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Dear Miss Morgan

September 10--
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Jeschke's Grand Hotel, Bad Nauheim.

Bad Nauheim, den

Aug. 17, 1930.

Dear Miss Morgan:

I have your letter of August 4 about the fire. The more I hear about the fire the worse it seems, and of course the worst of all is the burning of the trees.

An interesting fact is that Mr. Rankin's fire line stopped the fire in that particular direction, and this seems to indicate that a simple system of fire lines should be laid out and kept in order for a possible recurrence of fires.

I should say that undoubtedly the ground immediately around the Hill Top should be ploughed early every summer, or perhaps better, this ground should be planted in evergreen bushes.

I do not know whether this would do as well or not. It would certainly be better looking.

I am inclined to think that it would be difficult and indeed practically impossible to plant a fire if with wild cherry were planted thickly around the Hill Top or if any other drought resisting bush were planted thickly enough to prevent the grass from growing beneath them.

2. The road itself, as you say, should be a fire line, and can easily be made to be one with very little trouble by trimming down the grass on each side of the road.

It has been my intention to bring the road back across the country below House A and various loops of

this kind could be made wide enough and clean enough to become fire lines.

Moreover, the new road that is being planned to shorten the route down the hill to the north could possibly be extended by a loop to the west, which would be useful in a way and would also act as a fire line to the north.

Perhaps nothing more than these protections would be necessary, but the fire wardens seem to think that some other simple fire lines would be desirable, and I guess we would better have them made and maintained.

3. The incinerator may be technically perfect, but I cannot see that anything that sets the place on fire is perfect. Consequently, I would like to repeat that the incinerator must either be improved or must be taken out.

I have no scientific knowledge of the machine, but I should think that a succession of screens might keep sparks in, even if one screen does not. However, let us try to make it impossible for any sparks to get out of the incinerator; and if this cannot be done, let us remove the darned thing and dump our refuse in some excavation.

If we cannot, then let us remove the incinerator to the beach or somewhere where it cannot possibly do any harm, and transport our refuse by truck to it.

4. Some consideration must be given to the possibility of sparks from other chimneys-- the kitchen chimney and the big chimneys in the main halls. Possibly there is not much danger from the kitchen chimney as long as we burn petroleum. But sparks frequently come from the big chimneys in the main halls.

I am not discouraged, however, and I think that if a simple system of roads and fire lines and a fireless belt were made around the Hill, and a moderate amount of screene placed around the chimneys we would be safe from a recurrence of this kind of a catastrophe.

The singular part of it is that we did not realize that it was likely to happen at any time and take these precautions beforehand. Lightning seldom strikes twice in the same place, and if it does it generally encounters a lightning rod.

5. I hope something can be done with the burned trees, but I do not imagine that a great deal can be done. I think our chief hope is to replant as quickly as possible. Let us try to get practically all the replanting done this fall. We can lay off of other work and concentrate on replanting, because that is something which ought to be done immediately, as the trees take a long time to grow.

I do not know whether you can get big enough trees at the nurseries, but probably we can do a good deal of our selecting on the ranch. By big enough trees I do not mean big trees, because the time taken in planting trees that are too large to handle easily would be greater than the advantage gained.

We want to select no bigger trees than we can handle with comparative ease and promptness, because, as I say, I would like to see the whole job completed this winter.

Sincerely,

P-S We have reservations on the Majestic sailing September 10-- merely for your information. J-W

W. A. Stearns
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