

The Dominion Forest Reserves

the people, then why should good grass be allowed to go to waste if it can be utilized? The grazing may be desirable also as a protection to the wood. In some places the ground is covered with a dense growth of long grass and peavine. This, when dry, offers much fuel for fire, and when the fire once gets into it, it is almost impossible to check the flames. Cattle on the prairie have much the same habit as the buffalo. In going to water they follow one another and make paths which they follow day after day. These paths are fire lines where the fire may be checked, small to be sure, but there are many of them, and they give lines from which to back-fire.

Perhaps it will be objected that grazing prohibits the reproduction of timber. It seems to me, however, that the interference with reproduction from this cause is much overestimated. I know in the West many fields grazed constantly that have come into timber. There is danger from overgrazing, but from judicious grazing there is much less danger than from long grass and peavine.

PROTECTION AGAINST FIRE.

The problem of protecting the forest reserves against fire is the most difficult one we have. The fire problem is difficult even in the eastern provinces, but the conditions for fighting fire here are very favorable as compared with those prevailing in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and eastern British Columbia. Compare, for instance, the number of rainy days for the summer months at Calgary, Alberta; Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Toronto, Ontario. In our comparison, however, we must not only consider the number of rainy days but also the quantity of rain falling on those days; because, although a day may be considered rainy, there may not be precipitation enough to count much towards putting out a forest fire. The following table is a comparison for the four places mentioned showing the average number of rainy days in each of the summer months, and the average quantity of rain falling those months. It is compiled from statistics furnished by the Meteorological Service published in a volume entitled "Rain and Snow-Fall of Canada."

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