

SPECIAL!
CHRISTMAS
OVERSEAS—
EDITION



FOREST BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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

No. 47. VICTORIA, B. C., December 25, 1942. 08581.

Dear Folks, (Canada-wide and Overseas.)

The other day we got the grand idea of a Christmas card to accompany our next shipment of smokes. The card, quite a masterpiece, accordingly was designed, written, and on its way to the printer when we realized that the greater number of our shipments go on order direct from the manufacturers and that we had no way of getting them enclosed. So another brain-wave went into the discard but not without a certain guilty feeling of having let you down, even if what you didn't know wouldn't hurt you.

A letter from Pop Ritchie suggested an alternative.

Bill Tait exhibited the letter when we were down to his basement sanctum arranging for the Christmas cards—four pages of almost indecipherable script from which we gather that Pop, somewhere in Scotland, has been transferred to another company of his corps, is logging spruce telephone poles (checked and verified—spruce poles) and (repeated at least once to a page) would rather have the Newsletter regularly than anything else we can send. If this had been addressed to the Editor, we might have interpreted it as a bit of applesauce, but we can't think that Pop would have any reason for pulling Bill's leg on this particular subject and so take it at its face value. Incidentally, it lends weight to similar expressions of opinion from many another.

In part payment for the missing Christmas card, therefore, here is an extra Christmas Newsletter expressly for the men and girls in the various Active Services, in which I take this opportunity to ease my conscience of another burden—literally dozens of notes and letters, none of which have been personally answered. This doesn't mean they aren't read—they go the rounds of the whole office; or that they are not appreciated—they are stock-in-trade in all casual conversations. It merely means that with 100 of you away and the girls beginning to join the trek, and new jobs, there isn't much time left for the things we'd normally like to be doing. Most of us work these days pretty nearly as hard and as long hours as the average Assistant Ranger, and, funny enough, come pretty close to liking it. As for the girls, it should be real news that we are now represented in all three Services, Kay Robinson in the Navy, Gwyn MacAfee in the Air Force and Lily Edwards (Nelson) in the Army.

The other recent departures of which we have been advised are Jack Templeman from Chase; Dave Johnson and Mickey Pogue, Economics, Victoria, to R.C.A.F.; P. M. Monckton, Draughting Office, Victoria, R.C.A.F.; W. A. Conder, Lookout, Vancouver, to Army; W. M. Patterson, Dispatcher, Vancouver, to Army; Ralph Johnston, Invermere, to R.C.A.F.

While we're on the subject, A. J. Leighton, S. M. Lockard and H. Stevenson report themselves promoted to Sergeant; D. A. Sims, A. C. 2 to L. A. C.; and L. N. Woods to R. S. M.

Syd Benwell has arrived safely Overseas. Geoff. Playfair is at home at Qualicum on sick leave.

Ike Martin (Pouce Coupe), we are glad to report, has so far recovered as to be back on the job and has moved to Prince Rupert where he is sure, and we hope, the salubrious climate will put Ike back to where he was before he trailed off to the Peace River country. Doug. Ross (Grand Forks) has gone to Pouce Coupe to take over there.

Doug Ross' reciprocal, Ross Douglas, incidentally, is at Gordon Head training for his commission.

Harry Forse has moved down to Kamloops, and no sooner moved than he picked up a very severe case of strep throat, from which, it is nice to be able to report, he is now on the way to full recovery.

Larry McMullan has gone to Prince George where he stepped straight into a hot mess of fires, the only excitement of the summer.

Percy Young has moved in to Nelson as Fire Inspector, but it seems to be a waste of good manpower. They don't seem to be up to the old mark in the southern interior any more. No big fires this year at all.

For that matter, the whole fire season was pretty much a washout, except in Prince George where they managed to get a few good sizable blazes on their hands. Altogether we had only a little more than 1,400 fires reported, and throughout the coast, central and southern interior, none got big enough to write about. We didn't even have enough fires to give Jim MacDonald's pump a fair trial, and now with a lot of fire-fighting money left over, we can't even spend it! Maybe we can keep some of it for the sort of stations we've all dreamed about after you fellows come back.

