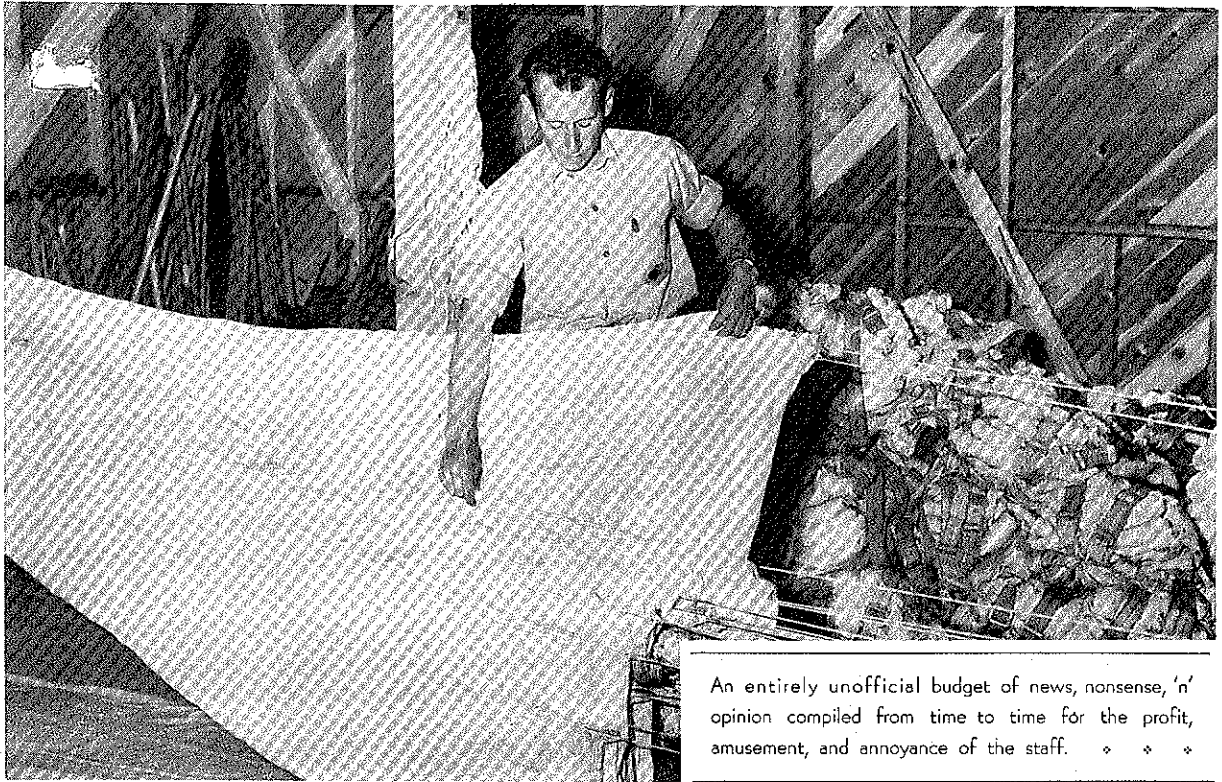


# FOREST SERVICE NEWSLETTER



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

No. 104

VICTORIA, B.C.

MARCH, 1952.

## PRE-SUPPRESSION PLANNING

By J.A. Pedley

As the years of study and experience in this business of forest fire protection roll along, it becomes increasingly certain to me that a very considerable part of protection efficiency lies in the extent of organization that has taken place prior to the actual need for suppression measures. We assume that the aim of all protection organizations is to keep fire-occurrence as low as possible and the fires that do start, as small as possible. This being so, it then follows that all activities leading to this end should receive prime consideration.

I doubt very much if any large, forested area such as that within a Forest District, or a Management Licence, can ever closely approach 100 per cent protection efficiency without a fully-developed Fire Control Plan. But this calls for years of study by experienced men appointed solely for that task. Meanwhile, some form of planning on a secondary scale and by the smaller units must be carried out. In other words, planning in the Ranger District and by the Ranger staff.

The term "Pre-Suppression Planning" differs from "Pre-organization" in that we go further in "Planning" which may be defined as the investigation and organization of all protection resources available to a specific Ranger District - Communications, Transportation and Access, Supplies, Tools and Equipment, Man-power and Key Personnel.

