

How Planes Help With Fire Fighting

By Paul G. Redington, District Forester, San Francisco.

Special flights over and around large fires to get a comprehensive view of the situation are of inestimable value. Very often we have fires in such rough and inaccessible country that it would take a day or even more for the man in charge to get around them, size up the situation and determine his plan of attack. Of course in the meantime the situation might entirely change, and he would be little better off than when he started. If, however, he makes use of a plane he can, in an hour or less, get an accurate picture of the fire, and can immediately so dispose of his forces as to attack it most effectively. Such flights should of course be made with the man in charge

of the fire or an experienced fire fighter as observer, since a great deal will depend upon his personal judgment. If desired, an emergency radio station can be established on the fire line and direct communication may be had from the plane to the ground. All pilots are radio operators, so that if the forest officer who is flying as observer is not qualified in this respect he can write out the message and hand them to the pilot for sending. However, even if no radio is used there is very little delay in the dispatching of the information gained, since a plane traveling at ninety miles an hour will return to a landing field in a few minutes, and the observer can then report by phone or in person.

Seaplane Service for Manitoba

By Col. H. J. Stevenson, District Inspector of Forest Reserves, Winnipeg.

I have discussed the use of planes very fully with Stitt, Fisher, and McLeod, the three District Fire Rangers and they agree with me that one seaplane of the F. 3 type, located at Norway House, and one at The Pas, in addition to the main base at Victoria Beach, would be able to do all the work at present done by ground patrol in these districts, and do it 100 times more efficiently.

When I started out with the planes I was of the opinion that we should have small scout machines to locate fires, using the heavier machines to take in fire crews and supplies. I have, however, entirely changed my opinion. In using the small scout machines, it would be necessary for them to return to the base, prepare the large machine, get a fire crew and return to the fire; whereas if the large machine had gone out in the first place, a fire fighting crew would be picked up at nearby points in the neighborhood and in this way save two or three hours, while the consumption of gasoline in both cases would be the same.

Crews are Willing to Fly.

We anticipated difficulty in securing fire fighting crews, but have had no difficulty whatever; as a matter of fact we could pick up a full crew at any available point, and in many cases the men express a willingness to fight fire without pay.

I believe that in 1922, provided we can be supplied with the machines, it would be possible to do away entirely with the ground men and canoes, keeping the District Fire Rangers and possibly two men who would make trips with the machines and take charge of the fire fighting crews in the event of fire. In this

way we could fight two or three fires in each district.

The country over which we flew is splendidly adapted for sea-plane work; in fact the whole area seems to be from 30 to 60 per cent water, and the planes can travel safely in any direction. If it were possible I should like to extend the work at once. I am thoroughly convinced that patrol with canoes is obsolete, and also convinced that it will be possible to do the work more efficiently with aircraft and at considerably less cost than our present methods.

ALPINE FLIGHTS NEXT.

Berne.—Trips to Alpine resorts by aeroplane are promised for next summer. The safe landing of the airman Durafour on the snow fields of the Dome du Gouter, at a height of 14,210 feet, or 1,572 feet below the summit of Mont Blanc, is, according to the officials of a Swiss aeroplane company, only the beginning of a new era in Alpine tours.

CONGO AIR MAIL.

The air mail service on the Upper Congo is now available. The rapid transmission of correspondence from Great Britain by the aeroplane service which has linked up with the European steamship arrangements is now operating between Kinshaba and Stanleyville. The air service is scheduled to take three days, as compared with fourteen days by river boats. An air letter fee of three francs per twenty grammes is charged to the addressee on delivery.

AVIATION IN AUSTRALIA.

The Australian Federal Government is carrying out its determination to utilize aircraft for long-distance postal and for limited passenger service, and the latest information upon this development comes from The London Times' Melbourne correspondent. Tenders have been accepted for such services between Adelaide and Sydney, and again between Sydney and Brisbane, 750 and 575 miles respectively as the crow flies. By rail the distance from Adelaide to Brisbane is 1,800 miles, and occupies four days. The subsidy for the first section is £17,500 a year, and for the second £11,500.

Tenders are also being called for a service between Charlesville and Cloncurry, in Queensland, a distance of 575 miles, much of it over country which in the rainy season is practically impassable.

Recently an aviator arrived in the centre of Australia in comparatively few hours, covering a distance which occupies carters' wagons two months. Added to the service in West Australia, there will soon be 3,000 miles of postal and commercial aerial highways in constant operation. If the experiments are satisfactory, they will be extended and will solve one of the great communication problems of Australia.

On the other hand, the Federal Parliament has seen fit to reduce the Defence estimates by £100,000, which means the practical abandonment by the Government of the air scheme outlined earlier in the year. The two squadrons of flying boats have both been abandoned, and the two seaplane squadrons, one active and one reserve, modified to six machines, three active and three reserve. The scheme now amounts to the carrying on with what is possessed at the present time, with the addition of several Avros ordered at a local factory.

DUTY OF FORESTERS.

(By Dr. C. D. Howe)

"I like to emphasize with all my strength that the object of a forester is not to protect trees from being cut. There would be no foresters employed in this country or in any other country if there were no lumbering operations. It is the forester's business to produce wood, and if he can make money in cutting and selling trees three inches in diameter he is doing perfectly legitimate business.

"The guiding principle in forestry is to see that wood production is continuous for all time; to see that areas that have been cut over shall come up again in commercial trees; that areas having been burned over shall be regenerated with commercial trees; and that waste lands and areas unfit for agriculture shall be made to bear commercial trees."