

Commission of Conservation

CANADA

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CONSERVATION is published about the first of each month. Its information relative to the natural resources of Canada, their development and the proper conservation of the same, together with timely articles covering town-planning and public health.

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The increasing industrial use of wood alcohol has created conditions of carelessness in the handling of it. Wood alcohol is an active poison, and all bottles, cans or other containers of this liquid should be plainly and conspicuously marked "Poison."

Mr. Thomas Hoskin, of Grafton, president of the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario, at its annual meeting, said: "The fire waste in Canada recently is the worst in the whole world. The loss in Canada would pay off the national debt in twenty years. It is seven times as great per capita as it is in Great Britain, and we are paying five times as much for our insurance as they are in Europe."

The thoughtlessness of employees, and their willingness to "take a chance," even when the possibility of accident is well understood, are two of the greatest obstacles in the way of efforts to secure safety to workmen. Employees should be made to understand that, even under compensation acts, the employers pay for accidents with dollars, while the workers pay for them with eyes and hands, and even with life itself.

At the conclusion of an address by Dr. C. C. James, Commissioner of Agriculture under the Agriculture Instruction Act, 1913, at the sixth annual meeting of the Commission of Conservation, Sir Clifford Sifton placed the position of the Commission on record as follows: "I want to say to him (Dr. James) that whoever may or may not support him in the work which he is doing, so far as the Commission of Conservation is concerned, its members, its staff, and its officers, he can rely on our unwavering and constant support and that of all those whom we influence or control, in the work which he is doing."

DESTRUCTION OF SHADE TREES

That the value of trees is not appreciated is an oft repeated statement, but there is an ever-widening circle of our citizens who recognize their value and are prepared to defend them.

In Toronto, Mr. Justice Middleton recently allowed judgment of \$500.00 for sixteen willow trees which had been cut on private property on Toronto island, by corporation labourers.

While trees are, to a great extent, private property, there is also associated with them a corporate interest, in that the general effect of their presence adds materially to the comfort of the people and to the beauty of their surroundings. It may be too much to expect that all owners of property containing trees will recognize their value from this standpoint. There is no authority to protect trees from wanton destruction by their owners, but education on the subject may secure the results aimed at. Horticultural societies should include the protection of trees in their spheres of activity, though, unfortunately, municipalities can not prohibit, by by-law, the removal of trees from private property. To maintain a nuisance on private property is a contravention of the law and the destruction of trees, with their beauty, shade and comfort, though legally permissible is not less blameworthy.

FEDERAL AUTHORITY OVER FISHERIES

Representative Linthicum, of Baltimore, has introduced into the United States Congress a measure to deprive several states of their present control of their fisheries, and to vest this authority in the federal government. The bill has not, yet, been passed but its ultimate enactment is foreshadowed by the issuance of an executive order which secures, temporarily, its main objects. The proposed legislation is not general in scope, its specific aim being to correct abuses connected with the Chesapeake Bay fisheries. Hitherto, the individual states have had control, but have failed to exert it with any degree of uniformity or efficiency. The natural result has been a rapid decrease in the productivity of these fishing waters.

The situation is one of interest to Canadians. The experience of both Canada and the United States proves that, if natural resources are to be wisely administered, the limits of federal and provincial or state jurisdiction must first be clearly defined. In both countries this has been strikingly exemplified by difficulties which have cropped up in connection with the control of fisheries and, in Canada, the subject has caused long and tedious litigation. Mr. Linthicum's bill forms part of the wider movement to secure for the United States what Canada already has, viz., sufficient federal authority to safeguard fisheries and other resources from depletion.

Co-operative Fire Protection

Forestry Associations, by United Efforts, have Secured Some Excellent Results

The co-operative idea in forest fire protection has gained real headway in eastern Canada during the past year. Not only have the two existing forest protection associations in Quebec made satisfactory records, and increased in scope and stability, but there is a movement in favor of organizing a third association, which will probably materialize for the season of 1916. The territory embraced within the latter includes the upper head-waters of the Ottawa river in the province of Quebec, and the new organization will be known as the Upper Ottawa Forest Protection Association.

The neighbour of the proposed new association on the east is the Lower Ottawa Forest Protection Association, which was organized in the spring of 1914. The territory patrolled in 1914 comprised 11,812 square miles, or 7,559,680 acres, on the watersheds of the Gatineau, Lievre, Rouge, Nation and Coulongue rivers. The staff consisted of a chief inspector, three inspectors, and 52 rangers. Although the severest drought of many years occurred during May, June and July, the fire loss did not exceed eight-tenths of one per cent of the amount of timber protected. The total number of fires extinguished was 154, of which 72 were caused by settlers, 15 by fishermen and sportsmen, 17 by lightning, 12 by drivers and woodsmen, 4 by railroads, 9 by trappers and Indians, and 25 of unknown origin. The total cost of the patrol and fire-fighting work was \$1.91 per square mile, or less than three-tenths of one cent per acre.

The territory of the St. Maurice Forest Protection Association lies next on the east of that of the Lower Ottawa Association, and comprises 12,707 square miles, or 8,132,416 acres. This represents an increase of 853,363 acres over the previous year. This association is the pioneer of its kind in Canada, having been three years in existence. Its staff during 1914 consisted of a manager, clerk, six inspectors, and 54 rangers. Two hundred and thirty-one fires were reported, of which 22 were set by river drivers, 10 by fishermen, 56 unknown. The balance were due to miscellaneous known causes. The total cost of patrol and fire-fighting was \$2.25 per square mile, or about one-third of a cent per acre. The cost of fire fighting was unusually high, on account of the extreme drought of the spring and midsummer.

The prosecution of offenders against the fire law has greatly lessened the fire evil, as has also the issuing of burning permits during the prohibited season. In District No. 1, where there were 105 fires in 1913, only four were

Arbour Day in Canada

It should be a General Public Holiday, for Arboreal and Clean-up Purposes

In Canadian schools it has been the custom for years to observe Arbour Day in a greater or less degree. This custom should receive increased attention from educational bodies and the general public, for the country has a great need for the planting of more trees and shrubs, both in school and residential grounds. Canada is so dependent upon her forests that any measures which may be taken to extend the knowledge of the pupils respecting trees and the need for their protection will serve a useful purpose.

In each of the provinces, with the exception of British Columbia, provision is made for the celebration of Arbour Day. In most provinces it is a public school celebration only, the regulations requiring its observance by the planting of trees and shrubs in school grounds. It should be made a public holiday, instead of being confined to the schools, and include the annual clean-up, particularly as it is usually celebrated early in May. In this way, more general interest would be aroused in the work, and greater results secured, from an arboreal as well as an artistic and sanitary standpoint.

reported in 1914. The provincial government has vigorously prosecuted offenders against the fire law.

Of portages and trails, 514 miles were cut and cleaned, and six lookout stations were erected. Leaflets on forest fires have been issued to school children by the Association in co-operation with the provincial Department of Lands and Forests and the Department of Public Instruction. Also twenty-one thousand fire posters and one thousand pamphlets were distributed throughout the various territories under the supervision of the association.

There can be no doubt that through co-operation, much better results in fire protection can be secured at a smaller expenditure than under the old plan of individual effort. Not only do the limit-holders combine their efforts, but the provincial government co-operates actively also. It seems natural that the co-operative idea of fire protection should spread rapidly wherever the burden of fire protection is placed primarily upon the limit holders, as is the case in both Quebec and Ontario.—C. L.

For the year 1913, there were 291 deaths by accident in Toronto, while in 1914, the first year of the Ontario Safety League's work, there were 241.