



Forest Branch NEWS LETTER

An entirely unofficial budget of news, nonsense, 'n'opinion compiled from time to time for the profit, amusement, and annoyance of the staff.

No. 32

Victoria, B.C., December 23, 1939.

08581

Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free;
And drink to your hearts' desiring.

With last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalties play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is tending.

....Robert Herrick.....

There is something about Christmas that moves the literary minded to write long editorials, well sprinkled with superlatives, on the subjects of peace, goodwill and brotherly love. It seems to make even the hardboiled maudlin with sentiment. So, just to be different, we will attempt to make our editorial of sterner stuff.

The Christmas Spirit might be something we could define as a sort of madness that causes us to spend money we haven't got, buying for people we don't like, gifts they don't want. On the other hand, it might be an urge that causes every possessor of an unemployed truck to rush into the country and cut a load of Christmas trees for the city market (without, of course, informing the Forest Branch); or it might be the instinct that moves the good ladies to spend days in a sweltering kitchen preparing a dinner they can never eat, because it's too "fattening". But again, it could be the feeling of acute loneliness that makes a person away from home toss a change of clothes into a club bag and wire the folks, "Arriving Number 7 (stop) Meet." But more probably it is a combination of all these things, a moving desire to have more at Christmas time than in ordinary seasons, a determination to salve that hollow ache of never having quite enough--to play the spendthrift, to give our best, if only for a day. (There we go! Sentimental! You can't help it!) So the best wish we can make you for Christmas is: May you have the wherewithal to fill the bowl to overflowing, to heap the plate beyond the ambition of even the greatest trencherman and to lavish wanted gifts on those dear to you.

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SMITHITICUS AT THE RIDGE

The Chieftain's brow was sad, the Chieftain's speech was low,
Darkly looked he at the smoke and darkly at the glow.
That fire will be upon us before the wind goes down,
And once it hits the logging slash, then what may save the town.

Then up spake bold Smithiticus, the Ranger of the Dis:
To every man upon this earth things happen just like this.
And how can man die better, than facing fiery breeze,
And burn hisself to ashes to save Joyce Kilmer's trees?

Be not alarmed my Chieftain, just leave this thing to us,
We'll handle the gigantic blaze with very little fuss.
In yon straight path a dozen fires may well be stopped by three;
Now who will stand on either hand and stop this fire with me?

Then up spake bold Lars Larson, Assistant Range was he,
Ay will stand on thy right hand and fight the fire with thee.
And up piped young Jonerius, a first-year stooge was he,
Lo, I'll abide on thy port side and stop this smudge for thee.

Smithiticus, said the Chieftain, as thou sayest, so let it be.
And so against that mighty blaze forth went the dauntless three.
For Rangers in their duty, stay not for love nor hire,
Nor do they care whose pants they tear when fighting forest fire.

Smithi carried mighty pump hugged tight to hairy chest,
With hose and smuss bold Larson strode step by step abreast.
And marching on the other side young Jonesi loudly swore
That armed with Jeep stick, 242, he'd boldly keep the score.

How can pencil now describe the battle then began.
As flames a thousand feet in height bore down upon the van.
On threatened town the embers fell in streams of fiery shot.
And beer went up four bits a glass, and even then 'twas hot.

A mile high and two miles wide the foe rushed down in mass.
A gale behind, and slash before, it galloped through the pass.
But so far and no farther, recoil, and then to flee.
For in its path on sizzling feet there stood the Dauntless Three.

There Smithi swung the mighty pump, Larson swung the hose.
And back they beat the swirling flames as fast as they arose.
On their knees, then up again; back, back, the foe they bore.
And young Jonerius weighed the Stick and jotted down the score.

But once they faltered in the fight when Victory night was hailed.
For bold Larson neared distress--his smuss supply had failed.
But Jonesi stepped forth to the breach with many a mighty lick.
Bore back the foe, revived the Swede with chews of hazard stick.

No quarter asked and none they gave. Young Jonesi led the cheer.
Smithi called on gods for aid; Larsoni called for beer.
With eyes ablaze and pants afire still further danger braved.
Until by night the fight was won; the blasted town was saved.