The ability to get out and handle the big fire and a thorough knowledge of fire behaviour and control techniques, is not necessarily the full requirement of the man charged with the protection of a forested area. Indeed, I sometimes wonder if it is even the most important. Certainly, to be a first-class protection man he should be able to do these things but, just as certainly, he should be able to organize to advantage whatever resources may be available to him towards the end that such fires, requiring such specialized skill, are kept to the barest possible minimum.

To catch the fire small and hit it hard requires prompt knowledge that the fire has occurred; quick rounding-up of an adequate suppression crew properly equipped; and, fast transportation of men, equipment, and supplies to the scene of the fire. Then, and only then does actual fire-fighting skill come into play. If successful at the initial stage, we reach the fire when it is still small and control is usually comparatively simple, even for the new man with little experience. If we are too late or improperly equipped, even the Old Timer, with all his experience, may well fail. Then we have the big fire!

Prompt discovery and fast action with adequate forces don't just happen. It is the result of earlier planning - preparedness, based upon the many small items of information picked up throughout the year.

It is not a frenzied rush of work for a few days or weeks during early Spring. Much of this information can be obtained in conjunction with other work throughout the year. On the logging inspection, when you size up an available source of man-power or when you discuss possible initial action taken by the company on adjacent fires. What size bulldozers has he? Will he hire them? And at how much? Is the main haul road a suitable access road for areas further back?

Or you are hiking along a back area trail. Is any part washed out and, if so, how many man-days will it take to fix it should you have need to transport a fire-crew that way? That lake you passed - is it suitable for aircraft landings? That store at the backwoods cross-roads - what can it supply? I could fill pages with this kind of thing but it is completely unnecessary as most of you know all about it.

Pre-Suppression Planning (continued)

'Most everybody realizes the advantages of being prepared. Yet, if you look into the true histories of many large fires you will find that from initial cause to final mop-up there is a long string of incidents and "accidents" directly due to lack of proper pre-suppression organization. In many cases that is why it is a large fire. We can labour the subject to complete boredom along this line of discussion.

Even while writing this I can hear such remarks as, "old stuff". Sure it is old stuff - old, tried, and found very worthwhile. Things don't have to be old and bottled to be good. Many will agree that all this pre-planning is a necessary part of good protection, but having agreed, fail to carry it out. I honestly believe that there is less work per man-hour put into this phase of our business than there was 20 years ago. If I am right, and I am led to believe I am, why is this so?

I think there are two main reasons or rather, one reason and one excuse. First, the reason - there are a considerable number of new men in the Service whose ideas on what constitutes a bad fire season, or what can happen during a bad season, are founded upon their experience during the past decade. Up to 1951 there seemed to be a general impression that we don't have bad seasons any more. Or that we have reached such a peak of efficiency that we can, and do, handle everything with ease. In other words, we have reached the overconfident stage just like the young and up-and-coming young fighter who is good, but lacks ring experience. He thinks he has the old pug on the ropes. Sure he is on the ropes, but when the proper time comes he uses the ropes for extra leverage and bingo! - the fight is over!



PEDLEY

A succession of favourable years is likely to fool us. Those who can look back on the Terrible Twenties and the Dirty Thirties will probably have other ideas. If we define a "peak year" as a season with 2,000 fires or better, we had five of them during the period 1920 and 1929. The average number of fires for each of the five was 2,324. 1930 to 1940 we had four such years averaging 2,384 fires each peak year. Sizes and the damage done, we won't mention. There has not been one year since 1940, including the "bad" year of 1951, where the number of fires exceeded 2,000. Last year, according to the October 6th weekly letter, showed 1,921 fires which was bad enough, but it could have been a lot worse.

Judging by past performances we can still get a succession of bad years if the Weatherman insists. Whether you believe in weather cycles or not, the possibility is there. Every Spring is the possible beginning of a possible bad peak year. We can't do a thing about weather, fire-weather in particular, but we can prepare for it. Whether we hit 2,000 fires or

more, or whether we can keep size and damage down, depends a very great deal on pre-suppression planning. The percentage of fires that reach major size will absolutely depend upon how well you are organized to catch small fires.

The new man should forget the past decade and keep in mind 1951.

