

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. 37

Victoria, B.C., November 15, 1940

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This number of the "News Letter" being edited by "Operation" should, we suppose, start off with some reference to the fire season. Well, it was bad in spots and worse in others, on the theory that no fire season is good. However, there were some outstanding situations that deserve comment.

Take Creston for instance (Jim MacDonald would give it to you at a bargain). A prolonged and early season developed into probably one of the worst concentrations of large fires on record. Jim had six big ones going at once and all close to Creston.

At Nakusp, Percy Young got over ninety (90, count'em) fires from one lightning storm. Frank Pym at Cranbrook had his hands full from early in June with one fire of over 70,000 acres and more following.

The Nelson Ranger District, under Acting Ranger Jimmy Robinson, got plenty to do, mostly from lightning, as did many others, while up in Kamloops the situation around Revelstoke, Salmon Arm and Chase kept the boys on the jump. Incidentally, Roy Eden took over supervision of the Revelstoke District after Jack Boydell's enlistment and both Jack Templeman and Hayhurst had additional burdens for the same reason.

Why try to pick out hard-pressed individuals in the fire districts? They all had more than any ordinary man should be expected to do. But then the Forest Service is not made up of ordinary men, and so an excellent record of hard work, coolness under fire and good results under all handicaps was hung up.

And, by the way, the reason for the bad fire season in part is probably due to lack of snowfall, or maybe that is only an indicator. Anyway, figures and charts just produced by Ian MacQueen tend to show that all but one of our bad fire seasons since 1920 was immediately preceded by a winter of light snowfall. Some of us have had a trace of that idea but Ian now produces the figures to prove it. So look out for trouble in the interior if your skis stay in the back shed all winter.

The further history of the fire season will be written in the Annual Report, but suffice it to say that the Vancouver and Northern Districts got off lightly, especially the Prince Rupert Coast.

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"Poetry", says Webster, "is the embodiment in appropriate, rhythmical language, usually metrical, of beautiful or high thought, imagination or emotion."

Knowing this definition, of course we were astounded at receiving the following from one of our well-known contributors, Jack Pine. Webster doesn't say that the beautiful and high thoughts cannot be put in gosh-awful metre or rhythm (or is it rhyme?), but he does say the thoughts must be high. (These thoughts should qualify, if you know what I mean.) So, we take issue with Jack that poetry must, ipso facto, be good and maintain that in printing his effusions we have lived up to our promise. (Between you and the Ed. we hope he sends more of the same.)

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"BELLES LETTRES" - The Turning Worm - by Jack Pine.

Come all ye Litterateurs and join this rebellion. A new day is dawning, a new era approaches apace. The present topsy-turvy state of society is about to be turned right side up. Sgt.-Majors will take their turn at Sanitary Fatigue, Rookies will inspect parades of Brass Hats, rabbits will chase terriers and Poets will take their rightful place in the "Scheme", obtain not less than two square meals per day and spend some portion of their waking hours in pouring contumely over the heads of "Ye Ed" and his satellites. Oh! Glorious Prospect! Speed the Elysian day.

One of the last straws was received lately in a communication from one of the aforementioned prospective contumely recipients: "We're short of copy, send something, we'll even print your bad poetry", or words to that effect. No capital "P" mind you!

"Well, what about it"; might say poor benighted laymen--"It seems a simple request to us".

There, fellow aesthetes, is the crux of the matter, the fly in the ointment, the casus belli, the foot in the trough, in short, the difference between the Philistine and the Poet. The layman is no more at fault than the Ed., who, forsooth, rushes in prating of bad Poetry.

Bear with him, confreres, restrain your fury aroused by this grating on your aesthetic susceptibilities. After all, on investigation we find that the request came from a person described as a Forester, one of the guild who, after years of research, have elicited the facts that trees grow upwards, bear leaves or needles and will burn. What sympathetic understanding may we Poets expect from one preoccupied with such mundane matters?

Of course there is not such a thing as bad Poetry. There is bad verse and jingling rhymes, but Poetry either is or isn't, if you know what I mean. In other words, if it is Poetry it is good, not to say divine, though presumably to a high-in-the-breast, low-in-the-forehead philistine (mention no names) all Poetry is foul, and difference in quality lies in degree of putrescence.