And so they tell the story--how Rangers saved the town.
The Dauntless Three are heroes, their names live to reknown.
Smithiticus got a statue, while he who led the cheer,
Received a two-bit raise in pay--Larsoni got his beer!



John Rogers, draughtsman at Nelson, has again supplied us with excellent drawings for the Forest Service calendar heads. The general theme revolves around the mythical Paul Bunyan and his prodigious deeds, which are well illustrated. A new one to us is the safety-razor-blade felling device. We aren't quite sure if this proves that Paul invented the safety razor or took his idea from some prior invention. The evidence in the pictures, no doubt historically sound, seems to favour the former hypothesis and only at some later date did Paul apply the invention to his personal problem. At any rate, we are indebted to John for his deep research into the life of our hero and his excellent portrayal.

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November 29, 1939, was a memorable day for Harry Forse. At 7.50 P.M. he became a father. The experienced fathers of the Forest Branch assured Harry that the mortality rate on paternity was very low, which gave him the additional worry of trying to figure out whether they meant what they said or were just trying to comfort him. However, apparently their reassurance was sincere as Harry seems to be doing nicely. Mrs. Forse and the new baby girl expect to be home in the very near future.

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Three men went to a hotel and were charged \$10.00 each per night. The clerk later sent the bellboy after them with \$5.00 to refund to each equally. The boy paid them \$1.00 each and put \$2.00 in his pocket. The men then had paid \$27.00 altogether and the boy had \$2.00. Where was the \$1.00 left from the original \$30.00 they paid?

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OH! FUDGE--IT'S WINTER

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(Original title censored)

Some months ago a nitwit named Jon,
Made nasty remarks about Spring.
He hinted with scorn that summer's "no bon"
And Winter, of seasons, is King.

O Foolish One, now that winter's could blast
Plays swing that's gone "corn" on your spine,
Do you not yearn for the zephyrs that's past
And ladies who frisked in the brine?

When sad day is ended your mind in a blank,
The car then refuses to go.
When she does, she gets skittish, slides over a bank
Into six feet of nice juicy snow.

For now 'tis the season that mis'ry knows well
And nature adds more to man's woes,
When fingers get lumpy, your blood starts to jell
And you lose all acquaintance with toes.

Or if its the Coast, when you get to the beach
You search the wild waves till you're blind.
For a storm has come up and your boat's out of reach
For your engineer's gone with the wind.

When you wake in the morn there's ice on the deck;
You moan, for you very soon learn,
That you enter the woods to get snow down your neck
And your "bone dries" will freeze to your stern.

Yes, Winter has came; with its shivers and chills,
The general expression is glum;
For we feed us on Aspirin, Bromides and pills,
'Cos the War shoved the price up on Rum.

You fumble with pencil, your compass gets stuck,
You swipe at the ear that has froze;
With cold icy mittens you wearily pluck
At your lachrymatorical nose.

This last devastation, this very last straw,
The brain trembles now on the verge.
Oh Winter! Oh Hitler! Oh Hell in the raw!
I must hasten and finish this dirge.

You slip and you sprawl, and you dive into drifts;
You barge into snow-laden pine;
You come up to breathe and an alderbrush lifts
And slaps you back into the rime.

We say that in winter we've never died yet;
Nor lived--if the truth we must sing;
But Nil Desperandum, we'll soon be all set
To crack down once again on the Spring!

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From Prince Rupert: Youst in case it's news to you--Carl V. Smith of this office, at present with His Majesty's Navy at Esquimalt, was married on Saturday, November 18th last, to Miss Marguerite Johnson of Prince Rupert. The wedding took place at Esquimalt.

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It Might Happen to You

...And it came to pass that a certain man, he being a logging person, did cause his henchman to trespass.

And the land whereon they cut down the trees of the Forest had been exposed at tax sale.

And when the spar-tree was rigged, what time the setting was half felled, the Forest Ranger appeared.

And he being a faithful servant of the Lord of the Forest, and prompt withal, did give the logger a 242 forthwith, ordering cessation.

And the weather being non-hazardous at that time, the Ranger did a close job of running the line, measuring the felled trees, and mapping the area.