Second, the excuse is given by the man who says that his slackness in pre-suppression organization is due to the overload of other work. He can never find time for pre-organization, he is always being hounded for other work. Fire Prevention is generally understood to be the primary duty of all Forest Rangers and I have never yet seen any instructions issued, or heard of any, that places any other job ahead of Protection or any phase of Protection. The man who states that he has no time, that other work is more pressing, tacitly admits to the belief that there is more important work than forest protection. Any forest officer whose primary job is forest protection and who can make the excuse as mentioned is excused from this discussion - he is not a protection man.

I have pointed out that pre-organization at least, is a job that can be carried out in conjunction with all other types of work in the field. It is merely a matter of thinking protection at all times and picking up the odd piece of information that bears on the subject. All that is required is to make a note of it and record it when getting back to the office.

Then, in the early Spring, a few days set aside to correlate all the information picked up by all the staff throughout the year; to bring it up-to-date and ready for the new fire season; to chart it, and fix the maps and overlays.

Suppose it does tie up other work for a week or so. It's either that or you start the fire season half-cocked and that's the way you remain. Get a bad season and you are not even half-cocked. Each successive fire puts you further back, and any time gained by passing up pre-suppression organization is lost, with interest.

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NELSON DISTRICTPersonalities

We are sorry to record that Syd. Simpson, our Chief Clerk, is in hospital again. At the time of reporting we are told that he is receiving continuous medical attention and is being kept very quiet indeed. We do hope that before the Spring is over, we will see Syd. around again.

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The leavening effect of the Ranger School is still working in the District. Rudy Damstrom and Charlie McGuire are back and have gone "home" to Fernie and Canal Flats respectively.

Al Larsen is holding down the Nelson Ranger Office while J.H. Raven is at Castlegar and J. Snider back at Brisco.

To keep the instructors busy, we have sent down five Assistant Rangers, G.W. Cartwright, Invermere; G.R. Webster, Golden; A.E. Moen, Creston; G.W. Graham, Rossland; and W.T. Uphill, Kettle Valley. How long can the School stand up to this sort of treatment?

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Another new face is shining among the Foresters-in-Training. He is Don Munro, of Kamloops, who was with Surveys. The reason for the radiance is his impending marriage to Miss Anne Dickinson of Trail. They have set March 8 for the date. We wish them every happiness in their new jobs.

Ted (Silent) Knight has evidently said it. He and Miss Lavina Stilwell are to be married on March 15. Miss Stilwell, at present a nurse in the local hospital, is the sister of Ranger Les Stilwell of Kettle Valley, whose wife's sister is Ranger Frank Hill's wife. As Ted is at present "going into operations", Vina will be able to "talk shop" with her new husband. We hope the summer holidays last all winter for the happy couple.

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Miss Noreen Smith, of Operation Division, left for longer, greener fields, and her position is being filled by Mrs. Anita Stasyn. Anita has been with us before and knows most of the ropes.

Bud Hamilton, who has been a clerk in the Management Office since January of 1946, has left us to become captain of a taxi-cab. He firmly established his position as "Officer in charge of Hockey Sweeps" during the last six years and will be missed.

"Scotty" Mitchell, who has substituted for almost everyone at some time or another, is keeping Bud's desk clean for a while.

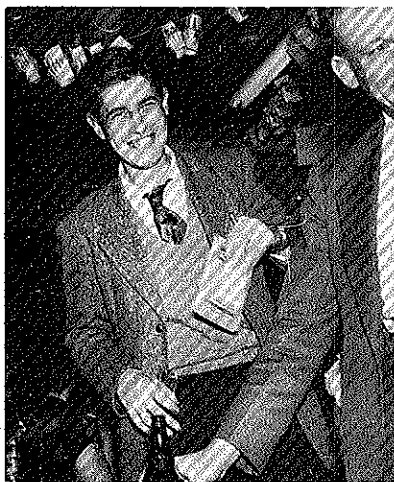
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The Christmas Party

Maybe this is a poor time of year to remember Christmas but, as it is now history, the feeling of remorse with certain unrestrained persons may have abated to the extent that we can now publish some of the more sober facts.

The girls had made an excellent job of decorating, complete with a tree, and had provided equally attractive refreshments. "Blind Date" gifts were arranged by lot and distributed by John (Bull-voice) Applewhaite. Some of these showed remarkable and scurrilous ingenuity.

The pictures show with what reserve and restraint such affairs are handled.



