

all to deal with, as it is manifestly impossible, or almost so, to exercise any supervision over the mining prospector. The governing authorities have come in for no little criticism for what is thought to be the lax manner in which the laws relating to prairie and bush fires are administered. But, while it is easy to criticize, it is not easy to suggest a more efficient means of preventing these fires. When it is considered what a sparsely settled and extensive country lies north of the 49th parallel and that inflammable material lies under your feet wherever you go, the difficulty of providing safeguards becomes apparent. The chief hope of a remedy, it seems to me, lies in an improved public sentiment on the question; and this, Mr. President, if I do not misunderstand the aims of your Society, is one of the objects you have in view.

Dr. Franklin B. Hough, who acted as Chief of the Forestry Branch of the Agricultural Department at Washington for several years, has gone into the subject of forest fires very exhaustively. In his report, Vol. 3, he devotes no less than 130 pages to that subject alone.

A circular was issued from the Department under his care, to its correspondents in the several States and Territories, with a view of ascertaining the extent of injuries that have been sustained and observed through forest fires, the causes of these fires so far as known, and the methods commonly employed for preventing them, or arresting them when started and under way. The circular invited such suggestions as might appear advisable concerning the means for preventing the continued recurrence of these calamities. Some of the suggestions and advice given are worthy of note and might be adopted with advantage. One correspondent says, in answer to the request for suggestions:—

“1. Open the eyes of the people to the danger, the immense destruction of property, the rapidly shrinking streams, the increase in the duration of droughts, the blighting of landscapes, and the general climatic effect. This can be done by national publications fitted for the common people,