

APPENDIX No. 4

area, special attention being given to areas to which fire might spread from the right of way. The chief causes of the fires which have swept nearly all forest regions adjacent to railways in Canada have been the leaving of slash on the right of way to be fired in a dry season and the leaving of the slash in the adjoining forest, to which fires from the right of way inevitably spread. I consider the prompt clearing of the right of way the first essential in railroad fire protection. The second is the safe disposal of the slash on logged-over areas adjoining the right of way. When these are accomplished, other common causes of fires are easily controlled by patrol. Fire wardens, spread five to ten miles apart, patrol all railroads under construction in British Columbia. The railway companies usually pay the cost of patrol. Such precautions were successful in 1913, only one or two thousand acres of timber were burned over.

Another feature of fire protection which is interesting us greatly at the present time is the question of the disposal of logging slash resulting from the logging operations throughout the country. There are about 75,000 acres of slash created each year in British Columbia by 800 different logging operators. A great many operators believe in slash disposal for the benefit of their own timber; a great many of the others are not yet convinced that it is feasible. There is no general regulation of slash disposal feasible in any province. As you know, natural conditions differ in each district and on each logging operation. While I believe that in nearly all cases some form of slash disposal is necessary to ensure the protection of timber from fire, I wish to make clear the fact that no general rule can be enforced in all localities. In some districts the slash may be burned broadcast, in others it should be piled and burned in order to prevent destruction of trees left standing on the ground; in others it should be lopped so that it will be flattened by the winter snow and rot readily in contact with the ground. Slash left on a logging operation is a menace to the mature lumber standing in the district, and also to the young timber which will come up on the logged-over land. The fire protective problem of Canada includes not only the protection of mature timber; the young growth which will supply the saw-mills of the future must also be protected.

Logging operators in British Columbia burned about 10,000 acres of slash in 1913. Each year the timber owners are becoming more favourable to slash burning as a fire protective measure. Experiments are conducted by the Provincial Forest Branch each year to demonstrate the feasibility of slash burning and to show that it is a cheap form of insurance.

A feature of forest administration which has been rather important in British Columbia this last two or three years has been the disposal of the timber which still remains in the hands of the Crown. As I said a few minutes ago, contrary to the general impression, all the merchantable timber was not taken up by license in British Columbia several years ago. The licenses are scattered, and we find now that there is adjoining them quite a large quantity of government timber. From surveys which we have made in the Coast district, where licenses cover the largest proportion of the timber, we find they only cover about three-quarters of the government timber. We have adopted a policy of cruising this timber and selling it by public auction or calling for public tenders, the timber, of course, going to the highest purchaser. One regulation is that the timber shall be all logged-off within the period which is stated in the contract, which is usually two, three or four years, the idea being that the timber will not be held for speculative purposes, but will be logged when it is purchased. Another regulation is that the brush shall be disposed of according to the regulations of the Forest Branch, which are varied for each logging operation.

The contracts drawn up to the present have usually required that the slash be burned, as it lies, at the conclusion of the logging operations. Occasionally local conditions are such that the logger is required to do nothing beyond cutting down snags and building a fire line around the area logged over.