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Canada's Fire Brigade.

Account of the Work Done by the Government Rangers Toward Saving the Forests of the Dominion From the Annual Peril of Conflagrations.

H. R. McMILLAN, Previously Dominion Inspector of Forest Reserves,
in *Collier's*.

Mr. H. R. McMillan is one of the increasing number of civil servants whose work by attracting attention outside has led to withdrawal from the service. He has recently left the Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior to take charge of the similar work for the province of British Columbia. The following article which he contributed to Collier's some time ago makes a good unit in The Civilian's series on the work of the several departments:

"The drying up of the country has been ascribed to many causes, but is generally supposed to be connected with the gradual destruction of the forest over large areas by fire. Whatever the effect may be of these destructive conflagrations in reference to the water supply of the region, there is no doubt that at different times almost every square mile of the country between Red River and the Rocky Mountains has been subject to them, and that hundreds of miles of forests have been converted into wide and almost treeless expanses of prairie." So wrote Director Selwyn of the Geological Survey at the conclusion of a trip made from Fort Garry to Rocky Mountain House in 1873.

The Prairies Become Treeless.

Since that time every summer has seen large areas of Canadian forests follow the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. According to a conservative estimate, six board feet of merchantable timber have been destroyed by fire for every foot cut by lumbermen since the earliest settle-

ment of the country. One of the largest lumber operators in the Ottawa Valley, Senator Edwards, is authority for the statement that in that district, the home of the white pine in Canada, at least twenty feet of prime timber have been burned for every foot cut and marketed. Reports from geologists, surveyors, and travelers all draw attention to the fact that over one-half of the timber originally existing in the country has been destroyed by fire.

Detailed statements sent in by seventy employees of the Forestry Branch covering 203,300 square miles of the most heavily timbered country in Dominion lands, the strip extending about 200 miles north of the prairies from Lake Winnipeg to Edmonton, the valleys of the Peace, Athabasca, and North Saskatchewan Rivers, the east slope of the Rocky Mountains, and the Railway Belt in British Columbia, indicate that of the virgin timber originally covering this whole area only about 34,384 square miles remain, the rest having been destroyed by fire. One ranger, for fifteen years a fur trader