

protection than that which had been satisfactory before. The province was divided into eleven administrative districts, and a man placed in charge of each district, who was responsible for all Government forest work, the collection of revenue, the supervision of scaling, the inspection of logging operations, and the organization and maintenance of a fire protection force. The expenditure on fire protection for the coming year will be, probably, \$360,000, and the number of employees, dependent upon the character of the season, will vary from 300 to possibly five and six hundred if it is an extremely bad season. We try to make our money go as far as possible by appointing as few permanent men as we can. The permanent men are the backbone of the organization. Under them are the five months' men, who are each given charge of territory which on the average will be well over a million acres in extent. Then each of these men, who is responsible to the District Forester, is given authority to engage local men. Of course, the five months' men are local men, too. They have to be residents of the community who have the respect of the people and who have shown sufficient experience in the timber to be able to handle fire protection—a duty requiring the highest quality of foreman. Each of these five months' men, who is really foreman for his district, is given authority to engage men for shorter periods. It may be two or three months, or it may be only two or three weeks. Furthermore, each man is given authority to employ fire fighters when a fire occurs.

The two or three main points which we have found of interest and of use in fire protection are, first, the permit system. No fires are allowed in British Columbia without a permit having been secured from an employee of the Forest Branch, and this employee must first visit the locality where it is desired to start a fire for clearing or construction purposes, and assure himself that there is sufficient force on the spot to handle a fire should one break out, and that the conditions are such that a dangerous fire is not likely to occur. This has probably saved us much more timber than any other feature of our legislation. It has secured for the policy of fire protection, I think, the support of most of the people in the country; they have all seen that it is necessary to be careful with fire. This is one of the features that struck me as most valuable, with my experience in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where settlers start fires in the timber at any season of the year without thought of danger to valuable timber.

There were about twelve thousand permit fires last summer, and of this number only seventeen escaped control, which is a pretty good record for a country like British Columbia, where the land is all wooded, the population sparse, and fire is a necessary preliminary to all agricultural operations. Settlers have not complained against the permit system. They support it because it assures them both protection against fires set carelessly by others, and the assistance of the fire warden in handling their own fires.

Another important feature was the system of handling railway construction. There have been about 2,000 miles of railway under construction through the forest in British Columbia in the last two years. Thousands of labourers have been travelling up and down the grade, cooking over camp fires, setting fires in cedar stubs and adding to the fire hazard. These men have absolutely no idea of the danger of fire. They carelessly leave fire in the slash always found along the railroad grade. Three years ago a fire which extended for 80 miles along the Grand Trunk Pacific started from this cause.

Great care is necessary in handling the fire situation along railroads under construction in such a manner as to avoid adding to the burdens of construction, and at the same time in such a manner as to control all possible fires. The method adopted in British Columbia has been to require a careful clearing up of the right of way and the burning of all the slash under permit and supervision at a safe season. During the whole of construction all lines are under the supervision of permanent members of the fire protection staff the whole year round. Where timber is cut for construction purposes the contractors are required to pile or burn the slash on the cut-over