

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Then let us try to fix responsibility for these 12,000 annual forest fires!

Forest fires are started by human hands in practically all instances. Lightning starts a few, but only a few in the annual total. Settlers are responsible for about 85 per cent. of the forest losses in Eastern Canada. By burning their brush heaps and slashings in very dry or windy weather, and by placing them near standing timber, the settler has become the cause of the greater part of our recent timber destruction. Quebec and British Columbia by law will not allow a settler to start a fire until he gets permission of a skilled Government ranger. This makes fairly sure of precautions for safety. Of course, every province should have a similar law, with rigid enforcement because it spells common protection and equal treatment.

Campers, prospectors, surveyors, river-drivers, and others who use the woods, cause thousands of conflagrations in valuable timber by dropping matches or pipe ashes or cigarettes in the dry duff, or leaving their camp fires half extinguished. In dry weather the floor of a forest is like the fuse to a powder barrel. A moment's thoughtlessness may cost your neighbor a fortune. Never leave a spark of fire behind you. In a day's time that spark may cover a whole township. It has done so times without number.