

dertake the responsibility of prosecuting this particular work. It is quite obvious that these insects are destructive to forest life. I have no personal information on the subject, and I did not know that the forests in my own province were being attacked by insects.

Mr. MANION: What information is there in regard to the authenticity of the statements to which I have already drawn attention?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): There is no definite information, but the officials of the department think that probably the statements are not overdrawn.

Mr. COOTE: I might return to the subject of the aerial patrol at High river. This is an important matter, which, I understand, comes under the Department of the Interior. It is possible that the service is furnished by the Air Board. I am not very familiar with the details, but I want to impress on the Minister of the Interior, and perhaps more forcibly upon the committee, the importance of the work at that particular station. They patrol the forest reserve, in, I think, the Clearwater, the Bow river and the Crow's Nest districts. The Crow's Nest and Bow river areas are particularly in need of this patrol, for irrigation projects in southern Alberta are already under way which will take practically all the available waters from the rivers in that territory, and the head waters of those rivers are all located in the forest reserves. Now, if those forest areas are allowed to be burnt over, it is questionable whether the rivers will then supply sufficient water at the proper season of the year for irrigation purposes, and the Government has already invested considerable money in surveys for these irrigation projects. For that reason I would impress upon the committee the necessity of continuing the aerial forest patrol at High River station. Last year the service located fifty-one fires, which were all extinguished without doing any considerable damage, with the exception of one fire which started in British Columbia and had gained headway before it was visible to the patrol. In case this is not under the minister's department, and not included in the estimates under discussion, I would specially plead with him that he use his influence with the Air Board to see that the service at this particular station is not discontinued, because it serves a dual purpose in the preserva-

[Mr. Charles Stewart.]

tion of the timber and of the water supply for the irrigation system in southern Alberta.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The Forestry branch value very much the work done by the air service in the location of forest fires, and there can be no doubt about the advantage and utility of employing the Air Force for this particular work, although perhaps it was not primarily organized for that purpose. It becomes increasingly apparent that drastic measures will have to be adopted to prevent destruction by fire alone, without taking into consideration destruction by insect pests. I think it will be generally admitted that fire is the most destructive agency we have to contend with in the preservation of our timber resources, and every effort should be made to check forest fires.

Mr. WARNER: I visited the department that is handling our forest fire patrol by air service, and I was assured that there was no intention of discontinuing the patrol at High river. I was informed, however, that the estimates for this service having been reduced, they would have to curtail the patrol more or less. I was glad to observe that those in charge fully understand the necessity of this service not only to protect the value of the timber but by keeping the live timber on the eastern slopes to preserve the rainfall and snow, as the conservation of this moisture materially affects all the country lying to the east of the foothills, as well as being of vital importance to the successful operation of the irrigation projects referred to by my hon. friend from Souris (Mr. Steedsman). Any one who has studied that district understands very well the benefits accruing from the retention of the air service. The service has been a little expensive, but the departmental officials admit that the expense will be lowered very much in future compared with the amount of work that can be done.

Mr. COOTE: The minister has told us that tree cultivation is carried on to a small extent in several of the forest reserves. Yesterday and to-day we were told in discussing the agricultural estimates that to make agriculture permanent in some of the older settlements of the prairie provinces it was necessary to go into mixed farming. That is quite true, but there is something here that is of as great importance to agriculture in those areas as mixed farming, and that is the cultivation of trees. Has the minister