



Forest Fire on Townships St. Louis and Grove, one hundred miles north west of Sudbury, near the village of Gogama on the C. N. Rys Ruel Subdivision. Lake Minnesinaqua and Lumber Mill in foreground. This fire was set out by river drivers, working on lake. The area burned was over $9\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, consisting of 5,120 acres of slashings with some timber left, and 960 acres of cut over and previously burned over lands. The value of standing timber destroyed was \$8,700. This fire was fought by the Ontario Forest Ranging staff with 49 men and one portable pump and extinguished at a cost of \$700.

settlers' clearing fires in that section. Now, after the event, this unfortunate state of public sentiment and the action resulting from it, appear in the light of a terrible and fatal mistake, which obviously should be rectified.

Throughout the permit areas of Ontario generally, as well as in other provinces and in many of the States of the Union, the permit system of regulating clearing fires has worked splendidly, and has been a tremendous factor in reducing the losses by forest fires, although, as might be expected, local difficulties are met with in some cases, particularly at the beginning.

The permit system is not an absolute cure-all, and fires still occur to some extent where it is in effect. The fire-ranger may use his best judgment in issuing permits, and unusual weather conditions may still neutralize his efforts and result in the spread of fire. However, all experience proves that the permit system constitutes a precautionary element of safety which no new settlement in a forest section can afford to be without.

According to press reports, fires had been smoldering for weeks prior to the disaster, in the territory tributary to a line between Haileybury and Englehart.

Under normal conditions, such fires would not seriously menace life and improved property. However, as past history in the North Country demonstrates, periodically, perhaps once in five or six years, normal weather conditions do not prevail, but, on the contrary, the period of



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drought becomes unusually protracted, whether in spring, summer or fall, high winds spring up and the many small fires which may have been smoldering away more or less harmlessly, are driven together and become a raging conflagration which utterly destroys everything in its path. This was the history of the Cochrane and Matheson fires, as it is of the Haileybury-Englehart fire.

If conditions remain the same, is there any reason to doubt that there will be periodical recurrences of these catastrophes, until the North Country has been so cleaned off by fire that

they will for that reason alone become impossible?

Fundamentally, it is a question of public sentiment. If the people in the North Country want immunity from periodical conflagrations of this character, they can have it or at least can come a good deal nearer to having it than in the past. But they must be prepared to pay the price. It is an old saying that one cannot eat his cake and have it too. The price to be paid is an uncompromising and overwhelming public sentiment against carelessness or recklessness in the use of fire, and in support of the fire-ranging staff in its efforts to render the country safe to live in, through the application of the permit system. It must be accepted as a matter of course that land clearing will have to progress somewhat more slowly. Fire must be relegated to its proper place of a good servant instead of a terrible master. Further, public sentiment must support still larger appropriations for the fire-ranging service, so that an adequate staff may be kept on duty, until the fire season is indubitably over.

Good Work of Forest Service

The annual appropriation for the Ontario Forestry Branch may appear large, and it is large, but in proportion to the enormous area which has to be covered by the fire-ranging staff, all past experience shows that it is still much too small. More money is needed for fire-rangers, for overhead supervision, for roads and trails, for aerial patrol, and for mechanical equipment such as telephones, radio,