

As far as comparison of the various regions covered in the table is concerned, the only general point that is observable is that in the Prairie Provinces the average area of large fires is much greater than in British Columbia. This, however, is due more to the differences in the characters of the two regions than to anything else. In the Prairie Provinces, there is a larger proportion of grass land and flat, relatively open country where fires can spread broadcast at a rapid rate. The mountainous character of the country as well as the greater preponderance of heavily-timbered areas in British Columbia tend to reduce the areas of the fires.

A comparison of Figs. 14 and 15, representing the number of fires and the area burned over, will readily show how the larger average size of fires in the Prairie Provinces affects the total area burned over, making it much greater proportionally to the number of fires than in British Columbia. Thus in a very bad season such as 1915, when fires start readily and in large numbers, the area burned over becomes very great. This is true even when the immense burned area along the Hudson Bay railway in 1915 is left out of consideration.

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1914.—The total number of fires reported to the Department of Lands, Forests, and Mines was 2,387, exclusive of those occurring in the two provincial parks. Several bad fires are reported to have occurred in Algonquin park and two small fires in Quetico park. Of the 2,387 fires outside the parks, 91 per cent, or 2,181, were reported by the rangers patrolling railway lines, leaving only 206 fires for the rest of the province. Only 52 fires outside the parks are said to have caused damage to timber. Ten fires definitely reported in connection with railway lines in Ontario under the jurisdiction of the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada burned 93,400 acres, while 94 fires along lines partly in Quebec and partly in Ontario burned 19,945 acres.

1915.—The total number of fires reported in this year was 486, distributed as follows: forest reserves, 52; unlicensed Crown lands, 61; licensed Crown lands, 56; railways, 317 (65 per cent of the total number). Seventy-seven of these fires are reported to have caused damage. The number of fires in the parks is not given, but it is stated that no damage was done. Of the railway fires 110 occurred along Dominion chartered railways, burning over 10,361 acres; the remaining 297 fires being reported by the rangers along the Provincial and Dominion Government lines.

1916.—The reports received in 1916 recorded 1,804 fires of which neither the distribution nor the area is stated. Of these fires 146 occurred along Dominion chartered railways, burning over only 4,100 acres, which is a remarkably good record considering the extent of fires in the rest of the province, and is a testimony to the benefits of efficient prevention measures. Only 125 of the total number of fires reported in the province are said to have been attended by any damage to timber. In addition to the above, there were several small fires in Algonquin park, which were put under control quickly. Three fires occurred in Quetico park; one, a small fire, another burning 80 acres, and the third spreading over a considerable area.

In the Clay Belt region fires occurred in four main districts. Apparently these all resulted from the merging of numerous settlers' fires which had broken beyond control. The areas of these fires are not reported even approximately. The largest fire was in the vicinity of Matheson and is stated to have burned through seven townships and parts of several others. It burned about thirty miles along the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario railway and eastward for several miles to the Abitibi river, in all an area of several hundred thousand acres would appear to have been burned.

Another fire of less magnitude burned around the town of Cochrane. The fire that destroyed the business section of the town started near its outskirts, but numerous other fires started at different points along the National Transcontinental railway and in townships north of it.