National Forest Officers Announce They Will Prosecute to End Those Who Maliciously Burn Trees.

Through the activity of national forest officers, a number of cases in which fires have been set carelessly or maliclously and caused considerable damage to standing timber have come to light. District Forester Chapman stated today that it had always been the policy of the forest service to point out the dan-ger of fires and the loss to the community, rather than endeavor to prosecute except in wilful or malicious cases. It appears from this summer's experience, however, said Mr. Chap-man, that there are some citizens who will not cease to be criminally careless until severely punished. We have therefore decided to prosecute rigorously any cases of violation of the law, to the end that standing timber, both of the government and of private parties, may not continue to be menaced by those who can not be appealed to in any other

Seven cases in which damaging fires have been caused either wilfully or by caralessness have so far been reported to the district headquarters.

On August 15, 1910, Supervisor Harris of the Wallowa national forest reserve discovered a fire on the south fork of the Wallowa river, which had spread from a camp about seven miles south of Lostine. When found the fire had spread over but a few yards of ground, and if it had not been extinguished at once it would have destroyed a great deal of timber, both live and dead, which is used by the settlers and residents around and in the town of Lostine.

A slight attempt had been made evidently by those who had built the campfire to extinguish it after it had begun to spread, but this was not successful. The supervisor extinguished the fire and at once investigated its origin. He ascertained from settlers along the road and residents of Lostine that D. G. Ferguson and Dr. M. Stiles, both of Walla Walla, Wash., had been camping at this place and had left a short time before. These two men were soon arrested at Wallows and taken before Justice of the Peace Wigglesworth. At the hearing they plead guilty to the charge brought against them and were fined the mini-mum amount fixed by law.

Fires Slashings.

On May 5, 1910, Henry Langlois set fire to slashing on his land, and next morning left his home, thinking that the fire was extinguished! The fire, however, escaped and burned over approximately 45 acres of national forest tim-ber doing considerable damage. Mr. Langlois agreed to pay the assessed damage done, and this settlement was

On July 30, 1916, Fred W. Cleator, deputy supervisor of the Colville nacounty attorney against Andrew Erickson for starting a fire upon the public domain and leaving it unattended. On August 15 a hearing was had before Jus-tice of the Peace W. H. Taylor at Cur-lew, Wash., at which Mr. Erickson plead guilty and was fined \$25 and costs.

On July 30, 1910, Mr. Cleator filed a complaint with the county attorney against Dan Bush of Ferry, Wash., for starting a fire upon the public domain and leaving it unattended, whereby the fire escaped and damaged considerable property. On August 13, a hearing was had before Justice of the Peace J. F. Clay at Curiew, Wash. Mr. Bush pleaded guilty to the charge and was fined \$25 and costs, amounting to \$6.40. Case to Grand Jury.

8. B. Fisher, a squatter claimant on Toroda creek, Ferry county, Washington, was arraigned before United States commissioner at Republic, Wash., Aug-

ust 2, and as a result was bound over for action by the federal grand jury. The latter, on September 21, returned a true bill against Mr. Fisher, the offense charged being that the trespasser in violation of the federal statutes wilfully set fire to his slashing, and failed to take proper precautions against the spreading of the fire. As a result the fire got beyond his control and destroyed a small amount of timber on the adjoining squatter claim, and on the national forest. Mr. Fisher's trial is set for October 10 at Spokane, Wash.

On September 10, 1910, J. H. Gregg was taken before United States commissioner at Eugene, Or., and on the testi-mony submitted was bound over for the action of the grand jury and in default of \$2500 bail was committed until the jury meets in October. Mr. Gregg is alleged to have set out a fire on the Cascade national forest in violation of the federal statutes and leaving the fire unattended. This fire destroyed a large amount of timber on the national forest and involved besides a considerable expense to the government in extinguishing the fire.

Evidence Available. On September 29 and 30 the case of C. P. Molt was brought before the grand jury at Spokane. Mr. Moit, whose squatter claim is within the Chelan national forest, desired to burn a slashing during the very dry season. Permit was denied him and he was informed by those who assisted him in burning that it would be exceedingly dangerous to start a fire during such a Gry time. Notwithstanding this, on July 12 he set fire to his slashings and within half an hour the fire was beyond control. It destroyed national forest timber valued at \$15,000. Although this was a case in which both the regulations of the forest service and the state and federal ws were clearly violated the grand jury refused to return a true bill.
This is the first case where ample was available in which a jury has falled to recognize the necessity for

The need for a larger force during the ummer to patrol national forest land has been strikingly evident this summer. There is no question but that fires can be practically stopped if the area each man has to patrol is of such size that he can get well over it in one day. The cost of such a force would not exceed a fair charge for insurance on the value of the property protected. on the value of the property protected. At present the forest service is expending apparently 2 cents per acre to pro-test and administer the national forests, and the value of timber alone on many thousand acres will exceed \$100. used and still keep well within the bounds of the cheapest kind of insur-more on other property.

punishing such gross carelessness

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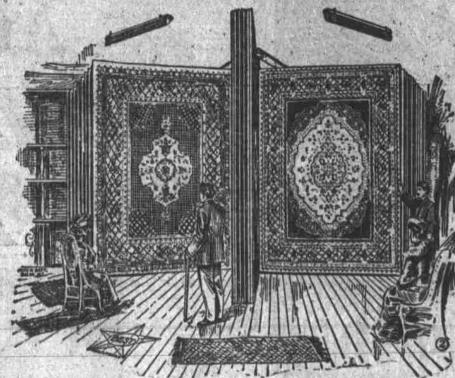


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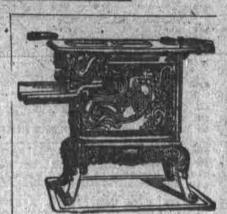
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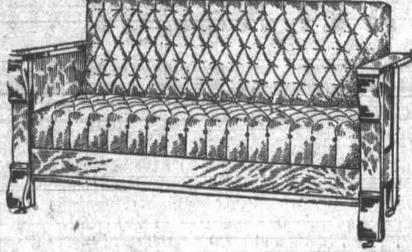


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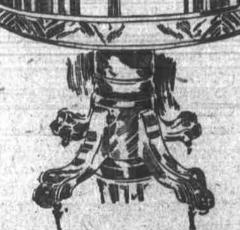


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