

The Aeroplane's Service to Forestry

(Concluded from page 419)

Object Detection.

The principal object of the patrol trips was, of course, to be detection of fires and the round trip taking upwards of three hours covering over 300 miles. Figuring an average visibility of 20 miles meant the actual covering of around $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres, or about 20 per cent of the whole district and including that portion where due to weather and risk, past experience shows the fire hazard is greatest. The Sunday patrol trip was considered to be particularly desirable, in that over the week end all camps are closed down and thousands of tourists and city folk are scattered in outlying points on pleasure trips. The hazard curve in consequence goes up and on account of the closing down of the rural telephone and telegraph, quick detection and reporting is hampered.

A Plan for Fire Fighting.

In addition to the regular patrol, allotment was made available of a portion of the flying time for emergency trips for fire fighting. The big F-3 machine was to be used for this work and a set of fire fighting tools with a portable gasoline fire pump were gotten ready to stand by, and a picked crew of fire fighters organized in advance. These arrangements were made to enable us to try out the aeroplane for actual fire fighting work for the transportation of a small picked crew as occasion arose to some fire, which was so located as to be hard of access by other means, for instance at the head of one of the long inlets on the mainland or high up on the mountains where no roads or trails existed but which could be reached with a plane landing on the inland lake. In the past, thousands of dollars have been spent cutting trails and fighting a way into a fire before any actual fire fighting was possible. One particular case occurred last year where over a thousand dollars were spent cutting a trail into a fire before any fire fighting could be started and where, if a plane had been available, five or six men with a pump could have landed on a small lake within 2 miles of the fire a few hours after discovery, and the fire fought and brought under control when still small. Fortunately or unfortunately no favorable opportunity presented itself this season to try this out in actual practice.

A trained Forest Officer accompanied each patrol trip so that in case of discovery of a fire, communication and transportation of the ground staff could be coordinated to best advantage after detection.

Supervision of Fires.

A portion of the time allotted to Forest Protection was held in reserve for special

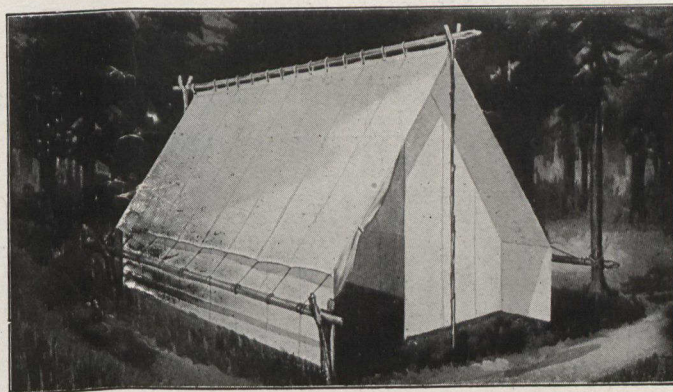
trips of supervising officials. In fighting forest fires, particularly in the height of the season, conditions sometimes arise where a ranger has to detail assistants and at times temporary employees to take charge of fires. This happens when a number of fires break out simultaneously. In such cases the expenditure of considerable sums of money and the handling of serious situation may be under direct control of untried men. At such times it is

of untold value to be able to transport a fire protection expert to the scene of a number of fires so that he may size up the situation, reduce or increase the fire fighting staff and advise on plans of attack. Lack of judgment on the part of men in actual charge of fires is often very costly, as untried foremen have it in their power, should they lose their head at critical moments, to waste considerable sums of money before an experienced officer can get on the job. One such case might mean the saving of sufficient money to pay for a good deal of flying.

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