

# Conservation

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## Fire Prevention is Personal Business

Fire Losses Can be Reduced When  
Earnest Effort is Made  
Individually

Reduction in Canada's fire loss must be effected through recognition by the public of personal responsibility. Unfortunately, we have too long looked to other interests to initiate and carry out laws or regulations to reduce the heavy losses due to destruction of buildings and stocks by fire.

As insurance companies are directly interested in the fire waste much has been expected of them in the way of fire prevention effort. Fire insurance, however, is strictly business. Without fires there would be no need for insurance; the constant danger of fire is the principal and in fact the only reason for the purchase of fire insurance. Fire insurance rates are based upon experience; as the insurance companies have control of the setting of rates, it can readily be seen that they will protect themselves.

Insurance agents are paid by a commission on the amount of premiums collected, and it cannot be expected of that they should wish to reduce their incomes.

The reputation of a fire insurance company for prompt payment of losses is one of its best selling points for new business. It is not in the interests of the company to contest claims for losses, even though the cause of a fire may be suspicious.

A satisfied agent is also a great asset to an insurance company, and consequently the company hesitates to challenge the business he secures.

While many insurance companies and many agents are actively promoting fire prevention measures, they cannot be expected to shoulder the entire responsibility for performing this service. It is the duty of every individual to assume his or her own share of this responsibility.

Business interests are commencing to realize more clearly the importance of the fire waste, but greater effort must be made to interest the general public. With joint effort on the part of employer and employee to eliminate carelessness and to be increasingly watchful for fire dangers, many of our heavy fire losses would be overcome.

## Conservation of Our Fisheries

In the time of Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, when hand nets were the most up-to-date gear for catching fish, and fishermen knew when their hauls continued to be light, that they had fished out a particular area. But, in these days, when demand may be increased and stimulated by long distance transportation facilities, the introduction of modern methods of fish catching, like the steam trawl, in which tons of fish may be taken at a lift, it is not so easy to determine quickly and accurately whether a given fishery is being fished out. Intensive modern methods of fishing may for a few years give a larger catch, even when the supply of fish is diminishing. Depletion is therefore an insidious thing, creeping upon our fisheries before we know it. Sometimes it is far advanced before we even suspect its beginning.

But there is one pretty sure way of detecting it—that is by statistics of catch (not of value) over a period of years. If the catch keeps going down year after year, we may be sure, despite intensive methods of fishing, that the species under observation is being cleaned out. A statistical enquiry of this sort shows that there are several species of Canadian fishes in process of depletion. One of these is the sturgeon, a fish caught in large numbers years ago in the Great lakes, especially lake Erie, and which was highly esteemed for its edible qualities. As late as 1900, the annual catch of this fish amounted to 2,645,722 lbs.; by 1910, it had decreased to 1,036,400 lbs., and, in 1919, only 27,700 lbs. was taken.

The shad, also, is almost extinct in our waters. In 1885, the catch was 14,535 bbls.; twenty years later it was 6,265 bbls.; in 1915, it went down to 3,867 bbls., whilst in 1919, production was only 1,038 bbls.

The "big run" of the valuable sockeye salmon, which occurred every four years on the Fraser river in British Columbia, is a thing of the past, due to over-

St. Thomas, Ont., Horticultural Society, in its annual report says: "War is being waged upon the billboard nuisance and the tacking of cards and signs upon fences and other places without permission of the owner."

fishing and to a rock slide near Yale during the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway, preventing the salmon from ascending the river to spawn in the tributary streams and lakes of the upper river. There are other fisheries, too, which a statistical study shows to be declining for Canada as a whole, and many individual streams and bodies of water are being depleted of valuable species. This is especially true of game fish which bring so many thousands of dollars worth of tourist trade into the country every year.

The remedy lies in prevention of over-fishing and in planting fry to replenish fished-out waters. It is remarkable what fish culture will do to rehabilitate our fisheries. In 1912, the Commission of Conservation, after a careful statistical study of whitefish production in the Great Lakes, represented to the Government that the supply of this valuable fish was being depleted and showed that the small annual plant of fry then being made was quite inadequate to make good the loss. Later, the Government increased its fish culture facilities and made larger plants of fry. The results speak for themselves. In 1910, the whitefish catch was 12,772,300 lbs. In 1915, it rose to 15,352,900 lbs., and in 1919 it reached 19,740,300 lbs., in spite of the heavy consumption of these fish during the war years. Private interests also have proved again and again that the planting of fry in streams and smaller bodies of water pays good dividends.

Alert public opinion and a well-informed independent press are the most powerful assets in conserving all natural resources, fisheries included. The onus rests on you and me and our neighbours to take an interest in these things which, too often, are nobody's business because they are everybody's business, and, through private influence, press, and fish and game clubs, the makers and administrators of our fisheries laws should insist upon the conservation of our natural wealth.

Campers and travellers were responsible for 246 fires starting in the British Columbia forests. This was a considerable reduction from the previous year, credit for which is given to the educational work done by the newspapers.

## Farmers Pay Dearly For Experience

Make Contract with Rainmaker  
Entailing Less than Average  
Precipitation

"Is it necessary to leave the farmer to learn wisdom at his own expense by becoming the prey of greedy plunderers? . . . It is a good thing to prevent forest fires; it would be still better to stop the squandering of the savings of the people."—*Mgr. Choquette, at Seventh Annual Meeting of the Commission of Conservation.*

The United Agricultural Association of Medicine Hat district has entered into a contract with "Rainmaker" Hatfield, under which, if four inches of rain shall fall between May 1 and August 1, 1921, Hatfield is to be paid \$8,000. He is to be given credit for one-half of the precipitation at \$4,000 per inch up to a maximum of four inches; in other words, if four inches of rain falls, Hatfield gets credit for two inches and receives \$8,000, while Providence is to get credit for the other two inches.

In order to carry out his part of the contract "Rainmaker" Hatfield is to "construct and build a rain precipitation and attraction plant" at a suitable location, also rain gauges.

The Dominion Meteorological Bureau, Toronto, says of this proposal: "In my opinion the whole thing is absurd. We are not ignorant as to the causes which lead to rain, and fully recognize that the forces of nature involved in the production of a summer shower are gigantic, so gigantic indeed that it is hard to conceive that any forces chemical or otherwise that man can bring to bear are otherwise than absolutely piffling. The explosion which wrecked Halifax in December, 1916, did not lead even to the formation of a cloud."

C. V. Marvin, Chief of the United States Weather Bureau, says his department is "eagerly desirous of assisting in the protection of farmers and other against payment of money for rainmaking schemes and contracts," also that "unquestionably a long campaign of education is necessary to completely suppress the injuries of these fraudulent schemes."

Prof. E. S. Hopkins, of the School

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