

structions in cases of fires required for cooking, warmth or industrial purposes, and the Ontario Act very properly makes it imperative that every person in charge of a drive of timber, survey or exploring party, or any other party requiring camp fires, shall once in each week read and explain to his men the provisions of the Act. The Quebec Act omits this very necessary precaution, necessary because railway and other surveyors are sometimes among the greatest offenders against the Act. The Quebec Act also omits the proviso which the Ontario statute includes, that locomotive engineers shall have their fire boxes properly guarded and their smoke-stacks furnished with screens. Both Acts, however, only impose a penalty of fifty dollars or three months imprisonment if that is not paid, for any infringement of the Act. Now, when such wholesale destruction is often the result, why should the offender receive so light a punishment? Why should not the offence be visited with heavy imprisonment without the option of a fine? Those in charge of drives of timber, surveying parties, &c., should be made personally responsible for the acts in this respect of those under them, under the penalty of a fine, whilst the actual culprit should in all cases be liable to imprisonment. So important is this question of the protection of the forests from fires, not merely to the governments which have the administration of the Crown Lands, and to lumbermen who lease them, and to the bankers who make advances on timber limits, but also to the large number of settlers in the new districts who have been in the past and are liable to be in the future rendered destitute and homeless through these bush fires, that it is suggestive whether it would not be well that every Crown Lands agent or bushranger should be constituted a fire inspector, whose duty should be to enquire into the cause of each bush fire, with a view to the detection and punishment of the offender. As facts now are, the offender is probably in most cases an employee, from whom the amount of the fine could never be collected, and hence there could be no attraction to an informer to go to the large amount of trouble and expense necessary in these distant districts to secure a conviction.