And when in due course the Account was issued the Ranger made many unsuccessful trips to collect.

And because it was an exposed area, the charges might only lie against the product.

So stands the matter to this day, and the Ranger hath been heard to say, "Woe is me, another week and he would have had logs in the water; yea, two weeks and he might have had a boom. Verily do I score high marks for efficiency, and zero for imagination.

..... C.F. Holmes - Victoria.

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Cause of Fire No. 160, Vancouver Forest District, is given as "smoking family of coons out of hollow cedar tree."

It is suggested that this is worthy of being added to the long list of causes of fire outbreaks, and a distinct warning to be chary of upsetting what the naturalist would call "the balance of nature."

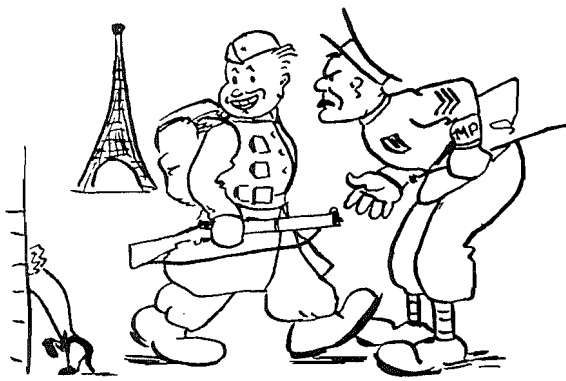
Some artists would picture the darkies beatin' it for "hell and high water."

..... H.H. Smith - Accounts.

C'EST LA GUERRE!

The F.D.P. camps are being wound up and the start of 1940 will see them out of the picture, at least for the present.

The buildings and tent frames in these camps have been made spotlessly clean by two of the "old timers" in F.D.P., viz: Bob Boyd and Joe St. Pierre. Bob was foreman of the late Project #20, Dean Park, and Joe--general all-round man at various projects--being designer of rustic work, much of his handiwork can be seen at Little Qualicum Falls; Medicine Bowls Park; Courtenay; Stamps Falls, Alberni, Englishman's River Falls, Parksville, to mention a few: so the camps are silent. However, if necessary they can be opened again at very short notice.



Several former members of the camp staffs are on active service with the Canadian forces. Curly Parsons, foreman at Peach Arch Park, left Victoria with the Princess Pats; Alex Dick and "Slim" Radford, former truckdrivers, are with the Seaforth Highlanders. Jimmy Gray and Larry Crowcroft, timekeeper and truckdriver respectively, enlisted in the Royal Canadian Engineers. Lee Beers, A.A. Mansfield and Kai Benätsen with the Artillery (incidentally Mansfield is Sgt. Cook and still feeding the boys first-class meals) and Jimmy McIntosh (another good cook) is with the 16th Canadian Scottish; while Don McMillan and Elmer Bryson of the headquarters staff are with the Army Ordnance and Army Pay Corps respectively. These are some of the boys whom we know definitely to be in the army--there are probably a lot more we haven't heard about. In any event, we wish them all the very best of luck and a speedy return to civilian life "apres la guerre fini".

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Wireless--present and future

The wireless telephone as a means of field communication has passed the experimental stage and is now an integral part of our forest protection machinery. Its phenomenal growth in four years from one experimental set at Prince George and four sets on the coast, to the present-day figure of 105 stations is good evidence of its success.

Taking advantage of the mistakes made and lessons learned in 1938, the operators were able to improve the efficiency of the sets a great deal in 1939. Interference between stations--one of the main troubles the radio expert had to overcome--was largely eliminated by arranging careful schedules and concise messages. While there is still plenty of room for improvement, the radio telephone is certainly on a much better working basis than it was a year ago.

The Department of National Defence has recalled all the licences for launch sets, but it is expected that this ban will be lifted within a short time. So far no other restrictions have been imposed.

The future trend in field radio seems to be towards still more portable sets. If sufficiently light and compact sets could be developed it would certainly facilitate communication with headquarters and allow closer supervision of crews in isolated areas. Car radios, too, offer a wide field for development.

