

Fire Protection in Dominion Parks

BY

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FIRE protection in the forests in Dominion parks is undoubtedly one of the most serious problems confronting the parks organization. I intend, however, to deal with only two aspects of our fire work and not with our general fire work, which is much the same everywhere.

During the past year our special activities in fire protective work have related chiefly to the development of a portable gasoline fire engine for putting out fires when they occur; and to a campaign of education calculated to prevent the starting of fires.

Portable Fire
Engine for
Forest Fires

In regard to the engine I think it needs no argument to convince anyone that the surest way of putting fire out is to apply water. In forest fire fighting it is well-known, especially in a mountainous country, very little can be accomplished with buckets. It is a physical impossibility for men to carry water under fire conditions for any length of time, and it is equally true that usually when a man has climbed up a rough hill-side with a bucket of water there is very little water left in the pail when he reaches the fire. It is the experience of nearly all who have been concerned in forest protection that most of the big fires are what are called secondary fires.

As a rule fires are discovered early enough to permit of their being isolated in a small area. The usual practice is to then have a body of men to watch the fire to prevent it spreading from the burning logs, tumps and humus of the segregated area.

Very often a big wind storm comes up, carries the fire forward, despite the efforts of the watchmen, and a conflagration is the result. It was figured that if water could be got on such a confined area quickly and in quantity we could remove one of the most serious forest menaces. It was this that led us to figure on a portable gasoline fire engine.

It is obvious that light weight and high power are essential. A great deal of time and thought was given the subject. We were fortunate in securing the co-operation in this work of Mr. H. C. Johnston,