



Don't Raise Hell!

► HELL, to rangers in the U. S. Forest Service and the National Park Service is not a remote theological concept; it is a near and terrible physical reality. They don't merely believe in it; they know it. Many of them have been there; any of them may be called upon in regular line of duty to go there at any time, especially

in late summer. For a forest fire, with its horrors of agonizing death to all forms of wildlife and its aftermath of charred ruin, surpasses even the grimmest of Dante's nightmares.

Every summer vacationer, camping, hiking or fishing in the national forests and national parks, carries in his pocket a bunch of keys to this hell. Unless he is a criminal or a lunatic he will not use them deliberately; he is much more likely to loose the furies of flame through sheer inadvertence, through plain forgetfulness of where he is and with what perils he is surrounded.

Most of the millions of people who annually make recreational use of our national forests and parks are city folk. Typically, when an urbanite lights a cigarette or a pipe outdoors, he simply tosses the match away, never bothering to see whether it is out or not and taking no note of where it falls. Similarly, when his cigarette is finished he tosses the butt aside, still smoldering. That may not be so bad in town: concrete sidewalks and asphalt pavements are not combustible. But that kind of thoughtlessness may mean the start of a million acres of devastation and thousands of animal lives lost—not to mention the possibility of human tragedies as well.

Danger of man-caused fires becomes especially great during August and early September, which are dry weeks in most of our forested areas, and at the same time are the period of heaviest tourist traffic. It therefore behooves everyone making use of such recreation areas to give careful thought to his stewardship, never relaxing his personal fire-watch for a moment.

Rules are simple enough. Don't throw away a match until you can pinch the blackened end between your fingers and feel no heat at all. Don't merely pinch out your cigarette butt or grind it under foot; slit it up one side and rub the crumbs between your hands, again until everything is quite cold. And never leave a campfire until you have drowned the last ember in gallons of water.

Science News Letter, August 13, 1949

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ENGINEERING

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● RADIO

Saturday, August 20, 3:15 p. m., EDST

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Chester S. Keefer, of Boston, chairman of the committee of the National Academy of Sciences on the Investigation of Cortisone, will discuss "Progress in Arthritic Therapy."

● MAINTENANT ●

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GENESE DES PLANETES—Alexandre Dauvillier—350 p., illus., \$5.00. Presenting the theory of the author, a professor in the College de France, with regard to the origin of the planets. His is a two-part theory: that the planets exploded out of the sun in a great celestial catastrophe; the other part, a chemical aspect, assumes the photosynthesis of glucides and then of protides at the expense of water from carbon dioxide and ammonia gas, the material thus formed being progressively organized into the form of our universe.

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