

Keeping out the Fire.

Fire is the most serious menace to the forest, and protection from it must be the basis of any system of forest management. On first consideration it might seem preposterous that the vast extent of the Canadian forests could be effectively protected from fire, but when one reflects that the fires that result from natural causes are comparatively few in number compared with those that originate through the action of man, the matter does not seem to be an utter impossibility. And that it is not so experience has already shown. The Dominion and Provincial Governments have established special fire-ranging services which have been effective in proportion to the thoroughness with which they have been worked out. A great deal yet remains to be done in extending these systems and in perfecting their operations; still the principle of a fire-ranging staff is justified beyond the possibility of hostile criticism. It is a form of fire insurance, which is both cheap and effective, and has now established itself as an unassailable feature of Canadian forest policy.

In the Province of Ontario, which spends the largest amount upon this service, the expenditure for 1903 was \$31,237, and the revenue received from woods and forests was \$2,307,356. Although this revenue was swollen beyond the usual proportion by bonuses for timber limits, the buyers undoubtedly found that it paid them to offer larger bonuses on account of the comparative immunity from fire, due to the establishment of a fire preventive service.