The picture of Ted (Silent) Knight, (who is mentioned elsewhere in this dispatch) is most revealing. He is clasping his gift copy of "Love Poems" just received from the tree. You will note the wise "Forse-sight" (or is it thirst?) shown by the District Forester as he removes the bottle from Ted's reach.

It was voted a very successful and friendly gathering and even the wives of the staff seemed to approve.

As usual, it would seem that Bill Wicken was responsible for much of the success of the show.

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NEWSLETTER

4.

Nelson District (continued)  
Strictly Business

For some years Interior operators have been criticized for failing to make complete and prompt returns. The following return shows the encouraging improvement that has taken place. This return was reasonably prompt as it was dated only one month after the expiry date of the sale.

Date

Place

B. C.

Forist Sirvic

Dir Sir

following Is The Statement of Timber sale ----  
for the time I had it

50 . Cords of wood  
7000 Feet Of saw Logs  
4332 huwed ties  
that was works

I paid up i fool for The Above

YOURS TRULY

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Art Waldie Claims That This Did Not Happen To Him

It is reported that a couple of fallers worked all morning with a power-saw in the deep snow around Creston to drop a large tamarac. The snow was deep and the job was tough. It was nearly noon when the giant toppled over, so the boys decided to have lunch. Lighting a fire on top of the stump of the large tree mentioned, they proceeded to make tea. After a good fire had roared for some time, strange sounds were heard within the stump beneath their fire. It didn't take much investigation to find that a large black bear was being roasted out of hibernation! Quickly the fire was doused and the men departed.

I suppose the moral of the story is, "Don't turn on the heat if you can't bear the consequences." (ED: Ouch!)

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MARVIN QUANCE

1905 - 1951

It was with deep regret that his many friends, in and out of the Service, heard of the death of L. Marvin Quance who passed away at Vancouver on December 18, 1951, after a long illness.

Marvin entered the Forest Service as an Assistant Ranger at Robson, in April of 1945, and alternated as Assistant and Acting Ranger until 1948 when he was put in charge of the Elko Ranger District. Having completed the Ranger School course, he received his permanent appointment in January of 1949. He was transferred to Nelson late in the same year and was Ranger-in-Charge until his death.

His quiet, helpful, nature gained him many friends and his devotion to duty, even during his final illness, earned the respect of all.

There are many who extend their sympathy to Mrs. Quance and his family.

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VANCOUVER DISTRICT

THE TALLY BOARD

Hatched

To Mr. and Mrs. F. Tannock, at Port Alberni, on January 29, 1952 - a DAUGHTER, Janet Ann.

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To Mr. and Mrs. D.W. Brewis, on February 8, 1952 - a SON. "D.W.B." is at present attending Ranger School.

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Welcome

Somewhat belatedly, to R.E. "Bob" Lawrie, formerly Assistant Ranger of that well-known summer resort of Ganges Island, to the Headquarters Cruising Party.

To W.L. "Walt" Tuttle, U.B.C., Graduate of Forestry '51, ex-Forest Surveys, now with our Management Division. Both Walt and Bob are currently enjoying a winter cruise on board the "Yellow Cedar", and are "somewhere" in Ranger Aylett's District.

To Frank Tannock, who wishes to apologize for the prolonged winter weather which he feels is a direct result of his having evicted the well-known groundhog from his four-room, self-contained den (basement suite or low haunt), in order to obtain living accommodation for his family in Vancouver. This is a tangible result of his recent appointment to Supervisor, with Headquarters at Vancouver.

To Mrs. Kay Macintyre, formerly of the Nelson Office and recently with the Hospital Insurance Board. Kay is working 'way, 'way down in the billing room and replaces Mrs. Mildred de Serres.

To James McNamee, who has been appointed a computer on the day shift. James formerly filled a similar position with the night staff.

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Good Luck!

To Ranger "Dick" Reaney, who was recently transferred from Langford to Alberni in order to take over the duties of Ranger in that District.

To Ranger "Bud" Wagner, now in charge of Ranger District 2, with Headquarters at Hope. Bud was our West Coast Ranger last Summer. Both Bud and Dick are recent graduates of the Ranger School.

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A Speedy Recovery

To Ranger L.H. Lorentson, at present convalescing at home following surgery.