Let us endeavour to differentiate and offer a critique! Consider the following lines:

"The night was dark and stormy,
A man stood in the street.
His aged eyes were full of tears
His boots were full of feet."

The metre here is correct. While the number of syllables differs in each line the rhythm is excellent, as is also the rhyme. The treatment of the subject matter, however, leaves something to be desired. While the close connection between tears and feet is admitted by one who has worn shoes a size too small, there is no mention of misfit in the verse. We have a suspicion that the rhymers guilty of this atrocity was playing on the word "full" and his cheek full of tongue while writing. Describing boots as being full of feet while being worn would appear to be redundant, though presumably the redundancy would not be apparent to a literal-minded Ed. unless a couple of toes protruded from each boot.

Now consider the following Poetic presentation on the same subject:

That night storm-laden clouds obscured the skies,
As in the street a man, advanced in years,
Stood grim, and dashed the moisture from his eyes,
Cursing the while tight shoes that caused those tears.

But what's the use? Why cast pearls before swine, or buy champagne for beer-swilling Eds.? Bad Poetry, pshaw! One would get a hot rejoinder if one hinted to this same Ed. that there was such a thing as bad whisky.

Thou Muse, by which our soaring thoughts aspire
To reach new heights, which even Eds. admit
Are only reached by passing through the fire;
"Whazzat? You wanna have a Fire-permit!"

JACK PINE (Pseud.)

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A story current during the first War may be timely now. A rookie had been having a bad time at his musketry course, barely hitting the hill on which the butts were located, and the Sgt.-Major had been badgering him. "Here, roared the latter, "Let me have your rifle." He had a shot and scored a bull, handed the rifle back to the recruit, following which the following conversation ensued:

Sgt.-Maj. "There, you have to take a fine sight with that rifle. Do you know what a fine sight is?"
Recruit. "Yes."
Sgt.-Maj. "Well! What is it?"
Recruit. "A boatload of Sgt.-Majors sinking."

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We have just been advised that several important changes in personnel have been approved.

At Kamloops, due to the enlistment of District Forester Parlow, C.C. (Geh) Ternan, at present Assistant District Forester, Vancouver, is to take charge as District Forester, and R.G. (Gerry) McKee, now Assistant Forester, Victoria, will be Assistant District Forester. Both men have had long and useful experience in Kamloops before and will undoubtedly give good accounts of themselves.

T.A. (Tom) Clarke, Assistant District Forester, who has been carrying on at Kamloops very ably since Parlow left, will become Assistant District Forester in the greater field of Vancouver.

Due to the resignation of E. Wilding of the Prince Rupert clerical staff, H. Bourne of the Victoria Office gets a well-deserved promotion to fill the position, and his place is filled in turn by D.I. McLeod of the Vancouver District Office.

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CHRISTMAS TREES (Believe it or Please Yourselves)

The Christmas-tree season is on us and we have been interviewed by the local agent regarding areas to cut. We have also been honoured with a learned discussion on how Christmas-tree cutting improves the forests, raises the standard of living, defeats Hitlerism, and wipes out the National debt.

Having been broken down, or softened up, an application was then suggested to cut on the area now covered by the Elk Falls Park! More particularly around the area covered by the old football field.

We take great pride in stating that the agent left the office in good health, one piece, and an aura of optimism. Our self-control is wonderful considering our blood pressure... or vice-versa.

To explain his optimism, he talked so feelingly that he convinced himself; and our unnatural stunned politeness must have fooled him. But if he so much as pinches one lone small seedling from that poor wee oasis in devastation we'll feed him Hamlock...liquid and solid.

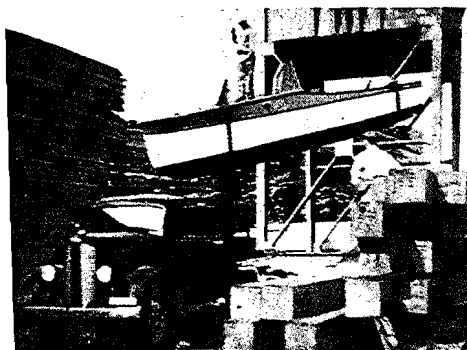
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READING COURSES AVAILABLE

Forest Act	Management	Surveying	Grazing
Typewriting	Arithmetic	Scaling	Stumpage appraisal
Telephone line construction			

The usual policy and procedure will be followed in allotting courses, securing material and following through in the Districts. Look up previous instructions.

