

# YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BIG PER CENT OF FOREST FIRES

Address Before the Forestry Conservation Association's Meeting at Portland This Fact Is Brought Out in Statistics Quoted by Forester F. A. Silcox of Missoula.

Portland, Dec. 3.—The meeting of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association at Portland last Monday night Tuesday proved to be one of the very best sessions ever held in the west to consider forestry subjects. It brought together four great forest interests—the private holder, the milling company, the state forester or forestry commission and the national forest service, as each interest was well represented. The important subject of the meeting was in connection with forest fires and how to fight them, and much was gained in this discussion towards a plan of co-operation of all interests concerned in the proper use of the great forests of the west.

## Silcox Speaks

Among the notable addresses of the session was one on "Railroad Fires," by District Forester F. A. Silcox of field district No. 1 of the national forest service, with headquarters in Missoula, Mont. Mr. Silcox said, in part:

"After half a century of disastrous forest fires in the United States, destroying thousands of acres of valuable timber, the railroads seemingly are just beginning to realize that they are largely responsible for a great deal of this loss. The reason for their tardy realization is so obvious that it hardly needs discussion. Only one inevitable result could be expected to occur when a shower of sparks was either blown through the stack of a locomotive or trailed out from the firebox into highly-inflammable material, and the inevitable has a way of happening. Practically little or none of the brush and debris occasioned by the original construction of the railroads was removed until a few years ago and it has been a notorious fact that even the best spark arresters in use have not been a dependable method of protection. Reports of forest fires and their causes, which are available in this country, clearly show these statements to be indisputable. The reports of the different states, through their state foresters or forestry commissions, show that the railroads are responsible for from 15 to 30 per cent of the fires, the causes of which are definitely known. Reports of the forest service show them to be responsible for 49 per cent of the fires started in national forests."

"The speaker then quoted numerous extracts from the reports of state foresters and state forestry boards, all of which went to show the railroads responsible for setting from 17 to 30 per cent of all the fires, the origin of which could be determined. He also quoted statistics from Canada showing the same condition prevailing, but in contrast presented figures from all of the principal European countries showing the railroads credited with but a very small per cent of the fires. Continuing, the speaker said:

"The question now naturally arises, 'Why, if the European countries have already effectively solved this problem, can we not do the same thing?' As a matter of fact it is not such a difficult matter to outline methods of control to solve the situation in the timbered regions of this country. The difficulty is in having the railroads go after the problem aggressively enough to see that the methods are practically applied. Such methods of control can be classified under three general headings: (1) safeguarding of engines, (2) cleaning up the rights-of-way, (3) patrol of the rights-of-way.

## Safeguarding Engines

"In order to keep up the necessary steam pressure for the operation of a locomotive, a forced draft is necessary. In the early type of engines this forced draft was direct from the firebox through the stack of the engine. This caused not only a loss of fuel but the blowing out of large live cinders, which caused many fires. The modern engines have what is known as a return draft, which forces the cinders back into the firepit before they are finally ejected from the smokestack. This mechanical arrangement has decidedly reduced the live sparks, but it has by no means eliminated them. Many attempts have been made to devise an efficient spark arrester which will not interfere with the forced draft, yet will act as an obstruction to such an extent that live cinders blown from the stack will be practically eliminated. Although the designs have been numerous and ingenious, an entirely satisfactory spark arrester has yet to be made. The prospects are that an ideal spark arrester will never be an accomplished fact. It would be possible to eliminate live cinders entirely from being ejected, provided it was not necessary at the same time to keep up a forced draft to maintain steam pressure. By the very nature of the thing, a spark arrester must be an obstruction, and, unfortunately, it appears that the more efficient the spark arrester the greater the obstruction. Anything that retards a full draft on an engine does not find favor with either the fireman or engineer. One cannot blame the fireman for knocking out the arrester when the engine is groaning under a long, hard haul and the steam pressure is running low because of a retarded draft. It is common knowledge that this has not infrequently been done. Spark arresters have been of two general designs, either some form of mesh wire in the stack or some form of rim-like obstruction along the interior walls of the smokestack. The principle of the plain wire mesh is simple. The idea was to provide a mesh which would catch the largest sparks, because of their inability to get through. It was thought that the small sparks blown through would die before reaching the ground. The theory of the second-class of spark arresters is that under the forced draft

the sparks are thrown around violently in the stack and that the centrifugal action, holding the larger cinders against the interior walls of the stack, they were caught by placing an inverted cup-like obstruction on the interior walls without materially interfering with the draft. Interference with the draft, however, has always been raised as an objection to both kinds. In my opinion, the spark arrester now in use should only be counted upon as a factor in minimizing, but not eliminating, the danger.