And speaking of bang-up layouts, we'd like to hand a bouquet to the late Ranger George McParlon, his successor, Doug. Ross, and their able assistants, Bill Haggart, Harold Holmberg and Emerson Reid, at Grand Forks, for their outstanding improvement work.

This combination have provided themselves, without any expenditure whatever on labour, with a garage and warehouse, 30' x 60', which would without doubt answer the dream of any Ranger in the Province. It is complete from dog house and showers to a separate tool grinding room. The doors look as if they had come from the factory and roll the way any rolling door should. There are gadgets galore, and the whole bears the mark of professional workmanship.

In the same warehouse, we saw the ultimate fire finder table. The story, we understand, is that Mr. Gregg, a year ago, finding some fault with a lookout table in that district, promised to send them one more in keeping with the purpose for which it was intended. The table, we understand, turned up in Nelson but was sent to another district, and the Grand Forks boys were so annoyed they determined to construct something so completely super-duper that never again would any Victoria officer endeavour to improve on it. From a few lengths of old water pipe, some angle iron and a spare piece of plywood, they have made a table which, we think, will be the standard of excellence for the Province hereafter.

The same gentlemen have recently constructed a water tramway on Morrissey Mountain Lookout. With a tin pail, some telephone wire, a barn door hanger and a little labour, the Lookoutman is now able to supply himself with water from the spring 725 feet down the mountainside by merely pulling the pail up the tramway. The cost of this improvement, we are assured, totalled \$8.00.

We are sorry that we cannot add to this list every noteworthy improvement from Province-wide. We happened to see these but we did not see the others.

Getting back to our knitting again and picking up the dropped stitches, Rusty Campbell has moved in to Prince George; and Bill Adamson has come back to take on the Quesnel District.

Looks, too, as if a lot more will have to be moving in to Prince George the way that district is developing.

Sam Marling is in Kamloops pro tem, subbing for Harry Forse until he is fully recovered.

From the letter file, we gather that:

L. N. Woods is now R.S.M., Provost Corps, Debert. ".....I have not had a day's leave since July and have kept Forestry hours (I mean Assistant Ranger hours) from early till midnight."

Lily Edwards (Pte.-W110013, C.W.A.C.) is in training at Officers' Training Centre, Gordon Head.

Sgt. H. Stevenson (K-11177, 37th Section, 58th Spec. A.A. Bty, R.C.A.) is at Uclulet. "Right back in my own front yard as it were."

G. H. Fewtrell (R-128616, L.A.C., No. 3 Wireless School, Winnipeg). "The little experience I had with the SPF sets has certainly helped. I got 145 out of 150 on my transmitter exam."

Sgt. J. A. Leighton (R-146475, No. 1 "Y" Depot, Halifax) Air Gunner and spoiling to go.

Eric Bennett (R.C.A.F. Overseas). Somewhere in Wales.

L.A.C. Robinson, J. H. (R-146096, R.C.A.F. Station, Gander, Newfoundland, C.A.P.O. 4.) "Although we are isolated we manage to have a good time now that we are blessed with the fairer sex. We have a dance every Friday night.....The thing that interests me most is their method of logging. Their equipment consists of a buck saw and a pole axe. Then the pulpwood is put in the rivers and driven to the mills. There are lots of disputes over who it belongs to."

H. G. M. Colbeck.

H. G. M. Colbeck (K-65426, 110 C.A. (B) T.C., M.P.O. 1101, Vernon.) "I am allocated to the R. C. Armoured Corps and will be leaving to join my unit in about a week."

A. G. McNeil (Pte.-K65804, Currie Barracks, Calgary). "The weather is getting nippy--We have 6" of snow--It can't compare with the Coast even if we do get a little moisture now and then."

Bill Hall (Capt., R. E., Middle East Forces) reports a rumour of Canadian beer in Cairo but hadn't yet been able to investigate.

Gerry Andrews (Major, R.C.E., Survey Directorate, H.Q. First Canadian Army Overseas) writes a long newsy letter. Of all his recent experiences, Gerry was most enthusiastic about a find at a local friend's place-- "a real Canadian cross-cut saw which threw out most beautiful ribbons several inches long."