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The flying boat "Gypsy" at Port Alberni. Ranger Stevenson draws attention to the fact that the slings are made of discarded fire hose, thus giving the boat more protection than if rope had been used.

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The Tobacco and Parcels Fund for our Active Service contingent has received most generous support. Subscriptions come in from all Districts regularly without reminders and in our latest Victoria list the staff has excelled itself. About 12,000 cigarettes have been purchased and a package has gone forward to each man every month with the compliments of the Honourable the Minister (who has been a generous subscriber) and the Branch. Pipe tobacco has been forwarded to the few who have expressed a preference.

An audited statement of the Fund was issued on September 20th. If you didn't get a copy the District Forester will be glad to send you one. Additional statements will be made from time to time.

We have had a number of appreciative letters. The following extract from one is published here by reason of its valuable contribution to our recent series on bear habits.

"Very pleased to receive the F.B. News Letter. Bear stories seem to be very much in the limelight but I've yet to hear a truer or more scintillating bear story than the one Frank Horn, a trapper we hired on the McGregor cruise, told us. He apparently was setting his traps one day, on his trapline naturally, when he happened to meet a very hungry grizzly. Frank was so startled he stood glued to the spot while Mr. Grizzly kept getting nearer and nearer until he was within leaping distance. The bear made a mighty jump and Frank recovered himself enough to step underneath while the grizzly was in the air. When he landed Frank wasn't on the same spot and they both turned round to face each other again. Frank figured he'd been real smart and when the grizzly jumped the second time he pulled the same stunt, a third and a fourth attempt finally discouraged Mr. Grizzly and he gave a few sniffles a grunt or two and walked off in disgust.

"The sequel took place a week later when Frank was on his rounds again and came to the same place and lo and behold!, here was the grizzly practising short jumps. Needless to say, Frank gave him a wide berth. I should add, 'This is not for publication.'



"We're enclosing a snap of the officers of No. 7 Company and if you can find a better looking aggregation of officers in this man's army, tell us."

Yours with best wishes to the Service,

"Alex Gordon and 'Pop' Ritchie."

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Left to right: Lieut. Ritchie, Salmon Arm; Lieut. Sheppard, Adjt., Victoria; Major Mobley, Tappen; Capt. Maude-Roxby, Kelowna; Lieut. Gordon, Victoria; Lieut. Martin, Merritt.

SIX WEEKS IN THE KAMLOOPS FOREST DISTRICT

This news item is going to violate the first principle of good reporting by furnishing history instead of news, as the period of time involved ended 18 days ago, viz., Oct. 12, 1940. However, as the Editor has so often pointed out, this is a News Letter forwarded only "from time to time."

We also understand that a reporter employs six little men to help him when he goes to work, or, as Kipling more aptly puts it:

"I had six honest serving men,
They taught me all I knew.
Their names are What? and Why? and When?
And How? and Where? and Who?"

Unfortunately, I find that this assignment is more complicated than reporting a one-news item and is more closely allied to the "Dear Diary" type of journalism.

Briefly, in newspaper parlance, yours truly (who) spent the month of September and the first half of October (when) in the Kamloops Forest District (where) helping out to the best of his ability (how), mainly in grazing administration work (what) because of the shortage in staff there through enlistments (why).

There is the entire story, which should have been in the first paragraph followed by qualifying paragraphs of lesser and lesser importance so that the bored reader could stop any time and still know what this article was all about.

This would be best for the staff of the Kamloops Office who were knee-deep in piled-up work on my arrival there. With 3 of the staff on Active Service and 2 off on a three weeks' N.P.A.M. training course, those remaining were doing double duty. Their work was also increased because of the enlistment of 2 Rangers and 8 Assistant Rangers.

It was too much for me, instead of being part of the overhead from Victoria I became a District man once more. What I did is therefore not news but was fully reported. Those interested will find it on files in the Ranger Office, the Kamloops Office and in the Victoria Office. In addition 640 permittees, whether interested or not, learned all about their grazing outstandings although this was very stale news to them.

