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FOREST BRANCH
NEWS LETTER

No. 1
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08581

It is felt that in discontinuing the publication of "Root and Branch" some years ago we lost a valuable medium of unofficial contact throughout the Service at large which we should make some effort to replace. With this in view it is proposed to issue news letters from this office. These will go forward from time to time, at unstated intervals, as material accumulates. Operation Office will act in an editing capacity and will be responsible for publication and distribution. Suitable items for including in these letters should be forwarded to the Chief Forester, attention "Operation", file 08581. The first item of news, then, is the news that news will hereafter find its way throughout the Service if you will supply it to Operation Office.

Nearly every field trip brings to light items of value to other members of the Branch. Notable exceptions are constantly occurring in the course of our regular correspondence. Interesting personal items are not infrequent. None of this is getting beyond the two or three individuals concerned, whereas it could be made a valuable source of interest. Your active co-operation in this project is requested.

The Chief Forester's office occasionally requires statistics of other forest protection agencies. These can be secured from various sources and in some detail for most of the agencies in the United States. They are not available for all our Canadian protection organizations and much that is available is not easily found. Last fall we tried to interest an appropriate authority in the project of collecting and publishing this information. Failing in that attempt we undertook the job ourselves. In some cases we failed completely. We have nothing from Quebec, and some other organizations. Our final result is not a complete statement for Canada but we did get much that is of value. The following totals offer some interesting comparisons with our B.C. records:

"A" Fires	1,494		Total burned	1,404,498 acres
"B" Fires	1,961		Cost	
"C" Fires	<u>1,441</u>		Improvements	\$ 109,856
Total fires	4,896		Equipment	195,190
Causes			Patrol	1,824,445
Lightning	885	18%	Fires	<u>751,392</u>
Campers	952	20%	Total	\$2,880,883
Railways	265	5%	Protected -	459,622,000 acres
Smokers	811	17%	Staff	2,416
Brush	545	11%		
Construction	95	2%		
Industrial	160	3%		
Incendiary	324	7%		
Misc.	365	7%		
Unknown	<u>494</u>	<u>10%</u>		
Total	4,896	100%		

There are a few extra copies of the complete tabulation which will be supplied to district offices on request.

A few years ago Supervisor Conway (Nanaimo) approached the railways of his district with the suggestion that an opportunity be given to him to talk to their maintenance men on the subject of fires. Meetings were arranged accordingly. A few section foremen were got together at some point on the right-of-way and Conway and the local Ranger talked to them for an hour about fires, what they should do and how they should do it. An effort was made to improve personal relation between railway employees and ourselves and to break down the old attitude of suspicion. This modest start culminated, in the case of the E. & N. Railway (operated as a division of the C.P.R.), in the current railway forest protection meeting held at Nanaimo on May 11th.

This meeting took the form of a luncheon at the Malaspina Hotel. Present at this meeting were the Superintendent, Division Engineer, Assistant Engineer, all the section foremen and roadmasters, some extra-gang foremen, the District Forester, Assistant District Forester, Supervisor, all the Rangers and Assistants, an officer from Operation Office, and the Mayor of Nanaimo as a guest. Another Supervisor and one Assistant Ranger were kept away by fires. More than forty railway men were present and a dozen Forest Branch men, all of whom were guests of the railway.

It is no longer necessary to talk to these men about details. They know what to do and what is required of them as well as we do. The discussion was confined to what has been accomplished and what we together hope to do.

The E. & N. has 217 miles of line with a greater proportion through dangerous hazard and valuable forest than any other like mileage in the Province. Last year the Railway had 14 fires which burned a total of less than 2 acres and cost the Railway about \$40 and the Forest Branch about \$20. This record can't all be credited to Conway but his action has certainly had a bearing on it.

The meeting at Nanaimo this year and the fire record of the E. & N. is a very good example of what a modest brain wave can develop in the way of results when followed up with some initiative and a reasonable run of luck.

Ranger Wood (Vernon) has evolved a new method of priming his Austin pump. What he does is this,--

Connect a Siamese on a short piece of hose to the discharge of the pump. Open petcocks on the pump to let out air. Fill the pump with water by pouring into the open valve on the Siamese. Turn off petcocks as water comes through, and turn off open Siamese when fully primed. You still need a foot valve of course.

Where you have a sufficient depth of water we still think the pumping action on the intake is much simpler but the Siamese will prove a valuable aid where you are working in shallow water.

The survey of the Kettle Forest will be completed this year by H.J. Hodgins, and forest survey parties under C.W. Walker and M.W. Gormely will work in the area south of Revelstoke, including the Upper Arrow Lake; and on the Kingcome and Seymour Inlets, continuing the survey of the coast northwards. Provincial Forests have now been established from Howe Sound to Broughton Island. It is hoped to work in the Prince George District next year.

K.C. McCannel, C.D. Schultz and A. Gordon have been temporarily lent by the Forest Surveys Division to take charge of the Young Men's Forestry Training Plan.

A.E. Collins and D. Macdougall are engaged in revising the Forest Inventory of Vancouver Island. Next on the list for revision is the Prince Rupert District.

This is not the first attempt of the Branch at a news letter. We decided on this present step a week ago and a week's continuous effort has only got us this far. The job isn't so hot. Posterity never did anything for us so we decided to see what the ancestor had to offer and accordingly dug up the old file. The help it offers is all of a negative description.

The first news letter made a strong start in 1913. It came to an anaemic end in 1920. It was a weekly affair, which probably accounted to no small extent for its end. Every week someone had to write that damned letter whether there was anything to be said or not. Toward the end the first sentence came to be standardized, "It is now some weeks since our last weekly letter." Already we are congratulating ourselves on that "from time to time" in the first paragraph above. A weekly letter is getting pretty sick as soon as it misses a week. "From time to time" is a good healthy project whenever it gets out.

It told about the weather here and there. We are not interested in weather--we have too much of it of our own here on the coast. It faithfully recorded the annual increment of the Forest Branch family. If Ranger Bill gives birth to quintuplets we might give it passing notice but even quintuplets is an old story.

We are interested in Forest Branch work and we believe there is enough of real interest and value going on which does not get around the Service, to warrant a letter of this description.

Every Ranger in the Prince Rupert District has a hose-drying mast. Not just a mast but a damned good mast. Cooper has a beauty. Wilson's is a work of art. Martin put his a mile down the road so it would be easy to lose a few lengths, but then it is a good mast and he lives in an honest community. That is news. The Vancouver Forest District used to have a hose-drying mast. They hung a pulley on a high branch of a four-foot fir. But then they moved the tool cache, for which the tree was used, and they couldn't move the tree. The tree didn't belong to us anyway so perhaps it's just as well they couldn't move it. When some other district develops enough pep to get masts up for every Ranger we would like to tell about it.

And another thing--we are not going to preach. This is positively the first and last sermon which will appear in these letters. Some of the things we have to say may have a moral. If so, you will have to extract it yourself.

Number 1 goes on its way, hesitant and somewhat doubtful of its reception. If there isn't too much adverse criticism, subsequent numbers will turn up "from time to time."