

## FOREST PROTECTION.

The protection of forests from fire is the first essential in the development of a forest policy for a State. Past experience has proven that the forests of Wisconsin have suffered great damage from fire at times, and, without question, history will repeat itself in the future, unless a well planned fire organization is developed, to be ready for the real dry season.

The protection of forests from fire in the north one-half of the State is brought about through an organization of town fire wardens, assistant fire wardens and the protective force of rangers and patrolmen in what is known as the forest reserve region. The town fire warden system is established by having each town chairman become ex officio fire warden and the road superintendents, assistant fire wardens. The chief duties of the fire wardens, of whom there are about 555 in the territory, in which there is a fire hazard, are the fighting of fires, instead of prevention and detection. The system of fire protection as applied to the greater part of the State lands or the so-called forest reserve area is one of *prevention, detection and control*.

The present forest fire organization outside of the protected area is inadequate since there is no definite plan of detection and prevention. The local wardens usually will wait until fires are upon them before taking any protective measures. From a conservation standpoint, forest fire prevention is the most important feature. Therefore, adequate appropriation should be made through State taxation to make it possible to provide for the appointment of so-called district fire wardens, whose duties would be to cooperate with the local fire wardens, timber owners, and others, throughout the entire wooded area of the State.

The protected area, within which the greater portion of the State reserves is located, includes 1,250,000 acres in Forest, Vilas, Oneida, Iron and Price counties. In protective work, over this entire area the State is aided by the Federal Government under the Weeks Law, and by individuals and companies owning large tracts of lands within its borders. This area is divided into 17 districts, varying in size from 66,000 to 138,000 acres. A ranger or patrolman is in charge of each district. Protective work is facilitated by a telephone system, a network of roads and trails, proper means of transportation and lookout towers, the latter making it possible to observe over one-half of this area.

The cost of protecting this one and one-fourth million acres of land was one and one-third cents per acre in 1915. It is proposed to gradually extend the lines of protection as funds and outside cooperation become available.

## FOREST FIRE ORGANIZATIONS.

As an example of the development of organized effort of timberland owners in the prevention of fire, the following data was compiled from reports of several associations. Organized effort on the part of timber land owners in this state would do much toward solving the fire problem. An organization covering three or four counties lying contiguous would be the most effective since an opportunity would present itself of close cooperation with the Federal, State and town wardens and patrolmen.