Here in Victoria, or in Vancouver, or Kamloops, you would see little or no physical change; but you might find some difficulty getting a berth on the train, or a room at a hotel, reflecting, I suppose, an all-out industrial effort. There are no unemployed and busy mills and factories mean more travel. The chatter of riveters drifts in through office windows, reminiscent of machine gun tattoo. The offices have the somewhat deserted air of midsummer when everyone is out on field jobs. Indicative of the times, a fire report from Kamloops gives the cause as a carless hunter. Normally we would have attributed this to a "carless" stenographer, but this time it's just possible they mean what they said.

A Forest Officer tells of finding a man--he suspected him of being an enemy alien--hiding on a hillside, near a clump of second growth fir, waiting for blue grouse to come out ahead of a fire. The Forest Officer was reasonably sure this man set that fire, but he couldn't prove it. There were several slash fires in the vicinity and this particular fire might have spotted from one of them.....The Forest Officer, realizing that he was stymied, ordered the man off the area, and went his way wishing there was some way to keep doubtful individuals out of the woods.....



WELL, WELL? WHAT ABOUT IT, HALL?
IS IT CANADIAN BEER, OR ISN'T IT?



THIS CARLESS
HUNTING IS HE!!



Here is a little information that may be of interest to members of the Branch who are interested in photography. Recently it was necessary to secure some pictures of pruning for a sustained yield sequence we were putting together for the 1943 calendar. The sun, being advised previously, no doubt, that we were coming out to make pictures, went into hiding. Clouds and all, we took the pictures in deep, heavily shadowed woods, using Agfa Super-pan Press film, which is about twice as fast as ordinary film, and apertures of f.8 and f.11. We allowed shutter speeds of one and two seconds.....The results were good. Much better than anything we have been able to get in bright sunshine. The reason is simple enough, if you think it over. When the sun is bright, there is a greater spread between the amount of light in the open and in the shade. Thus, you must either under-expose the shadows, or over-expose the highlights.....When it is a little cloudy...you get a reasonably even exposure on the whole scene.....

Since the last newsletter was published, we have had fire trouble. Many of the fires resulted from slash fires that got out of control due to the prolonged dry spell in September.....Still others were traceable to hunters.....

The boys at Hill 60 say they had a dozen fires during the first two or three days the season was open. All the fires occurred in areas where there were no active logging operations and no public roads..... The only people in the area were hunters. It is reasonable to suppose that most hunters, being experienced woodsmen, would take every precaution to make sure that there is no chance of fires resulting from their visits to the woods, but for every 50, or maybe 100, careful hunters there is one who is irresponsible..... A few prosecutions might help, but before you can haul a man into court, you must be reasonably sure you can prove your case and if a hundred hunters covered a piece of ground on which a fire later developed, who are you going to grab? Which one of them is responsible? It is very difficult to secure enough evidence to assure a conviction.....Perhaps the best solution is to keep hammering away at the education angle, and at the same time encourage members of fish and game clubs, as well as other sportsmen to step hard on the careless members of the hunting and fishing fraternities whenever they happen to meet them. Most men hate to lay information against a man, but will not hesitate to read the riot act in private.

Man's adaptability is an amazing thing. Ordinarily mild men, whose knowledge of firearms a few months ago consisted of experience gained from using a cap pistol in their youth, and whose knowledge of explosives extended no further than how to set off a handful of Hallowe'en firecrackers, now discusses with absolute ease, rates of fire, muzzle velocities, shock in foot-pounds, trajectories, effective areas, fragmentation and demolition bombs, fire power, enfilades and other technical details concerned with making life as miserable as possible for certain other men, who constitute the dusky-hued gent in the international woodpile. All this results from the shot in the arm that has been administered to the Reserve Army. Interest has been revived and activity greatly increased. The Reserve Army now has the arms and is rapidly learning how to use them..... The women, too, toss a rifle around with a deftness that bespeaks of confidence gained from training.

ONE MAN'S FOLLY

He cluttered up the house with guns and rifles
And ammunition pertaining thereto,
And fishing rods, complete with reels and other trifles...
She objected.
In self-defence, there seemed nothing else for him to do
But teach her how to use them all.
Now she takes her pick and he debates
Whether he would not have been wiser
To have left them hanging on the basement wall.

