the white man in handling fires. His senseless slaughter of the buffalo does not appear more serious than his thoughtless disregard for life, either human or



A novel bit of wild life photography, by Mr. Charles Camsell, Deputy Minister of Mines, Ottawa. Mr. Camsell was travelling to Great Slave Lake by gasoline boat and canoe. The latter carried gasoline and the other supplies. When about midstream of Slave River, the canoe got adrift. About the same moment Mr. Camsell espied a lynx swimming directly in the canoe's path. It boldly climbed aboard, rested a while on the boxes and then resumed its journey to shore.

animal, when a camp fire is left unquenched, or a clearing fire is allowed to get out of control.

The importance of the fur trade to Canada should not be under-estimated. It is to Canada that the world turns for a large part of its supply of furs. The fur production of the Province of Saskatchewan alone during the season 1919-1920 at present valuation amounted to over \$2,000,000.00.

### Who Benefits by the Fur Trade.

Thousands of Canadians rely on fur-bearing animals for a livelihood. Both Indians and white men do the trapping and thereby earn a living. The various provincial governments impose royalties on fur-bearing animals caught and thereby receive a revenue. Thousands of traders deal in the skins of such animals

and thereby add to the wage-earning population of Canada, and finally thousands of furriers are engaged in the tanning, dressing and making up the skins, with the result that a good proportion of the Canadian population is directly dependent on the supply of fur-bearing animals for a living. It is a common complaint of the Indian that fires have crossed his "marten," or hunting grounds, with the consequent destruction of all such game as marten, fisher, fox, ermine, and lynx. This necessitates a "change of venue" for his activities, or the confining of his attention to the trapping of beaver, otter, etc., thereby reducing the numbers of these animals more rapidly.

In the country's wild state forest fires were rare. When a fire did occur it was caused by electrical storms. The Indian knew too well the effect of fires on his