"The opening of fireboxes and dumping of live coals on the right-of-way is an act of negligence and is inexcusable. There seems to be no valid reason why the ashes cannot be shaken gradually from the firebox and the slag and other material which collects in the bottom of the firebox dumped in a place where there can be no fire danger, or where the fire can be watched. The brands from the firebox are a real source of danger. In one specific case in Minnesota, a fire warden reported that he had frequently seen an engine of a fast shore line train trail fire like a comet, yet not emit a spark from the stack. It seems that it ought to be possible to eliminate this particular source of danger from fire with ordinary care in the use of the present mechanical devices.

"After all, the whole problem is largely a matter of fuel. As long as locomotives continue to use coal, particularly on the heavy, mountain grades, they are going to continue to set fires. This fact has been recognized by some of the railroads, which have, in consequence, adopted oil as fuel in the forested mountain regions. In my opinion, it is only by the use of oil or electricity as a motive power that an engine can be considered safe. This seems to be the general opinion of those who have been in a position to study the question.

## Cleaning Rights-of-Way

"Without the adoption of electricity or oil as a motive power through the forested areas, the most effective substitute method of control known is a proper cleaning up of the right-of-way of inflammable material. The character and width of clearing necessary varies in different parts of the country, but this method of control has been universally recognized. One reason for the rare occurrence of fires in the European countries is the excellent manner in which the rights-of-way of the railroads have been cleaned up. In France trenches 20 to 50 meters, or 65 to 165 feet, wide, kept free from all grass and brush, are made along railroad lines. In the Black forest, near the city of Friburgstadt, in the western part of Wurttemberg, Germany, the exterior boundary of the clearing on the railroad right-of-way was planted with maple and locust trees to guard against setting fire by sparks from locomotives. This clearing on the right-of-way, which is 75 to 200 feet wide, is cleared twice a year of combustible material, such as sticks, leaves, etc. This work is excellently done and as a result the rights-of-way are practically rendered safe. In this country similar efforts are being made.

"Methods of clearing the rights-of-way in Montana and Idaho have varied from cleaning out strips 50 to 250 feet wide and from simply removing the brush material in the form of punk logs, heavy and rotten ties to the removal of all debris and the burning over of the strip at the beginning of

Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound railway, which was cleared under stipulations requiring this as a condition in securing their right-of-way through the national forest, has cleared a strip of 100 feet wide on each side of the track with special extensions in many places of 200 feet on the uphill side. On one forest, during the best season, a fire guard at the outer edge of this strip was of approximately 10 feet and the area between the rails and the guard burned over. The Northern Pacific and the Great Northern railroads have in many cases cleared strips approximately 50 to 100 feet wide on each side of the track of all inflammable material by cutting, piling and burning such material as occurred on the strip which is immediately within the fire guard. Even the old stumps were grubbed out in doing this work. Although this work has not been completed in northern Idaho and Montana, the results of the past year are mighty encouraging. Already it is shown conclusively that, in lieu of the use of oil or electricity, a properly cleared right-of-way is the most effective safeguard in the control of railroad fires. This was strikingly shown on the Minnesota national forest last season, where, out of 64 fires, 56 were started by the railroads, all of them on the Great Northern, which at the present time has no fire line through that forest. No fires occurred on the Soo line, although passing through practically the same kind of timber, because it has a clean fire line of 50 feet on each side of the track cleared of all inflammable debris and then plowed and burned over. This is one of the best specific examples, showing just what can be expected with a proper cleaning up of the rights-of-way. Where the timber is so heavy, for example, on the coast, and the cost of clearing up the right-of-way is almost prohibitive, there seems to be no alternative for the railroads but to use oil or electricity as a motive power.

## Patrol Rights-of-Way

"Until we have reached the point where the railroads have either put their rights-of-way in first-class shape or have adopted the use of oil or electricity, constant patrol of the rights-of-way throughout the fire season is absolutely essential. This is best accomplished by special men on spacers assigned to this work and by holding each man employed in the railroad service responsible for reporting fires when discovered. This applies to not only the track gangs, but to the regular employes on the freight and passenger trains. For a long time it has been felt that the railroads should assume this responsibility. In some instances this is recognized to the extent of requiring it by law. To make the patrol effective, caches of tools are located along the right-of-way and maps furnished to each patrolman, showing him the various telephone connections and telephone communications by means of which he can call for additional assistance. He should be authorized to call on any of the gangs of temporary laborers along railroads to fight fire when necessary, it being understood that payment for the use of this force will be made by the owner, provided the railroad is not responsible for the fire. The effectiveness of systematic patrol is recognized wherever the railroad hazard is present. The fourth annual report of the forestry commissioner of Minnesota for the year 1908 has the following to say along this line:

