

one time the whole surrounding country appeared to be suffering, but how far the fires reached back it was impossible to say as no one seemed to know where they ended. In response to the request for an estimate of the destruction the agent states that this is fairly a poser, but there is no doubt that a great amount of destruction was done by the past summer's fires. To say nothing of the loss to miners and prospectors of their buildings, tools, &c., the destruction of timber and young forest was most deplorable.

A significant fact in view of the rapid railway development in Canada at the present time, is that given in the following paragraph:—

“The most serious of the three (fires) occurred near Ehatt, and was supposed to be caused *by the fires getting away from the men clearing the right of way on the new railway line of the Great Northern Railway Co. from Grand Forks to Phoenix.* This fire burned for a considerable time among fallen timber, and though efforts were immediately made to check it, it was only after a rainfall that any successful stop was put to it.”

The agent reporting from West Kootenay does not attempt to give any description of the fires or the loss, merely stating that it must have been considerable. He does not think that a fire warden service could be made large enough to be effective and winds up with the suggestion that “perhaps the most effective prevention would be a heavy and opportune rain.” Whether this is a suggestion to the Government of British Columbia to go into the rain-making business is not clear, but it certainly sounds like the counsel of despair.

This is a general statement of the reports received and while the details are necessarily not definite, they show clearly that the loss to the Province has been large and point to the necessity of some more decisive action than has yet been taken.