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Your House is Afire!

THE CANADIAN PEOPLE are the greatest forest owners in the world.

True, the United States contains three or four times as much timber as Canada, but the title to seventy-five per cent of it is vested in private persons.

The Canadian people own almost 85 per cent of the national forest area. Frequently, the timber growing on portions of that 85 per cent is leased to lumber or pulp and paper companies, but the fact of that lease does not diminish the significance of public ownership and control of the land on which the timber grows.

Practically every lessee of timber in Canada is legally subject to whatever reasonable conservation requirements the public interest from time to time may demand. In no other part of the British Empire is the public authority so unequivocal, and nowhere else is the responsibility for what happens to the forest resources so squarely placed upon the shoulders of the common citizen. The eyes and ears of most of us are so dulled by one-sided arguments on "alienated timber berths," and charges of slicing up the "public domain" that we quite overlook the fact that Canadians continue to rule all but about fifteen per cent of the forested area.

The weak spot in forest conservation in Canada is not that timber berths are leased to private companies but that the Canadian citizen himself **Where Citizens Are To Blame** burns down by wilful carelessness each summer fully five times as much timber as is cut on all the timber berths from ocean to ocean. Critical at times of the legality of com-

pany titles to a township of pine, he has not time to notice that 113 parties of Fishermen did their best to burn up the forests of the Ottawa Valley during 1921 or that 308 camping parties left nothing undone that would have turned British Columbia last year into a shambles.

To be able to say that we the people of Canada are the governors of our forest properties is a worth while boast, but it should not end with that. We shall profit from such an advantage only as we realize that we, the owners, are also the persistent destroyers; that we, the owners have great obligations which we can properly express through a deeper interest in our Government forest protective services, and by personal cautiousness with all forms of fire while in the woods.

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The Prairie Province Forests

As these lines are being written, a conference between Western Provincial ministers and the Dominion Government is in session relative to the transfer of the natural resources from Dominion control. It now appears probable that a settlement of this vexed matter will be reached by which the legitimate ambitions of the prairie governments to rule over their own domain may be satisfied.

The one and only concern of the non-politically-minded citizen who comprehends the why and wherefore of forest conservation is that in any adjustment of title deeds conservative forestry policies shall not suffer.

There is no net revenue for any public authority in owning the forests of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Eighty per cent of the original forests of those provinces, growing on non-agricultural soils that constitute more than a third of the prairie provinces' area, have been destroyed by fire. The timber that once grew on those non-agricultural lands was established by a wise Providence to meet the wood-using needs of millions of settlers. We, the all-important Present Generation, however, have chosen to heap up difficulties for future population by burning down their forest endowment. The prairie province forests must be **rebuilt, reconditioned**, if they are adequately to meet the needs of new population. For, be it remembered, no prairie farmer can grow wheat, raise stock, or pocket a dollar profit unless he first draws on the forest for a farming "plant," his house, barns, fence posts, fuel, implements, wagons, and what not. Two thirds or more of all the timber cut in North America each year is used on farms. Such a statement may surprise our readers but the official facts stand behind it.