"Some stringent new provisions have been enacted affecting railroad companies. In a dry season a railroad company must employ at least one patrolman for each mile of its road through lands liable to be overrun by fire; engineers, conductors or trainmen discovering fire adjacent to the track must report the same promptly at the first telegraph or telephone station reached. When the fire occurs near the line of its road, the company must have it extinguished. 'Near the line

in which a fire could usually be set by sparks from passing locomotives. Locomotive engineers and master mechanics are held responsible for the good condition of the spark arresters, but without relieving the company from its responsibility. The minimum penalty for violation of any of these provisions is \$50.

"In dry seasons every such company shall employ at least one patrolman for each mile of its road through lands liable to be overrun by fire to discover and extinguish fires occurring near the line of the road, by which is meant a distance within which a fire could usually be set by sparks from a passing locomotive."

## Co-operative Agreements

"Owing to the seemingly flagrant disregard of the railroads to enforce even ordinary precautions for protecting forest lands along their rights-of-way from fire, the general tendency was to secure coercive legislation which would force them to take definite action. Legislation of this kind is necessary, and it should be clear and specific, with sufficient penalties attached to make it seem reasonable to the railroads to carry out the conditions imposed. It hardly seems reasonable, however, that the railroad as should wait until it becomes necessary to take coercive action. The advisability, from purely a business standpoint, of adopting the most progressive measures of fire protection should at once appeal to the railroads themselves. Considering the costly damage suits against the railroads and the expensive litigation which they entail, it is a reflection, in my opinion, on the business management of our railroads that they have not recognized, before the matter was forcibly thrust upon them by the various fire organizations throughout the country, their responsibility and taken action to secure better fire protection. The neglect along this line has been notorious. From indications, however, it seems that they are now ready to co-operate in a way which really means something. The co-operative agreements which the forest services has with the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads embodies, I believe, the essentials of an effective and satisfactory working basis of co-operation.

"To clean up its right-of-way satisfactorily to a properly-authorized forest officer.

"To use effective spark arresters.

"To furnish such employes as are available to fight fires.

"To permit use of spacers for patrol.

"To properly instruct their men to notify forest officers in case of fire.

"To permit riding on freight trains when necessary arises.

"To fight without cost any fires originating within 200 feet of their right-of-way.

"The forest service agrees:

"To maintain an efficient patrol along the right-of-way.

"To construct telephone lines connecting forest officers' headquarters.

"To supervise the clearing of the right-of-way.

"To furnish its regular employes to fight fire and to pay for the extra assistance of fighting fire for fires originating outside the 200-foot strip, unless it can be shown that the railroads are responsible for the fire.

## Results

"Under the co-operative agreement very satisfactory results have been accomplished. No co-operative agreement, unless followed up aggressively, will mean very much. It has been necessary to keep constantly before the attention of the railroad the terms of the agreement and the necessity for taking action. The local forest officers have, through personal touch with the division superintendents, been able to go over the rights-of-way in order to determine just what the railroad could do. This has been followed up by frequent conferences and correspondence, with the result that this year we have something real to show as the result of our co-operation in northern Idaho and western Montana. It is much more satisfactory to work the problem out on a co-operative, rather than a coercive basis, and I feel that there is a distinct desire on the part of the railroads to take this point of view. Everything points to a more progressive attitude on the part of the railroads, and I believe that they are coming to see the value of proper protective measures, not only from the standpoint of self-interest but from that of general public policy. They desire no special commendation for this attitude. It only exhibits a reasonable degree of business foresight in not waiting until more stringent and coercive action had to be taken, for there is one thing certain—that the indiscriminate setting of fires, of which the railroads have been guilty in the past, has reached the point where it will no longer be tolerated."

## PATTERSON IS LOCKED UP.

Seattle, Dec. 9.—Malcolm R. Patterson, who shot and wounded seriously R. T. Seal at Port Orchard yesterday, was brought to the county jail here tonight and locked up in default of \$20,000 bail, the offense charged against him being assault in the first degree. Patterson's father, ex-Governor Malcolm R. Patterson of Tennessee, has engaged counsel for him. Seal is in a hospital at Bremerton.

## GIANTS WIN.

Havana, Dec. 9.—New York Nationals 7, Havana 4.



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## First Presbyterian.

