

Combatting Forest Fires

Constant Patrol the Only Effective Means During Danger Period

The primitive method of combatting forest fires is to wait until the fire assumes alarming proportions, endangering life and property, and then to organize a fire-fighting force to try to put it out. Unfortunately this system, or lack of system, still prevails in many parts of Canada. Too frequently, these untrained volunteer fire-fighters have actually assisted the spread of the fire by indiscriminate back-firing. Under the best of circumstances, the chances of extinguishing a large forest fire by human efforts alone are small. In many cases, the best that can be hoped for is that the fire may be checked until assistance comes in the form of rain.

As has been said by a woodsman, whose nationality may be inferred, "The time to put out a fire is before it starts." The value of constant patrol of the forests during the dangerous period is becoming more fully appreciated every year. The organizations entrusted with the protection of the forests, such as the Dominion and Provincial forest services, and the co-operative fire protective associations in Quebec, are all devoting their main efforts towards efficient patrol. The establishment of look-out stations for the detection of fires, and the installation of telephones and signal systems by means of which the location of fires may be promptly reported, or assistance summoned, are component parts of the patrol system. The use of aeroplanes has been experimented with in Wisconsin for fire detection, but their utility under ordinary circumstances, especially as a substitute for other forms of patrol, has not yet been demonstrated. It is, however, to be anticipated that the application of aviation to a fire-detection method is developing to a material extent with the return of aviators after the war, and with the development of a smaller, slower and less expensive form of hydroplane or aeroplane.

Thousands of dollars have been spent annually throughout the Dominion in fighting fires, which could have been prevented by the expenditure of a comparatively small amount on patrol. By efficient patrol, damage from forest fires can, to a very large extent, be prevented; while fire-fighting comes in after a considerable amount of damage is done. As a protective measure, one dollar's worth of patrol may easily be worth a hundred dollars' worth of fire-fighting.

Rangers should be impressed with the importance of this phase

of their work. The man who puts out a fire with a few shovelfuls of earth or with what water he can carry in his hat, may be performing a greater service than one who, by failure to take such preventive measures, is compelled to organize a large gang of fire-fighters to check a conflagration. The ranger, who, by his influence in the district, can secure the co-operation of the settlers, campers and others to prevent the setting of fires, may have an easy job, but he is of more use to the country than he who, by failing to attend to his patrol duties, is obliged to work day and night fighting fires which need never have reached such proportions.

Not all fires can be prevented; many are started by lightning, and others from causes which are purely accidental. These must be quick-

Canadians should not consider that 1917 will be the only year that rigid economies must be practised. There is no knowing at this date when the war will end, and even after it has ended there will be urgent need for Canada's surplus of food for many months while Europe is being regenerated.

ly detected and put out while incipient. Constant vigilance is the price of success in fire protection.—R.D.C.

Save the Rags

Shortage of Wool Increases Demand for this Waste

A serious shortage in wool exists. Almost all countries engaged in the war have taken over the wool supply to provide for soldiers' equipment, while the United States Council of National Defense recently took up with the clothing manufacturers the matter of the saving of cloth by eliminating from the 1918 styles patch pockets, flaring skirts, cuffs on coats and trousers, etc., and all unnecessary pleats and frills. The Council is also advocating the more general mixing of cotton with wool and the more extended use of shoddy.

For this reason the old fashioned rag-bag should come into fashion. The day when rags were not of sufficient value to warrant much attention being paid to them is past. To-day there is a heavy demand for woolen rags. Scarcity of new wool has created an increased market for shoddy materials, of which woolen rags are the basis, and increased prices are being paid for this hitherto neglected material. *Save the rags.*

Benefits of Fresh Air

Proper Ventilation Essential to Good Health and Efficiency

Fresh air is one of our unlimited natural resources, available at all seasons and at all hours. It is essential to life and good health. Of recent years more attention has been paid to its beneficent influence in this regard, but far too many people regard fresh air as a means for the cure of such diseases as pneumonia and tuberculosis; it is not adequately recognized as the greatest disease preventive known.

Nature has done her part in sup-

plying pure air. Wherever the opportunity is afforded, the air is continually changing by natural methods. Man, however, has rendered this effort of nature largely nugatory by building homes, factories and offices almost air-tight, in which the air becomes stagnant and unwholesome. The consequence is that the occupants, continuously breathing the same air, rapidly become drowsy and incapable of giving of their best efforts.

In the homes of our people, greater use should be made of the body-building fresh and pure air. Rooms should be thoroughly ventilated and aired; sleeping rooms especially require that the air be continuously changed. The easiest and most convenient means to accomplish this is by the opening of windows. A cross current of air between two windows gives the best results; otherwise, a change of air may be secured by lowering the upper sash to permit the foul air to escape, and raising the lower one to admit the fresh air. Roll the blind to the top to facilitate the exit of the impure air, or, if pulled down, insert a few inches of netting at the top of the blind.

Public health should be a primary consideration. Pending the improvement of housing and living conditions people can do much to secure greater health for themselves by making use of the open window to admit fresh and pure air.

Present Fuel Situation

Coal Should be Secured Now Last all Next Winter

The following indicates that there will be a greater coal shortage next winter than last, and that we should arrange for our fuel supply accordingly:

1. Great Britain is short 1,000,000 tons of coal; France lacks even more; the coaling Allied warships on the Atlantic coast, the naval, domestic and industrial requirements incident to the entrance of the United States as a belligerent all mean that the coal production must be increased.
2. United States officials anticipate that next fall there will be unprecedented demands for rolling stock as well as great difficulty in handling the production.
3. The situation is that the United States companies have placed an embargo on the going out of that country, as the United States desires to keep coal cars in that country for any emergency that may arise.
4. The present rather acute shortage of coal in many quarters will not be helped by war conditions in the United States.
5. Coal prices have generally increased, and, unless there is Government regulation, the price will reach higher levels.
6. The U. S. Geological Survey as well as other agencies having knowledge of the fact are urging all consumers of coal to buy both large and small, to stock their winter's fuel during the summer months.

In so far as central and western Canada is concerned, the situation is intensified by the fact that owing to the coal strike in the west some 200,000 tons has already been lost from production this year; about 500,000 tons is being lost owing to the shortage of ships available for the manufacture of munitions, a much less coal than ordinarily is being brought up the Great Lakes for year, so that there are practically no supplies on hand.

From the above it is evident that we should be assured of our winter's supply of coal, and, at the same time, to save inconvenience and perhaps all of higher prices, we should buy our coal during the summer months whenever and wherever it is available at a low price.

The Dominion Government has appointed a Fuel Controller to take charge of the situation, and the dealer and householder can assist in filling their bins now with sufficient coal to last through the winter. By so doing they will be able to avoid the congestion of the coal way congestion occurs next winter. W.J.D.