What a time to collect money from cattle men! With beef at the highest prices since the last war, namely 6¢, 7¢ and 8¢, the field staff's task of collecting the hard ones was obviously reduced to something less than normal. Any rancher who has been able to struggle along for the past lean years is now going to reap the benefit of his persistence.

Spent a week on the Riske Creek Range in the Chilootin where I had not been since 1932. It was most noticeable that in the 8 years, seven out of the fourteen ranchers using the front part of this range were either out of business or deceased. I had to watch my step while on this range as there were more hunters than birds. There had been very little snow last winter and June of 1940 was exceptionally hot and dry, with the result that the numerous ponds scattered over this 27,000-acre prairie had dried and the duck and goose population was away below normal. Then too, because of the war there were far more American hunters than usual.

Two kinds of hunters were in evidence: those known locally as "killers" who were out to shoot their limit each day even though they had to work hard to do so, and those others known locally as "sportsmen". The latter appealed to me as they took time to appreciate the beauties of the Cariboo in the fall. The entire time I was there the weather was perfect with dry, bracing, sunny days and zippy nights, and the fall colorings were delightful.

Well, my reader, since I am reduced to talking about the weather I will sign off and seek more practice so that next time I can give you the interesting highlights of such an enjoyable trip in true journalistic style without so much padding. R.G. McKee.

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RANGER WALLER, SQUAMISH, PLAYS NOAH.

"For the past week I have been unable to do any office work owing to the condition of the office and the house.

"The main flood subsided after the dykes were opened but the tide entered and flooded by 16 inches each day until the dykes were built high enough to check it. This was Sunday, 27th inst.

"It was a sweet mess and rather discouraging. The Jerry's incendiary bombs would have been useless here though if that's any comfort. There was a good deal of unnecessary excitement but it was tough at that.

"The water rose about 30 inches in the house but dropped to 25 inches and stayed that way for over 24 hours then gradually subsided leaving a deposit of very fine silt over everything and $\frac{1}{2}$ " on the floors.

"There is damage of course but not nearly as much as I expected. Some stationery was destroyed and the camera is ruined. It was useless anyway. It took a dive off the desk where I had put it for safety. I saved the files although some were wet but I could not get the lower drawers out of my desk and typewriter table in time.

"The water came up in the night and rose very rapidly. The light being off made things difficult. We had sufficient warning from the old timers, but we had been warned so many times without anything happening that we treated the warnings like the proverbial cry of "wolf" and took the consequences.

"I saved my car but the garage floated off its foundations. However, I managed to get a line on it and hauled it over its site where it settled more or less in its place. The board walks floated over the fences but I caught a section of the town walk and poled them back and tied them so that they also settled in place. Several cords of my wood joined the great meeting place and I have recovered some of it. The balance will probably be on the shores of the Sound.

"The place is still a terrible mess but I am drying out by degrees and in a couple of weeks I may be able to breathe and settle down. The work has been rather too strenuous and for the first time in my life I have experienced rheumatism.

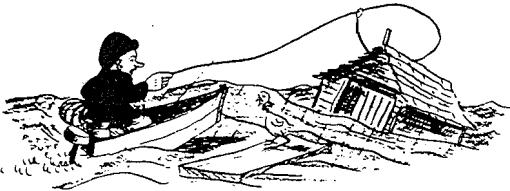
"The work of getting rid of this silt is difficult. I have hosed the house out thoroughly but the dam stuff adheres like paint and burns the hands like lime.

"The walls and floors are somewhat damaged but not badly. The floorboards are buckled somewhat but a coat of varnish and wall paint will cover a lot of sins.

"The water rose about 20 inches in the speeder house and covered the D.D.V. Pump No. D30 and the RV No. R4. The place is in a filthy mess and will take about two days to clean up. I was unable to get into it until Saturday as the road had washed out and a boat was necessary.

"The roads are yet in too bad shape to travel but are being gradually repaired."

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VISIBILITY MAPPING PROJECT

Two undergraduate foresters, Norman Lind and Howard Elsey, have been employed in the examination of prospective lookouts during the past two summers.