Slowly, but surely Canada is getting on a war footing, and the Forest Branch, in common with all other civilian endeavour, is feeling the pinch. Equipment is supplied only if our priority rating ranks other bidders.....Ironically enough, the money is not so difficult to come by, but it is fast becoming impossible to find anything to purchase.....How different from a few years ago, when nearly every manufacturer's agent in the Province beat a path to our door.....and us without a dime to our names.....

The manpower problem is becoming increasingly serious, too, particularly as it effects trained men, such as rangers, patrolmen, cruisers, etc. The juniors on our office staffs change so fast that even George Melrose, who hires them, cannot remember all of their faces, let alone their names.....Most of them do not stay long enough to become part of the organization, and flit away to follow the first siren call of higher wages.....

Tommy Simmons is renowned for his long memory. Tom can tell you accurately more about what happened in such-and-such an instance, 20 years ago, than anyone else we know of.....and all from memory. He comes forward now with the record of a case in 1922, wherein the Branch prosecuted two Vancouver men, P. Long and W. E. Park, for failing to put out a campfire. The case was tried before Judge Alexander and fines and costs amounted to \$401.80 for each man.....This beats the Oregon case, which we quoted from the Forest Log in the last issue of the Newsletter, by some twenty years.....The clipping which Tom has attached to his note is from the Vancouver World, long since defunct.....

FORESTRY CORPS

When I enlisted back at home, six thousand miles away
(I joined up at Vancouver, getting there from Menzies Bay),
I went and joined the Forestry, for I'm a logging man.
The way I figure, every guy should do the things he can.
They sent us loggers overseas to log the Scottish Hills
And show them how we cut the stuff that goes to Fraser Mills.
It seems the Scotties didn't know a spar-tree from a "cat."
Well, boys, they sure do know it now. We laid the country flat.

Their trees are mostly little stuff, a spindly kind of shrub.
You wouldn't think their pine and fir would pay for half our grub.
We try to tell them of the firs that grow two hundred feet
But losh (that's Scotch), they laugh at our colonial deceit.
We speak of cedars ten feet thick and mountains two miles high
And rivers three miles broad and such.....they never blink an eye
But just say "Och" and "Heugh" and "Wow" and other Scottish words
That mean "Canadians can lie the same as other birds."

Well, if they seem to think our tongues are pretty slick and limber,
They know that we're not fooling when it comes to cutting timber.
We only wish their firs had grown two thousand years or so
To give us wood to bite on and put on a proper show.
My gosh, they ain't seen nothing yet. They think we're working fast...
They ought to see a logging-camp that really goes full blast,
An outfit near Alberni, say, that tears the woods apart
And turns the trees to Davis rafts before they barely start.

And yet, though they're not logging folk, I like these Scottish boys.
They're solid and they're careful and they never make a noise
But just keep working on the job, a-ready for what's next,
And though they say they're mad as hell, you know they're not that vexed.
I've watched them pretty close these days and made a pal or two
Who talk like punk comedians but think like me and you.
In fact, they think much better, for unlike the logging men
They're not so keen on cutting as on growing trees again.

(The London Charivari.)

And that seems to bring me pretty well to the end of my tether. Whatever the foregoing may lack, it certainly is the longest letter I ever wrote. It isn't the kind of letter, of course, that a Chief Forester should be writing to a widely scattered staff, but I don't know what the right kind should be; if ethics and policy and pep and efficiency and such like, we are just fresh out of stock.



CHRISTMAS TREE IN A BLACKOUT—

And it isn't very Christmasy, as it proposed to be, I'll admit; but at any rate you will know that we here at home, in comparative comfort and safety, and with prospects of a fairly normal Christmas morning and Christmas dinner, are not forgetting you on this best of all holidays. Many of us have spent more than one Christmas on Active Service ourselves.

All of us wish you the best of all possible days in the best of all possible surroundings; and all the "fixin's" to go with the smokes; and a speedy and safe return with the job well done. There's another good job waiting for you here.

C. D. ORCHARD,

Chief Forester.



THIS IS THE OPERATOR AT CJD
AFTER THE "FIRE SEASON" IS OVER.

ME.....WORRY?