

# The Canadian Engineer

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## The Canadian Engineer

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## FIRE RANGING: PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

For several years the question of the preservation of Canada's natural resources for the nation has been the subject of much discussion in the press, in technical societies and before especially appointed commissions. The compiling of information and the study of existing conditions were doubtless necessary, but we do think that the provinces, which have control of the forest wealth of Canada, have had information enough so that before this they might have successfully disposed of that perennial problem—the organization of a fire ranging staff.

In the past the forest fire ranging system has been almost altogether a patronage organization. Men were appointed who had absolutely no fitness or experience or knowledge of the country. The rangers who were appointed for the few summer months were not selected because of their qualifications, but for political reasons solely, and it is commendable that in at least one province, Ontario, the Minister of Forests recognizes that the timber areas are too great an asset to be so lightly dealt with and inefficiently protected.

To those who spend part of their summer months in the woods it is well known that many of the fire rangers leave their regular beats for pleasure trips, and on other occasions do not leave their lodge at all, but fill in their daily reports after imaginary inspections. Too often these season appointments are grasped by young fellows, who expect to have at the expense of the province a pleasant summer's holiday, and it is gratifying to know that from this out the Department will treat these appointments as appointments of trust and responsibility, and that under the plans for remodelling of this Department experienced bush rangers with a sense of duty and responsibility will be selected, and it is to be hoped that in addition to patrolling the forests in the summer to put out fires the system will be extended to patrolling of licensed areas in winter to enforce the piling and burning of brush and to prevent the unnecessary slashing of the young forest.

A preservation that prevents waste will be much more popular and efficient than a policy that attempts to preserve natural resources by withdrawing them from useful commercial purposes.