

FOREST FIRES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Mr. J. R. Anderson, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for British Columbia, has again furnished the Association with a detailed report on the fires that occurred in British Columbia last season, with a partial estimate of the value of the forests destroyed. Though the season was very dry in some parts of the province, the destruction of forests by fire was, on the whole, not great when the great extent of the province is taken into consideration. Railway locomotives are a constant menace to the forests through which they pass and as there is apparently some difficulty in punishing the offenders under the Act now in force, it is hoped that it will be so amended that railway companies may be compelled to take better precautions and be made liable for the full amount of the loss caused by the negligence of their servants.

The comparatively small number of fires last season was due in part to a better observance of the Bush Fire notices posted everywhere. These notices have made everyone familiar with the laws relative to forest fires and prospectors and miners, as well as ranchers and settlers, are acquiring the habit of putting out their camp fires, instead of leaving them to smoulder. More care is also taken by those clearing up land to prevent fire from spreading to the adjoining forest. The preventive measures taken by fire wardens and their promptness in dealing with fires have done much to restrict the loss from this cause.

There are few seasons in which there is not a considerable destruction of valuable forest by fire on Vancouver Island, but 1905 was a notable exception. In Cumberland District there were no fires, the greater care taken by settlers and the heavy rains of July and September being the cause. In Cowichan the only fire reported was a small one up the Koksilah River, on the lands of the Victoria Lumber Manufacturing Co. The fires in this district are as a rule attributed to prospectors. The agent at Alberni, where there were no fires, thinks that the best preventive measure is to warn the public just before and during the dry season. In Alberni District East, which includes all that portion of the district lying east of the head of Cameron Lake, as well as Lasqueti and Texada islands, there were no fires. The agent says: "This portion of the district has been entirely free from bush fires this season and as the Bush Fire notices were posted up all over the district before the dry weather set in, I think it has had the effect of making campers and others more careful in