

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. 31

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08581

Many a tree is found in the wood,
And every tree for its use is good;
Some for the strength of the gnarled root;
Some for the sweetness of flower or fruit;
Some for shelter against the storm,
And some to keep the hearthstone warm;
Some for the roof and some for the beam,
And some for a boat to breast the stream.
In the wealth of the wood, since the world began,
The trees have offered their gift to man.

-- Henry Van Dyke --

There may be just as many things to write about today as there were on the occasion of preparing any other News Letter but, if there are, the war has quite driven them out of our head. Not that we have anything much to say about the war. We do know a corporal and a couple of sergeants but they haven't been able to tell us much; the old grape-vine doesn't seem to be functioning in the same smooth way we knew it in 14-18; and even the prophets "Casandra-like prognosticting woe" are conspicuous by their absence. All we can tell you is that there is a war on and we don't know what it will do to the Forest Branch.

Looking back into ancient history we find that in 1914 we had a permanent staff of 167, which dwindled in a fairly straight line to 114 in 1918; while on the Honour Roll of enlistments from the Service hanging on the Chief's wall we find ranged between the alphabetical extremes of Allen, M.V., and Wright, A.W., some 129 names. In other words, we lost around 76% of the staff in enlistments and wound up in 1918 with around 68% of our total establishment. We know these figures don't balance but we never were much good at balancing anyway, and we are merely telling you what the records disclose, disclaiming any responsibility for them.

As for the immediate present, Lorne Swannell is in uniform from the Prince George District Office, C. V. Smith from Rupert, and N. H. Wharf, H. Casilio and W. Hall from Victoria. They go with the best wishes of the Service and we shall look forward to welcoming them back in due course.

In the new Economics Division they have been trying to tell themselves just what their name involves. We quote their line-up for your information:

"With a view to clarifying our ideas of the field of study covered by the term 'forest economics' the following is submitted for your information.

"Considering the scope of Forestry in a broad sense there are two main objectives, namely, economic and social, and in most instances it is difficult to arrive at a definite separation of the individual ramifications. For this reason Forest Economics has come to be regarded as covering the entire range of economic and social problems involved in the production and utilization of forest resources, including all of the various products derived from forest land and all of the services rendered by the forests. However, it is most important that studies in forest economics be properly co-ordinated with those in other branches of forestry such as forest management, silviculture, and utilization of forest products, for the simple reason that it is not possible to make a clear-cut separation of these various lines of scientific investigation. For example, detailed information concerning the rate of growth and yields of stands treated by various methods, and of the biological effects of given methods of treatment, is fundamental in estimating the relative economic advantage of the particular treatments under consideration. In the same way a knowledge of the physical and technical properties, and uses of wood produced under varying forest conditions is necessary to a determination of the value of the material produced, or to the prospects of marketing the product to good advantage.

"The field of Forest Economics therefore, may be interpreted in a broad or narrow sense. Ours is a broad conception and the field may be broken down into the following divisions:

- "1. Inventory of the Forest Resources
 - (a) Air Surveys
 - (b) Field Surveys
 - (c) Resources Inventory
 - (d) Revision of Forest Reserves
2. Land Classification
3. Growth and Yield Studies
4. Artificial Reforestation
5. Silvicultural Studies
6. Forest Management
 - (a) Working Plans
 - (b) Utilization
 - (c) Private Forestry, e.g. Farm Woodlots and Town Forests
7. Soil Studies
8. Protection Research."

A letter from Bob Carter at Prince George encloses some pictures taken by Assistant Ranger Geo. Smith on a fire trip on the old Blackwater Road. The Blackwater Road down the west side of the Fraser is of some historic interest. It was the old stage rout and, until the opening of the present highway around '27 or '28, was the only through road from Prince to Quesnel and the coast. Years ago the Forest Branch owned a "farm" down this route near the crossing of the Blackwater River where the Prince George District wintered its pack string and saddle horses. The late Walter Langmuir wintered there with the stock on different occasions.



