

# E D I T O R I A L

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## Consent of the Governed

THE minds of hundreds of thousands of Canadians are groping for some effective escape from the periodic catastrophes caused by forest fires. Northern Ontario's terrifying disaster apparently differs from former ones in that the region was comparatively clear of dense forest and therefore was outside the jurisdiction of fire rangers. For all that, the Canadian public, easily aroused by loss of human life where loss of timber would create small commotion, 'asks to know' if pioneering in Ontario's north *must* necessarily be paid for in the lives of women and children, millions of dollars in fire insurance collected from other parts of Ontario, and hundreds of thousands of dollars of relief regularly paid out from public treasuries. Within eleven years the opening up of agricultural lands of Ontario has taken 347 lives by fire. Is this the normal forfeit for provincial expansion? Few who balance values on a humane scale will say that any conceivable pile of oats or rye or hay or potatoes can compensate for such sacrifice. Fewer still who know anything about the Northern Ontario situation will argue that the natural inflammability of the country under extremely dry and windy conditions is beyond control.

Many remedies already have been suggested and the inquiry under way at Toronto at the moment of writing may be depended upon to reduce the problem to proven and practical suggestions. Remedial action undoubtedly will follow if for no other reason than that Northern Ontario cannot survive many further doses of the fearful advertising which, despite the local optimists, every one of these holocausts showers upon her.

### The need of Educational Patrol

Meanwhile general agreement is evident upon one point. No law can be enforced unless the majority of the people to whom that law applies endorse and support it. In a jail yard or a hospital ward (easily managed units) any law can have immediate enforcement with very little human help and little or no sympathy from those affected by the regulation. But in broad sweeps of country, with population scattered, and the task of making a living often very acute, it is one thing to print a law forbidding carelessness with fire; it is quite another job to keep it enforced. The fact is, in newly settled lands every man to a large degree must be his own policeman. The fire ranger, denied local co-operation, will never get far with fire prevention. Public opinion always,—everywhere—is Boss. This does not say that all corrective efforts should be withdrawn in face of a *wrong* public opinion. But those who are looking for a "mailed fist" type of forest fire control will have to resign themselves to the more intelligent process by which restrictive laws over forest fires are buttressed by the good sense and co-operative loyalty of a popular majority. If one fifth as much were spent on 'educational patrol' as on ranger patrol, the evil reputation of Canada for forest catastrophes would rapidly disappear.

## NO MORE SALES OR LEASES OF CROWN LAND

In the interest of forest conservation the Government of Nova Scotia has withdrawn all Crown Land from either sale or lease. This will not interfere with settlement in any way, as there is abundance of vacant cleared land and farms in the Province for all settlement purposes.

This measure, it was stated in the announcement, has become advisable owing to the rapidly diminishing wood supply and is in the interest of the preservation of our waterways, water powers and water supplies.

This is an advanced step on the part of the Government in the line of an effective forest policy.

## The Fast Growing "Athel"

READERS of the Canadian Forestry Magazine will recall an interesting picture and several descriptive paragraphs concerning the Athel tree scientifically known as the *Tamarix articulata*. The editor is in receipt of a letter from Mr. Bruce Drummond of the United States Department of Agriculture, at Indio, Calif. in which definite information is given as to the ability of the Athel tree to stand cold temperatures. Mr. Drummond says: "This tree comes from North Africa and is, so far as we know, a desert tree that will not resist a severe climatic condition that you have in the North West. It has frozen down at six above zero and while it sprouted from the stump again, yet we have no reason to feel that it would thrive and resist the climatic conditions other than in the South West."