

The Success of Co-operation in Forest Protection

In Past Four Years, the St. Maurice Association of Limit Holders
Has Made Splendid Record.

By

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Preparatory to discussing the work of the St. Maurice Forest Protective Association a short summary of the conditions existing previous to its formation will not be out of place.

Formerly each limit holder obtained appointments as fire rangers from the Department of Lands and Forests, for such men as he deemed necessary for the patrol of his limits. Naturally he desired to protect his timber but at the same time wished to eliminate any avoidable expense, hence the majority of the men appointed as fire rangers were woods and drive foremen, woods clerks, cache keepers and dam tenders, improvement gang foremen, scalers, &c. To the most of these men fire ranging was a secondary occupation which they considered of minor importance, consequently an efficient patrol was a minus quantity.

Individual Efforts Fail.

With the location of a new Transcontinental railway through the heart of the territory came the menace of fires resulting from construction gangs, steam shovels and work trains. Settlers located in and near the limits had long been a source of danger, and as new townships were opened up along the new railway their number increased. Disastrous

fires resulted from all these sources. Some of the limit holders affected thereby increased their efforts to cope with the increasing fire danger, others took their losses as inevitable, and the inadequacy of scattered individual action was plainly evident.

Since 1903 the lumbermen of the St. Maurice Valley had driven logs on a co-operative basis and between 1908 and 1911 some of the owners of limits along National Transcontinental Railway had conducted a successful patrol of the right of way, so the co-operative idea was not new.

These then were the conditions leading to the desire for better protection for the limits as a whole regardless of ownership lines. In the latter part of February, 1912, a number of the limit holders in the St. Maurice Valley decided to invite all the owners in the Valley to join together in the formation of a co-operative forest protective association.

Association's Objects.

This was consummated when on March 2nd, 1912, sixteen timberland owners, whose holdings totalled over seven million acres, united in organizing the St. Maurice Forest Protective Association, its chief objects being as follows:—

To organize and establish an efficient system of fire protection, em-