The present letter reports the road to be in bad shape and adds, "When George Smith says a road is bad, that's news"--but not to us. We attempted a trip over the same route around 1927 when we gave up all hope of getting the car back into current service before we had covered the first ten miles. That it actually came through was the best recommendation we know for the old Chev. touring model of the day. With all due respect to George's judgment, we really think the road has improved in the past 12 years, because it couldn't have got worse.

Bob continues, "There is much radio activity here this year with our surveyor friends on the Finlay River and we contact Mr. Andrews on Aircraft B.K.P. near Whitewater (now called Ware). We supply everything from legal rulings, weather reports, personal greetings, confidential messages to lady friends, stock market quotations, war news, time signals, and general routine contact calls, run a sub-post office, and our buying orders would make the Purchasing Agent envious. Our most difficult task is to assure the several wives that all is well and to advise sundry mothers that 'her boy' is well and washes his socks regular."



In explanation of this last we might say that Survey Parties of the Public Works Department, of the Surveyor General's Branch, and Jerry Andrews of our own Service, working in the north this year, kept in touch with their offices and the outside world through radio communication with our Prince George office and the Look-outs. Incidentally, these gentlemen have been most appreciative of the service they received from the Prince George and Prince Rupert Districts, especially of Bob Carter's response and interest in their welfare, and of Clarence Saunders' news digest from Black Mountain Lookout. Albert Biederman on Pilot Mountain is also "mentioned in dispatches."

Baseball, tennis and various other games by floodlight after dark are commonplace in these days, but fire fighting by floodlight is something comparatively new. Assistant Ranger S.C. Frost reports as follows: "Received report of Deeks Fire at 20.00 o'clock August 22nd....Found fire being fought by a crew from Porteau who had seen the fire as they were starting for a show at Britannia on a tugboat, most of them in their good clothes. Fresh westerly breeze blowing but crew holding fire, packing water up the bluffs in pails. Tug standing by lighting up the scene with searchlight."

Apart from the novelty of fire fighting by tugboat searchlight, we think the staff that can get the countryside that fire conscious, or the party that passed up a show to go fire fighting in its best clothes, or the tugboat, or somebody or something should be highly commended. Perhaps we don't sound very serious about that but we are.

Wrapped up in a neat brown paper parcel somewhere we have a tell-tale piece of a bearing tree felled by an ambitious logger, together with a falling wedge made from the corner post. Now we have reported an example in the other extreme:

"Trespass area not as large as indicated on last M.T.I. report. Rigging man admitted to moving S.W. corner post 5 chs. to west. Had been given previous orders to take care of all corner posts and thought he was doing correct thing in removing Post to a safe spot."

ODDS AND ENDS

Recent requisition: "One cat, with accessories. Must be a good ratter."

We have just received a postcard from Radio Station J8CJ, Iaru, Korea, advising us that our station VE9ES was picked up there on July 27th last. VE9ES is Saddle Mountain Lookout.

A coincidence has occurred this year in the Invermere Ranger District, there being 3 Johnsons, viz., Ranger F.J.G. and Assistant Rangers J.L. and R.,--or Unus, Secundus, and Tertius.

THE SONG OF THE STICK

- By Jon Anon -



Oh what do I do when the heavens are blue,
An' the heat's coming strong in the wind.
Do I quiver and quake, do I shiver and shake
When the lookouts report themselves blind?
Do I wiggle and whirl, the psychrometer twirl,
Do I worry myself till I'm sick?
No, I don't get demented, I rest quite contented
An' goes out and looks at me stick.

When things look so dire an' the boys see a fire,
An' for months now for rain do we yearn,
With heat devils stoking the fire that's smoking
We first find if forests will burn.
This no doubt seems breezy; but really it's easy,
We just work the Doohickey trick.
So before we get tragic we go in for magic
An' weigh us a handful of stick.

