

age. Whatever normal growth there is, is totally offset by the tremendous losses caused by fire, insects and other devastating factors. The above facts are well known. Every close observer of our forest life knows them to be true. They are repeated here to emphasize the facts and they are facts that cannot be over-emphasized. True as these things are it may well be asked, how can they be remedied; and this, after all, is the supreme question. What measures can be taken that are practical, workable and capable of enforcement, which will preserve, or tend to preserve our forest life?

It will be conceded by the great majority of people that the forest fire is by far the greatest menace threatening our timber supply today. For a proper solution of this problem, the problem of the forest fire, the essential aim is the *total prevention of fire*. Failing this, we must direct our attention to more efficient methods of fire fighting, with its subsidiary problem of eliminating all factors contributing to the progress of this awful menace.

What Causes Fires ?

It is imperative in a study of this question to distinguish carefully between *direct* causes of fire and factors contributing to its progress. It has been stated and stated often that logging slash and debris is a fertile cause of fire. This assuredly is *not* the case, but is perhaps the greatest factor to contributing to its onward journey. The chief direct causes, I think, are three, namely, carelessness on the part of settlers burning slash in all newly-opened districts; carelessness on the part of intruders such as fishing and hunting parties, prospectors, surveyors, river-drivers in our immense timber areas during the dry summer season; sparks from smoke-stacks of engines whether locomotive or stationary, possessing defective screens. Among those classified as intruders, river-drivers may not properly be entitled to the term, as their work is closely related to an industry based on forest life, but the others are intruders and nothing else; they have no appreciation of the care that must be exercised while journeying through the woods in summer; they have no love for the forests apart from the profit they derive. Other causes there are undoubtedly, e.g., lightning and incendiary, but they are negligible compared to those stated above. An examination of each, with possible remedies for their extinction, will prove profitable.

Carelessness on the part of the settler in burning slash is a more fertile cause of fire than is generally believed. Only the other day, one of the leading officials of one of our greatest pulp companies stated that fires resulting from spread of a settler's burn were negligible. The facts are not with him. How does he explain that the fires that originate far from where man lives are few, very few, compared with the fires that have worked from the settlers burn into some great wooded limit, in short, has had its origin in carelessness on the part of the settler? This carelessness is easily explained. There is a deeply-rooted belief among the settlers that fire is a beneficial thing, that land can be more quickly and easily cleared where fire has swept, provided the available standing timber has been utilized. It cannot be denied that from the standpoint of the settler he is right in so far as his own land is concerned; but he must be awakened to a sense of public ownership, that he is only one of many, that the private gain must be effaced for the common weal. It is with reluctance that one is forced to state that you cannot educate the settler to a sense of national duty through pamphlets or signs. He must be dealt with drastically. The only remedy is simple, viz.: the imposition of a heavy fine on all the settlers who fire without a permit, and those who do not carry out

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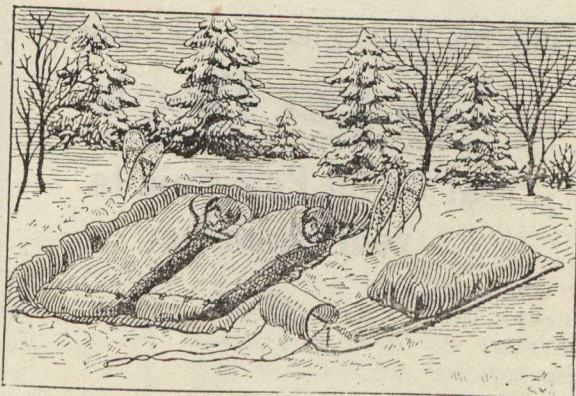
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