

## FOREST FIRE LOSSES IN THE WEST.

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effort by hundreds of men to get it under control. In the interval the timber loss has been enormous, as several timber limits have been wiped out and very large areas of promising young growth destroyed. It is estimated that fully fifty million feet of fine saw-timber has been killed by this fire up-to-date.

Near the end of May a second great fire broke out on the Stony Indian Reservation west of Calgary, and soon spread to the forest reserves in the Ghost River Valley. This very destructive fire has been fought by a small army of men for seven weeks, and, the latest report received, dated July 16th, states that it is not yet under effective control. Again, in early June another large fire started in the Sarcee Indian Reservation and finally spread westward up the Elbow River, extending however only a short distance into the forest reserve. It was finally placed under control on July 13th. Meantime another very large fire started farther north, between the Red Deer and Clearwater Rivers. Our latest report, of July 16th, shows this fire running south into the Bow River forest and so far defying all efforts at control. As to the exact extent of the damage occasioned by any of these fires, no definite reports are yet available.

The Brazeau and Clearwater forests appear to have sustained very considerable damage, at least three large fires having occurred on each, but owing to rather more favorable rainfall conditions farther north the Athabaska and Lesser Slave forests have fortunatel yescaped so far with comparatively light fire losses.

D—B. C. Reserves—On the British Columbia Reserves also the fire hazard for a time was considerable, but our protective organization succeeded in carrying them through this danger period without experiencing any serious fires.

### 2.—Fire Ranging Districts.

With the exception of the districts in British Columbia an abnormally serious fire situation is reported to have occurred on all the fire ranging districts. The chief fire ranger at The Pas says: "This is the worst fire season that the West has seen for twenty years—woods all dry as tinder even in the muskegs." In Prince Albert fire ranging district heavy losses are reported, and in the Battleford District twelve large fires had occurred before the end of April, covering some 55,000 acres. No Battleford

May or June reports are yet in hand, but it is certain that they will tell of still more widespread destruction in this part of the West.

In regard to the region north of Edmonton, the district ranger says: "All through this district large fires have occurred." One of these fires destroyed the town of Lac la Biche, and the chief ranger reports that another—the one which swept timber berth No. 1900—killed some fifty-five million feet of merchantable timber that the same condition of danger and loss from ber. A May report from Fort McMurray shows fire has been experienced this season even in the Mackenzie Basin.

### No. 3.—Railway Fire Ranging.

From reports received, it is evident that the Railway Fire Ranging Service has done some excellent work this season. For instance, of the numerous fires reported in April, practically all were extinguished before burning over more than 10 to 30 square yards, thus demonstrating the efficiency of the patrol system employed.

With reference to the fires on forest reserves in general, and those in Alberta in particular, it must not be forgotten that the war greatly depleted the administrative and ranger force and also largely stopped the construction and proper maintenance of protective improvements such as trails, telegraph lines, lookout towers, and fire-guards.

With normally effective protective machinery and good laws properly enforced governing the burning of slash by lumbermen and settlers, there is every reason to believe that even in such an abnormally dangerous season as the present, the forest can be adequately safeguarded from fire loss.

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