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Holidays

Supervisor Morrison came back from holiday leave looking quite refreshed and ready to start work for another season. In spite of all the rumours going around, Reg wishes it to be known that it is definitely not true that he was thrown out of any bistro in either Seattle or Portland!

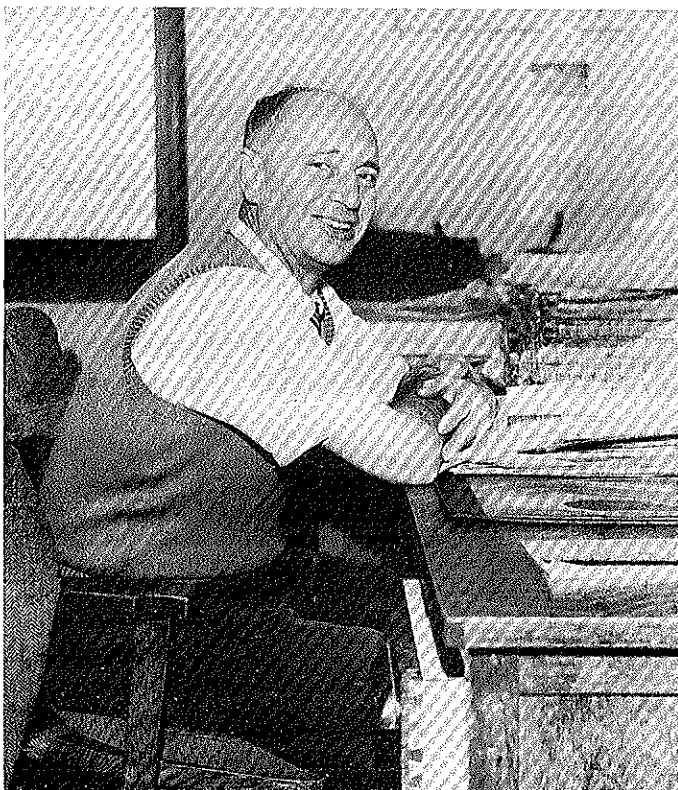
The following is a direct quote from a letter addressed to a local Municipality: "Mr. C.F. Holmes is currently on annual leave and will not be returning to duties until the 3rd proximo." True, we do have some nice girls hereabouts!

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So Long, and Best Wishes

To Frank Balsdon, on his move to B.C. Forest Products as camp accountant. Frank has been a computer with the Scaling Staff for the last 10 months and we are going to miss him.

To Bill Littleton, Assistant Ranger at Alberni for the past two years. Bill recently left to go into business (reportedly sawmilling) on his own, and we all wish him luck in his new venture.



Cec. Frampton

To Cecil Frampton who, after 15 years' service, is leaving us after his current holidays. Cecil is dropping down two floors, and will be working with the Alaska Pine and Cellulose Ltd. in April, gaining a position in their Protection Division. Briefly, Cecil's career began as an assistant Ranger at Cowichan Lake; he was transferred as Ranger to Port Neville and then to Thurston Bay, and returned after 5 years as Ranger to Cowichan Lake; he was a member of the first class at the Ranger School, and he was appointed Supervisor with Vancouver as Headquarters in 1948. Cecil, of course, was asked how it all started, and the following reminiscences explain everything.

LOOKING BACK

By Cec. Frampton

It was a most haphazard and unspectacular chain of circumstances that ended in my finding myself Assistant Ranger at Cowichan Lake, in 1937. It is interesting to look back and see how actions that seemed so unimportant or even trivial at the time resulted in very big changes in the course of events.

The labour market between the two wars was a bitter and ruthless dog-fight

Looking Back (continued)

and though we all probably benefitted from our experiences, they were costly and most of us still carry scars to remind us of the ferocity of the struggle.

Being a sawmill man at the time, I attended the lumbermen's educational classes that were held and we frequently had lectures by representatives of the Forest Branch. My job as an edgerman required a thorough knowledge of logs and lumber and as I spent most of my spare time in the woods I naturally developed an interest in the activities of the Forest Branch, as it was then known.

My first attempt to connect with it was made when I went over to Vancouver to interview the Supervisor of Scalers, at that time located in the Court House. When I told him I was interested in becoming a scaler he, of course, asked me what experience I had. I explained to him what my work required me to do and I still remember the gist of his reply - "We don't need any scalers at present, but when you have had 4 or 5 years' experience as a sawyer we could probably take you on."

