

# Fighting Forest Fires from the Air

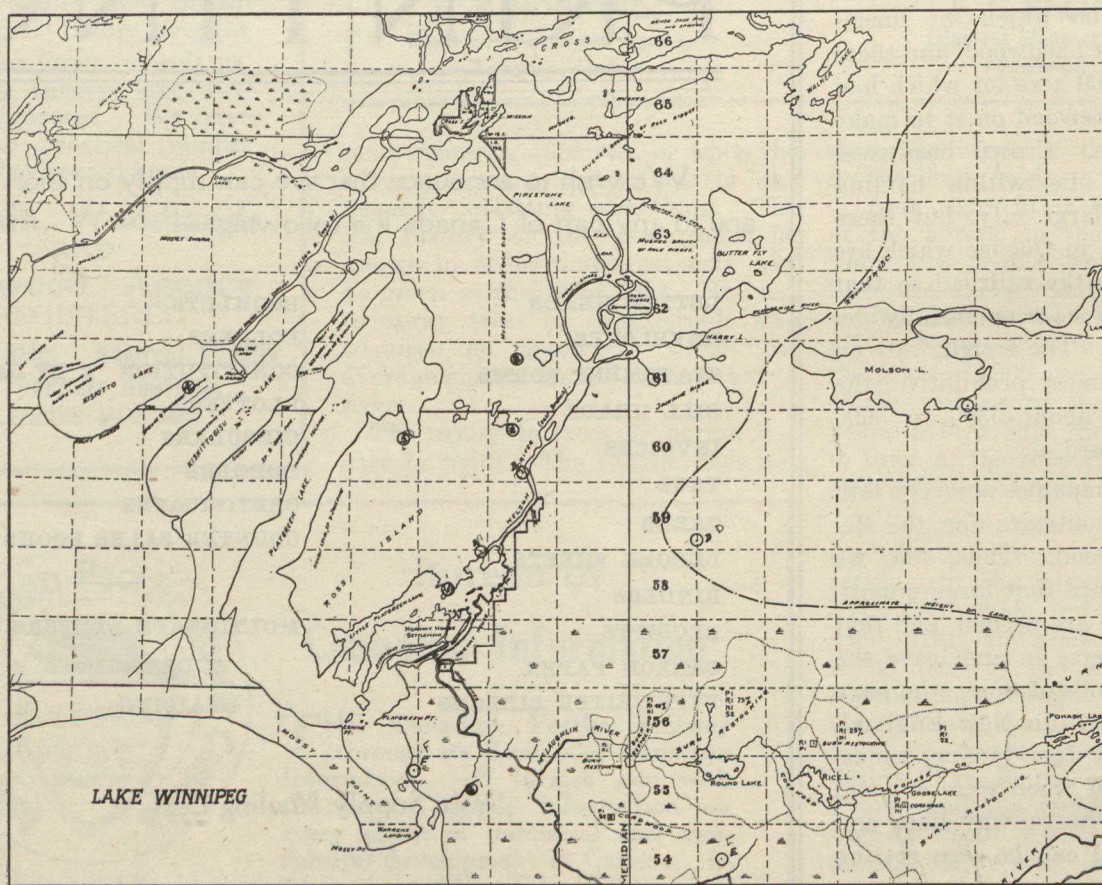
Eleven Incipient Conflagrations Started by Lightning, Speedily Controlled  
by Aeroplane Patrol

*By Major W. Arthur Steel, M.C., the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals.*

**E**VEN THE CASUAL newspaper reader of today cannot have failed to note the occasional references made to the use of the aeroplane in assisting the fire ranger in his strenuous efforts to save our forests, but like many others, he has probably passed it off with the remark "Yes, they should be very useful for that work." Few people have taken time to study this question, and fewer still have had an opportunity of personally observing such work, since forest fire fighting must, of necessity, be carried on far from the beaten track of commerce, or even the path of the Summer tourist.

It is not surprising then that comparatively little is known about this new departure in the methods employed

to be covered in this country, the area has been divided into three patrols, and sub-air stations established; one on Forestry Island, Norway House; and the other at The Pas. Seaplanes are stationed at each of these sub-stations for the purpose of patrolling a given area, the forests in the southern part of the lake being handled directly from the base at Victoria Beach. It might be advisable to describe briefly the way in which the aeroplane is used in this work. Weather permitting, daily flights are made from the various bases over the area to be patrolled. A fire ranger usually accompanies the plane on these flights to act as observer, and to make notes of the conditions in the area and of the progress of any fires which may be observed. In



by the Dominion Forestry Department. The title of this article might lead one to believe that it was going to be a long winded discussion of the many technical questions involved, but such is not the case. On the contrary, the writer merely intends giving a very short account of some actual happenings which he was fortunate enough to witness, first hand, while on a trip to Norway House, Northern Manitoba.

The Manitoba Forestry Department is assisted in its work by a fleet of seaplanes, operated by the Canadian Air Board, from a base at Victoria Beach, near the southern end of Lake Winnipeg. On account of the great distance

the case of an old fire, he can decide whether additional men are required, or whether the fighters already at work can be withdrawn. When new fires are discovered, he can obtain the exact location, the extent of the fire and the number of men required to fight it, and the quickest and easiest route to the fire. Where long distances have to be covered, or where a fire is so situated that it is difficult to reach by canoe or motor-boat, the plane can be used to transport the men and equipment. There are so many lakes in this district that it is possible to land within easy travelling distance of almost any fire, no matter where

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