

Columbia of course—and comes across into Alberta, it then becomes the responsibility of both provinces. I understand that Alberta simply is not financially able to take care of fire protection in those forests; they are too extensive; we have them all up through the mountains, the Peace river country and the park areas. Has the dominion laid down any policy under which it contributes, both regularly and in emergencies, to assist the provinces in efforts to fight fire? Sometimes the loss by fire in our section of the country has been such as to make angels weep, and we have been helpless to do anything about the matter.

Mr. CRERAR: The federal government does not assist, and as far as I am aware, never has in the past assisted, in the actual protection of provincial forests against fire, by any direct outlay of money. But for years the federal forest service, in association with the parks administration, has in certain forest experimental stations and in national parks carried on studies as to the best methods of protecting forests against fire, studies for instance as to the daily extent of fire hazards. As a result of those studies those in charge of forests or having forests, such as the lumber and the pulp and paper companies or the provincial governments, can estimate fairly accurately the increase in the fire hazard under certain weather conditions, and therefore are in a better position to be on guard against the outbreak of fires. The studies carried on in these forest experimental stations under federal direction have resulted in building up a body of knowledge that is being availed of to-day by lumber companies, pulp and paper companies and by provincial governments. That is a useful service and an important contribution to the preservation of our forests.

I quite agree with what my hon. friend said about the importance of conserving our forests. In fact I think a general indictment could be laid against the Canadian people for their carelessness in past years in connection with the handling or conserving of our timber wealth. It has been the history of every other country that sooner or later they have been driven to recognize that situation. To-day I think there is pretty generally widespread knowledge in Canada as to the need for sound conservation policies in connection with our forest resources. In many European countries, for instance, the timber crop is harvested just as a grain crop is harvested; that is, it is cut under scientific management.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Even Christmas trees.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

Mr. CRERAR: In that way the perpetuation of the asset is secured. All these aspects of our forest heritage in Canada are being studied to-day in increasing measure, and at this point I would say that the work done by those in charge of operations in these forest experimental stations, and in our parks, has been a most valuable contribution to that study. I think public opinion generally throughout the country is being aroused in connection with the planting of trees and protection against forest fires. As a matter of fact, 86 per cent of all the fires that occur in Canada are attributed to carelessness on the part of individuals, while only about 14 per cent are brought about by natural causes, such as lightning. Quite obviously there is great opportunity here to inculcate in the minds of both young and old the need for extreme care in guarding against fire losses. Someone drives along a road through some timber. He throws a cigarette out of the window of his car, and that may bring about the destruction of thousands of dollars worth of good Canadian timber. The only way by which this asset can be protected is by developing the public consciousness of the need for this protection, and I think substantial progress has been made in that direction, particularly in the last ten or fifteen years.

Mr. JAUQUES: I should like to point out—

The CHAIRMAN: I would say immediately that discussion of this question, which is under provincial jurisdiction, is out of order under this item. I was very much prompted to tell the minister a moment ago that the discussion did not arise under the item being considered. The question of the conservation of our forests is under provincial control, and does not arise here.

Mr. JAUQUES: I was not going to refer to provincial matters at all. The national parks extend from Jasper to Banff and include a great part of the western side of Alberta. In connection with not only our forests but everything else we have followed the principle that we should save money and waste wealth. If our educational authorities and even the churches would reverse that maxim and teach the people to spend money and save wealth, we would all be a great deal better off and at the same time a great deal saner.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, that this matter comes under provincial jurisdiction, but there are people in Canada who are coming to consider it more and more a federal matter. An industry such as mining, for example, is a provincial matter, but at the same time the dominion is