Shortly after this, the great depression took over the country and along with thousands of others I found myself out of a job. The minimum wage became the maximum wage, that is if a job could be found. These times were hard on specialists but being a bit of a jack-of-all-trades, the wolf at the door was successfully kept outside, even if he did get his nose inside sometimes.

There was plenty of spare time and once more I thought of the Forest Branch and on enquiry at the local office found that there was to be an Assistant Ranger exam in 3 weeks' time. They also told me that the exam was based on general knowledge, experience, and Part II of the Forest Act. Accordingly I bought a copy of the Act, translated Part II into understandable English and proceeded to memorize all the matter in it. I am forced to admit that as a result of all this "cramming" I was better informed then on Part II of the Act than I am today. At that time I could quote chapter and verse -- I have graduated now to knowing where to look it up.

The exam was held in the Chamber of Commerce Auditorium in Victoria. I believe there were one or two vacancies to fill but at least 200 showed up to write. I had taken a business course so the payroll in the exam was no trouble. The fire pump being a 2-stroke motor was right up my alley as I was working part-time as a motorcycle mechanic; I organized a mythical three-day trip into the wilds to locate a fire or traverse one, or something, and I fought a fire on paper that probably reduced the examiner to tears and likely would have caused the Forest Protection Fund financial embarrassment. I remember at the time, however, that I thought the exam very practical and sensible.

A short time later I received a courteous letter from the Government advising me that they were pleased to tell me that I had qualified as an Assistant Ranger. Two years later I was still a part-time motorcycle mechanic but had added spray-gun painting to my repertoire.

One day a notice appeared in the paper to the effect that an Assistant Ranger exam was to be held at Ganges. I accordingly took my two-year-old letter to the local office and asked if there was a job going but was told that a new list of qualified men had to be made up and I would have to write the examination once more. As it was a nice motorcycle ride to Ganges with a ferry trip included, I decided to write again.

There was a gentleman at Ganges, playing billiards, whom I was later to learn was Bob Murray and to meet on many occasions on fire lines. The exam was much the same as the previous one and a little while after I received a further letter from the Government telling me again that I had qualified. I was now getting wise to the ways of official circles so I put the letter away and forgot about it. I had enough papers and diplomas to paper the walls, none of which could get me a job; but I was working part-time on a job for which I had no written qualifications.

More than a year later a stranger could have found me sorting tons of iron in Mc & Mc's warehouse where I now had a steady job, in fact one did, and a conversation something like this took place - "Is there a chap here named Frompton?" "Yes." "Did you write an examination for Assistant Forest Ranger?" After some hesitation "Yes." "Did you want to go to work for the Forest Branch?" This was a shock. I had a job, and you did not quit a job in 1937 in a hurry. I had more or less lost interest in getting into the Forest Branch and had a lot of friends and connections in Victoria so I decided to say "No" but at the last moment said "Yes".

A few days later Percy Sweatman at Duncan had a new Assistant Ranger with a motorbike for the new Cowichan Lake Assistant Ranger District. I later learned that Charlie Holmes was the stranger who located me in Mc & Mc's warehouse. He was Ranger at Victoria.

Cowichan Lake at that time was a boat district, "transportation by F.B. launch" so the official instructions said. They should have added "and on foot". The only Government road went through to Youbou and it was so bad that it was easier to go by boat anyway. One pot-hole in this road deserves official mention as it was sufficiently large and deep for someone to have placed a fair-sized tree in it where it stood in the middle of the road. There were a few small unofficial roads and trails that were extremely bad even by the standards at that time and a large number of abandoned railway grades. Truck logging was only in its infancy at this time and railways held sway in the big timbered areas like this. Everywhere over the logged-off lands there seemed to be unending snags and fire scars.

There was no Hillcrest mill or village at Mesachie Lake, only a water tank on the railway at "22" crossing where the Robertson River railway branched off the main line. There was no mill at Honeymoon Bay, just a booming ground at the foot of a huge twisty fir snag that was struck by lightning a couple of years later. The

Looking Back (continued)

Experimental Station could only be reached by boat but work was just being commenced with the use of relief labour on a road that was to connect it to the foot of the lake. This road was the start of a great burst of development that has since taken place in the locality. At that time the Forest Branch launch was the "Chestnut", later to be succeeded by the "Larch", which has since been replaced.

