

all the other provinces. Life is safe and the people are gradually forgetting the times when forest fire horrors were continually before their eyes.

Inviting Another Horror

Since I came to Alberta, I have seen those same Ontario conditions of the days before the fire duplicated in almost every detail. We have the settlements in the tree-covered country of the north. In fact nearly all the new farmers are homesteading in more-or-less timbered territory. We have to use fire to burn off our slash and we have been doing it just like Ontario used to do—with a strong invitation to a wholesale waste of life and property.

I'm a farmer—couldn't earn my living at anything else—but I can see beyond my farm gate when the good of the Province of Alberta is at stake. I can see that Alberta can't get along on merely bare land and a set of strong muscles. We need coal to keep us warm, wood for buildings, posts and implements; we need towns and cities to provide a near-by market, and we need all the manufacturing industries we can lay hands on.

There's none of these things can come to, or continue in, Alberta, unless we all join in saving the forests. The coal mines are no good to us without wooden pit props, and if pit props get scarce up goes the price of coal. There's not much use having water powers unless they have something to bite on. They must have raw materials, like wood, to turn into products.

What good is cheap land if fence posts and lumber are too dear to purchase? What hope is there for industries in Northern Alberta unless they are *forest industries*.

A neighbour told me the other day that there was no room for the forest in northern Alberta, that every acre would soon be under crops.

"Crops?" I retorted, "what crops? When I tell you that not twenty acres in a hundred in northern Alberta can grow wheat or support stock, I'm not basing my talk on an ignorant opinion. Look at this!" And I unfolded a Dominion Government Report

proving that only about one acre in five in our part of the country was any good for field crops. "What becomes of the four-fifths?" said I.

He didn't know.

A Western Desert

"Will it be a desert waste of blackened stumps and useless soil, or will it produce timber? Will it fetch pulp and paper industries into this country, with their busy towns and pay lists, or will it be a No Man's Land forever? Will it keep the settlers supplied with cheap fuel and building materials, or must we import them at high prices from *British Columbia*?"

Do you wonder that I have no use for forest fires? Every time I see one, I see a cloud of trouble. I see higher cost for farm necessities, and a poorer chance of making Alberta prosperous for my children.

Personally, I never start a clearing fire until every precaution has been taken. I pile my slash fifty to a hundred feet from the standing bush. I burn only in safe weather, usually in the evening, and keep watch on the operation all through. I consult the fire ranger and follow his instructions.

The rangers are not policemen, I take it. They are the best friends the settler has. Some of these rangers have been telling me that the Alberta staff have set out this year to keep Alberta clear of forest fires. They want the personal help of every man, every woman, every boy and girl who lives anywhere near timber.

Every good citizen this year is to look on himself as a deputy fire-ranger.

Watch every kind of fire—but above all, keep a tight rein on the slash burning.

That's all that your country asks. You'll see to it, won't you?"

PHILIP T. COOLIDGE FORESTER

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