Radio has its funny side, like most things. One incident arose out of the necessity of pressing our field sets into use for occasional urgent personal messages. This message was from the wife of a Ranger to her husband. It read, "Don't forget to change the baby."

The use of profane language is prohibited, and also the transmitting of music over our sets. One of the Assistant Rangers was in the habit of placing his personal receiving set before the mike of his field set, in order that the boys outside could hear and enjoy news broadcasts and music. Someone informed the Department of Transport and the result was a letter of protest, which brought his radio activities in that direction to an abrupt end. It is illegal to retransmit any programme over our field sets.

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Air Survey

During the 1939 season our Air Survey activities definitely advanced from the apprentice stage, characterizing the three preceding years, to that of a seasoned and competent Air Survey unit capable of going out and "bringing home the bacon," as far as Air Survey photography is concerned.

Last year unusually sunny weather was given credit for some 7,000 square miles photographed--this year our "bag" of 6,600 square miles was taken in spite of adverse "photographic" weather.

Operations in the Nelson District touched the 49th parallel, and in the North included oblique shots across the 60th parallel into the portals of the coveted Yukon.

The year witnessed several new features worthy of mention--perhaps, first, the successful charter of aircraft of type and power more adapted to photography than machines used heretofore, viz., the well-known Fairchild 71C, with supercharged 450 h.p. Wasp motor. This permitted routine photography from 16,000 ft. above sea level (instead of 13,000-ft. ceiling as in previous years), which meant an average of 62% more country included in each photograph--an obvious economy in flying, film paper and subsequent plotting.

The high altitude necessitated use of oxygen--which proved a boon in reducing anoxemia (get that boys! Symptoms: premature fatigue, brain fag, dark brown taste, violent head and tummy ache.) On one occasion, when a bottle contained ammonia instead of oxygen the effects were stimulating, to say the least--someone had blundered.

Another outstanding feature this year was the use of radio, direct and indirect. At Nelson, thanks to the District Office and the Lookoutman, an "air-tight" weather service was organized which saved many a fruitless ascent, on days when cumulus was accumulated everywhere but over town--and enabled us to make useful flights on other days when Nelson was the only spot in the region under clouds.

Then in the North we enjoyed the untiring efforts of Mr. Carter, "VX6A" to contact us on the Finlay River--in spite of vicissitudes of different kilocycles, rundown batteries, Aurora Borealis, and spasmodic attacks of "mistysketitis" (at our end).

On September 27th the season was terminated by a dramatic flight to Vancouver from Prince George, through squalls in the Interior, to bump abruptly into zero-zero visibility in the Cascades and Howe Sound occasioned by a setting sun, fast-ebbing daylight, and impenetrable smoke screen from slash fires. However, it ended happily with dinner at the Hotel Vancouver where, as luck would have it, we were able to "bellyache" about the smoke to the Chief himself G.S.A.

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FOREST PLANTING

by Samuel T. Dana, '07*

What do we plant when we plant a tree?
A thousand blessings for you and me--
We plant the lumber to build us a house,
We plant a cover to harbor the grouse;
We plant the fuel to kindle our fire,
When strikes the prices of coal send higher;
We plant for fences the posts and rails,
We plant a shelter to temper the gales.

We plant the pencils to scribble our notes,
We plant the ballots to cast our votes;
We plant the paper in which to read,
The news that o'er wooden poles we speed.
We plant the piles to erect our docks,
We plant the rayon for shirts and socks;
We plant the extract to tan our shoes,
We plant 'most anything you choose!

We plant the barrel, the box, the crate,
In which to ship all sorts of freight;
We plant the cars to carry the grain
The farmers raise on the western plain;
We plant the sleepers under the track
O'er which we send our products back;
We plant a blanket to hold the soil,
We plant good wages for those who toil.

We plant a forest sponge to check
The menace of the wild flood's wreck;
We plant refreshment, rest and health,
We add our share to the nation's wealth.
We plant a stately cathedral where
To worship God in the open air;
Beauty, contentment, prosperity,
All these we plant, when we plant a tree.

* - With apologies to the authors of other
verses with the same first line.

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