Let's drink a toast deep to remarkable "Jeep",
The gadget that worry restrains.
For it tells us a lot, such as whether it's hot
And sometimes it tells if it rains.
When it's hot as a cinder and bush is like tinder
An' lightning stirs up quite a kick;
No need for affrightment, no cause for excitement,
Just go out and look at the stick, the stick,
Just go out and weigh you some stick.

The Vancouver Daily Province reports: "A huge fish resembling a salmon has been seen in waters off Princess Royal Island. Carman Gibson and Harry Scott, aboard the forestry cruiser 'Alpine Fir', sighted the fish. They said it was 40 feet long and about 6 feet wide. It was a silvery gray color and had markings similar to those of a salmon. Gibson and Scott said it swam near the boat about 6 feet below the surface and was apparently unafraid."



We don't see why a 40-foot fish with a 6-foot beam should be afraid. They were fairly evenly matched. The "Alpine Fir" is 40 feet long by 9½.

Extract from Patrolman's diary: "While looking up a snow-hole a she-grizzly and three cubs came to within 30 feet of me. I whistled and she sure beat it. I was close to a tree."

At the end of Seymour Arm, Shuswap Lake, is Car No. 84, a protection car which is used on the portage between Shuswap and Humamilt Lakes. The route is an old logging road--mighty useful now for our purposes. There is no traffic to bother and I believe it's the only car road in B.C. where the auto horn is of no use. Gas stations are unknown and the road signs only say, "Be careful with Fire". Deer along this road are so tame that when the car is parked they curl up in the car box and sometimes go with us several miles over the portage, only to jump out when the Ford slows up on one of the grades. What a pleasure it is to drive on this unknown highway where road hogs can be forgotten for a day at least! (Eden - Sicamous)

One more use for old hose--crimp it around the edges of a float and it makes a better bumper than the old tires for the protection of your boats. We used the large-headed roofing nails at every crimp of 3 to 4 inches apart. (Eden - Sicamous)

Rusty Campbell and other old war horses are getting most restless at times. Rusty expressed himself in no uncertain terms when our golf team went to Quesnel on Labour day and wasted a day chasing a "pill" around the Willingdon Links when a war was on. We think that Corporal Campbell would now make a good Sergeant-Major, although his ambitions are modestly those of a Recruiting Sergeant and he has already asked the Army and Navy Command to supply him with a pipe and drum band to stimulate recruiting in Quesnel. Many of us have been on guard duty on the building and municipal projects and will probably go further if we can pass the M. C. A close haircut and a shot of adrenalin may fool him.
(Bob Carter - Prince George)

A considerable amount of ingenuity has always been used in allotting names to fires, but this year Kamloops District seems to have gone one better. They have apparently endeavoured to get their field men to name their fires with a name commencing with the same letter as the Ranger's, and in case he ran dry presume that additional letters were allotted to him, or he chose them. Y.V.Q., and O have resulted in some queer specimens, but notice that they all seemed to fight shy of X. Here is the alphabetical score to date:

O	9
Q	12
V	21
Y	32

We wonder how many of you could sit down and think of 32 names commencing with Y. (Simmons - Operation)

During the past two months Bert Conway and Jim Pedley have exchanged jobs at Campbell River and Kamloops.

Miss Lee at Vancouver and Miss Bush at Nelson have resigned; and Miss Matthews has joined the ranks at Kamloops, and Miss Christian in the Operation Office at Victoria.

Percy Young (Nakusp) is absent from duty on sick leave and Alf Nunn (Victoria) is also on the sick list. We hope to see them both back in their usual good spirits and much improved health in due course.

Miss P. M. Lee of the Vancouver office resigned October 30th.

It is not usual for us to discuss the plans and prospects of departing associates but in this case we think we should report that Miss Lee left to enter into partnership with Mark Gormley of the District Staff.

We understand the papers were duly signed on November 4th. We wish them all that is good in their new venture.