



Ontario for that matter, we need better roads and more aid to settlers—and wiser fire prevention systems.

There should be an inquest on this fire.

Any candid fire ranger will confess promptly his helplessness against fire in the forest. There is no finer body of young men than those who have from time to time served



What was left of the Imperial Bank at Cochrane.

A scene taken while the fire was attacking Timmins. In the background the flames are to be observed. In the foreground the last of the inhabitants of the town are packing their chattels. In the immediate foreground is a baby carriage which has been used to carry goods out of the houses into the waiting wagon. The ladder leaning against the house to the left was used by the occupants to carry water to the roof. For many hours they fought off the flying embers, but at length had to give up.

In this railway cut a number of refugees from Nushka, a French-Canadian settlement, met their death. Driven at last from their homes they ran in panic down the track and crouched in the cutting which is to be seen just where the railway tracks turn out of sight to the left. They hoped that the flames would jump the cut, leaving them untouched. Rescuers found them here later, burned in the attitude of prayer.

This man is W. H. Fairburn, of 999 Logan Avenue, Toronto. He was working with a gang for the Canadian Stewart Company, erecting a bridge over the Abitibi River, not far from Matheson. Fairburn himself is not loquacious and would give the newspapermen very little satisfaction as to his part in the catastrophe, but people from Matheson say it was he who came running in from the Abitibi—a considerable distance, and under a blazing sky—to warn the townsfolk to fly for their lives. From his vantagepoint on the Abitibi he had seen the flames coming.



the Ontario Government in this capacity. Their lonely vigil, with canoe, tent, grub and water-bucket, is in itself an epic. Many a fire that has never been mentioned in the newspapers escaped this unenviable distinction simply because one of these dogged lads labored for a day and a night to put out the blaze started from some neglected camp fire left by a tourist. But, though fire rangers were giants in pluck and endurance, they cannot do much against a serious fire under conditions as they exist at present.

"Me!" exclaimed an exhausted ranger seen by a newspaper writer in the bush this summer; "what can I do?"

"I got a tent five miles over yonder," he said, pointing across the lake. "I got a chum, and we live there together. We take turns cooking and washing and mending. We got two canoes and some pails—and a beat of 10 miles wide by 80 miles long."

"How do you cover it?"

"Canoe and afoot."

"How often?"

"Often as we can. Maybe once in ten days."

"How many miles a day can a man do in a canoe?"

"Depends."

"Not enough to cover all your territory in one day?"

"Should think not!"

"But how can you tell if a fire has started?"

"Can't tell at all, unless it's pretty big. Then we see the smoke. When we see that—it's too late, as a rule."

"Best way for a man in this job is to have a good nose. Keep smellin' the wind. That's what tells."

"Then, again, y' can keep your eye on the general track of the tourists and sort of nose around after them and remind 'em to put out their fires. If y' could get around often enough, or if we had any real authority over the careless settler, we could do some good there."

"You can nearly always get t' know the lazy settler from the other kind, and it's the lazy man that causes the fires. A good settler doesn't set fire to a timber-slash till he's mighty certain of the wind. Even then he's extra careful, and



like as not he sends us word. But with this strip of territory m'chum and I cover—it's too much. We just get around often enough to hear of the new babies. Settlers don't pay any attention to us.

"Other day, m'chum climbed a tree to look things over."

"All serene," he shouts, and then changes his mind.

"No, it ain't," he calls down, "there's a little smoke down by Dead Man's Island!"

"I climbed the tree. Thought at first it was a cloud, but soon saw it wasn't. Well, we paddled for it. When we got there, Dead Man's Island was a goner."