Seeing Lake Cowichan as it is today and thinking of it as it was in 1937, it is natural to go back to my first glimpse of it in 1912 when, with a group of boys who had hiked from Victoria, we were given a ride to the head of the lake and back. There was only one logging camp to be seen on the shore of the lake. A few days later we all stood on the summit of Mt. Prevost where the lookout is now located. Looking up the Cowichan valley and westward over the mountains there was one unbroken canopy of trees, trees and more trees as far as the eye could see.

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(We don't think it is quite so tough to join the Service these days. Our best regards, Cecil, and we'll hope to hear from you occasionally.)

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To Jim Marrion, who is leaving on March 8 to take a position with the Dominion Tar and Chemical Company in North Vancouver. Jim is one of the file boys, and has been with us since last July. Good luck in your new job, Jim.

... ..

Scaling News

On March 31 and April 1 the Licensed Scalers Examination is being held for the Ranger Class now at Green Timbers School and on April 1 and 2 a similar examination will be held for those of the general public who desire to take it.

Starting on February 29 coaching for the Ranger Class commences and will continue for each Thursday and Friday until the examination. A new scaling class consisting of ten student scalers is being selected and the course will commence about mid-March under the instruction of Senior Scaler, Frank Paterson.

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We are sorry to hear of the illness of our Assistant Supervisor of Scalers, Mr. A.C. Heard, and our Inspector of Licensed Scalers, Mr. J.H. Templeman. We wish them a speedy recovery.

... ..

PARKS PATTEN

OWED TO SPRING - OR - YOU CAN'T  
PARK HERE BROTHER - ITS A  
RECREATIONAL RESERVE'.

By: Seymour Park.

Ah Spring, beautiful Spring, with the cute lil' buds popping on the boughs and the first shy flowers poking their little heads out of warm, awakening earth - and the Back Room Boys opening the office windows wide and flexing their biceps while they drink in great big gulps of ozone. Spring, Ah, Spring! - you mean BAH - Spring!

Every year around this time our boy Chester Peter Lyons approaches our desk and sticks a large pistol against our unoffending head. Under such persuasion, we produce something cute and lovable about dear old Springtime; lambs gambolling in verdant fields and little, fleecy clouds racing each other across the wide, open, blue sky. Oh, Brother! However, this year our boy Lyons is the first in the field (bless his heart) and we can really talk truthfully about Spring in happy old Headquarters.

For a start it rains unendingly for the entire period and any cute, wee Spring flower stupid enough to stick its head above ground is forthwith drowned. The Back Room Boys fling wide their windows and the weak-chested office staff promptly goes down with the 'flu, the ague, and the chills. The girls always neatly contrive to catch this in relays, so that mountains of untyped reports and correspondence climb sky-high. There appears to be a sort of competition amongst the Back Room Boys as to who will produce the largest and most impressive, lace-embroidered report, and each is firmly convinced that his opus is a world-shaker. So the pile grows and so does the general air of gloom.

Yes, and Spring is Income Tax time - along with the flowers and the "lambkins". Our boy Ernie the Accountant, sits like a ghoul in his corner, handing out the Bad News. If anything is conducive to Colic, it is finding out that you haven't made enough money to pay the taxes on the money you're supposed to have made so you could pay taxes. Its what is described as a vicious circle and it means you go out and sell the radio. Then, of course, Spring means waiting for our new Vote. We will not elaborate upon this painful subject. However, we will say that our Personnel officer stopped in front of our desk the other day and gave us a long piercing look. We promptly went out and registered with the Unemployment Bureau.

And so there it is - Spring! As the dear old saying goes - "I - should - have - stood - in - bed!"

Pass the arsenic - please.

... ..

OUR MASTHEAD STORY

On this issue, the Newsletter Masthead shows F.J. White, who is an Acting Ranger at Barriere in the winter and Air Observer, Kamloops, during the summer, in the act of folding supply-drop parachutes. This could be called a typical pre-fire season organization job.

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The Welcome Mat

The olde tattered Mat is extended by Public Relations to welcome Mrs. Ione Guthrie, as assistant to Isabel Chisholm in the Forest Service Library. We hope you will be happy in the Service "Nonie".

Mrs. Guthrie replaces Joan Veness who has moved down the corridor as a stenographer in Operation.

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