Corner of Pine and Stevens streets; Rev. J. N. MacLean, minister; residence, 320 Stevens street—Public worship at 10:45 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.; special music at both services; a men's double quartet will sing at the evening service; Sunday school meets at 12:15 noon; the Y. P. S. C. E. will meet at 6:30 p. m. Strangers and visitors will find a cordial welcome at any of these services. The weekly prayer meeting will be held in the chapel on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

## Swedish Congregational.

Swedish Congregational, 520 West Spruce street; C. R. A. Blomberg pastor; residence on River street; Bell phone, 8561 red—Sunday school at 10 a. m.; morning worship at 11 a. m.; Young People's meeting at 6:30 p. m.; evening services at 7:30; special services at 8 p. m.; Rev. A. Lidman of Minneapolis, Minn., will preach both morning and evening. There will also be preaching every evening during the week, when Rev. A. Lidman will preach. Our Scandinavian people are most cordially invited to come out and hear Rev. Mr. Lidman, as he is a very good speaker.

## Calvary Christian.

Harold H. Griffiths, pastor; office in rear of church; Bell phone 1094; Independent phone, 574—Sunday services. Preaching in the morning at 11 o'clock and in the evening at 7:30 o'clock, subject of morning discourse, "The Poetry of God's Providence;" subject of evening discourse, "The Apology of the Sins;" special services by Mrs. G. A. McMichael; Bible school at 12:15 o'clock; Christian Endeavor meeting at 6:15 p. m. topic, "The Source of Our Strength;" Miss Lulu Matthews, leader; subject of Wednesday evening service, "The Horadrome Movement in France." The C. W. B. M. auxiliary will meet Thursday afternoon at the home of Mrs. W. E. Dinsmore.

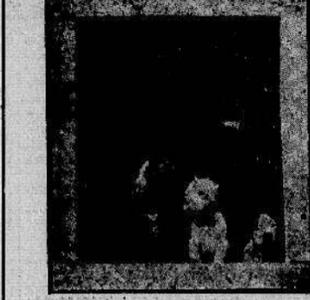
## First Methodist Episcopal.

Corner of Main and Washington streets; J. W. Bennett, pastor; residence, 316 East Main street; Bell phones—home 30, study 98; Independent, 799. Morning services: Class meeting at 10:15; preaching at 10:45 a. m. topic, "Gratitude and Courage;" Sunday school at 12:15 p. m.; J. H. Inch, superintendent; Epworth league at 6:30 p. m.; evening service at 7:30 o'clock, subject, "The Happy People;" official board meeting Monday evening at 8 o'clock; prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. A cordial invitation is extended to all.

## Evangelical Lutheran.

Corner of Hazel and South Sixth streets; G. Gustafson, pastor; residence, 234 Edith street; Bell phone, 1078; Independent phone, 1364—Morn-

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## Church of the Holy Spirit.

H. S. Gately, rector; Sunday, December 10—Morning service and sermon at 10:45 a. m.; Sunday school at 12:15 p. m.; the Bible study class will meet on Wednesday evening, December 13, at 8 o'clock.

## Immanuel Baptist.

Pine and Woody streets; Rev. C. B. Allen, Jr., D. D., pastor—Public worship and service at 11 a. m.; Bible school at 12:15 p. m.; R. Y. P. U. at 6:30 p. m.; evening worship and service, 7:30 o'clock; sermons both morning and evening by the pastor; prayer and praise service Wednesday at 8 p. m.

## Swedish Lutheran.

Swedish Lutheran church, 424 Alder street; Rev. P. O. Hanson, pastor—Sunday school, 10 a. m.; devotional services, 11 a. m.; evening services, 7:30. All our Scandinavian friends are invited to attend these services.

## First Congregational.

Corner South Fifth and Chestnut streets; Elmer E. Birtnier, minister—Morning worship, 10:45, subject of sermon, "Reality in Religion;" Sunday school at 12:10 p. m., R. T. Crulshank, superintendent. A full attendance is desired to prepare Christmas music. Subject for discussion in men's class, "What Has Christianity to Offer the Wage Earner?" Commissioner Cathbert Peat will meet with the men and

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take part in the discussion, Christian Endeavor at 6:30, "The Sources of a Workers' Strength," leader, Miss Jennie Rowe. Evening services at 7:30. The sermon will be the sixth in the series on "The Man Jesus," the subject being, "The Friendliness of Jesus." There will be a choir at both morning and evening service. The meeting for prayer and Bible study will be held Wednesday at 7:45 p. m. The lesson will be Revelations, chapters three and four. All strangers and persons without a church home will be welcomed at any or all of these services.

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