A summary of the points examined during 1940 is as follows:

East Kootenay	46
West Kootenay	37
* U.S. Border Lookouts	<u>15</u>
Total Nelson District	88
Prince Rupert	13
Prince George	<u>5</u>
Total for season	106

* Examined for overlap in Canada.



A map was made showing the area directly visible and wherever possible a complete panorama photograph was taken from each point. A report was submitted indicating its suitability as a lookout, together with various physical details such as type and height of structure, amount of clearing, accessibility of water supply, trail chance, etc.

A total of 119 points have been examined in the Nelson District during the past two summers. Although additional work will be necessary to complete some of the more remote areas in the East Kootenay, it will be possible this winter from the information at hand, to plan a network of primary lookouts to control all the higher risk areas.

In addition to the lookouts during the periods when visibility was poor, an inventory was taken of all roads and trails, together with the class and condition.

During the winter, this information will be assembled, together with existing data on forest cover fuel type and fire occurrence zones to form the basis for a Fire Control Plan to adequately serve the Nelson Forest District.

During the summer D. Macdougall completed 5 panoramas from primary lookouts on the Coast and 9 in the Kamloops District. We now have 57 lookouts so equipped throughout the Province and photography will be completed on the remainder as conditions permit. Mr. Macdougall reports a decided increase in efficiency of lookoutmen following the training school earlier in the season.

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We are advised that the British Forestry Commission has recently placed an order for 3,000 pounds of Sitka spruce seed from the Queen Charlotte Islands. This bears out reports that, despite the heavy inroads on their forests for war purposes, the British leaders are insistent that the reforestation programme go forward. One cannot help but admire a people with such tenacity of purpose that they can undergo continuous bombardment from the air and at the same time think in terms of crops fifty to seventy-five years hence.

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ECONOMICS DIVISION

Air Surveys Despite heavy loss in technical personnel, the air-survey crew photographed a total of 5,500 square miles last summer; 1,700 square miles of this for the Forest Branch and the remainder principally for the Surveyor-General, with small jobs for the Water Rights and Public Works. Flying was done on the North Shore of Burrard Inlet, the West Coast of Vancouver Island, and the proposed Alaska Highway north from Sifton Pass. Jack Benton operated the camera while Hugh Hodgins did the observing on the North Shore, Cedric Walker on the West Coast and Mr. Norman Stewart of the Surveyor-General's branch on the Alaska Highway.

Field Surveys Two major surveys were completed during the season. The North Shore survey covered the lands lying between Howe Sound and the height of land west of Harrison Lake. A complete inventory was made of 1,041,800 acres and maps and estimates are now being prepared. Cedric Walker was in charge of the project directing the activities of a two-cruiser party working from the "B.C. Forester", with an assistant, Mickey Pogue, in charge of a second two-cruiser party working by car between Coquitlam and Stave Lakes. The second survey, under Dick Nixon, with John Stokes as assistant-chief, make an inventory of the Slocan Drainage. A total of 830,000 acres was covered and maps, etc., are now in preparation.

George Silburn did further reconnaissance work on the proposed Dome Forest while he was in the Prince George District supervising the work on their forest cover maps.

John Collins also did a small job of reconnaissance in the Big Bend country, near Beavermouth, while in the Nelson District supervising the forest cover map project.

Forest Cover Maps As mentioned above, Silburn and Collins spent the major portion of their time supervising a forest cover mapping project sponsored by the Protection Division and the National Forestry Project. Three boys were employed at Nelson, Kamloops and Prince George, five at Victoria, and one at Prince Rupert, bringing up to date all the forest cover maps. We are pleased to report that the Vancouver, Nelson, Prince George, and Prince Rupert district and Ranger maps are now up to date, while another season's work will complete those in Kamloops. This is a big job done and will be very useful to George Melrose's long-range protection planning.

Silvicultural Research The research crews under Garman, MacBean and Allen, completed a busy season of plot measurements. These men are doing a good job in a quiet way and it sometimes takes the comments of an outsider to bring this to our attention. Recently a letter came to the Chief Forester's office from a man in the East saying that the forest research work being done in B.C. was by far the most interesting in the Dominion.

Protection Research MacQueen, with two assistants, for the most part concentrated his efforts on completion of the lookout visibility and transportation planning project in the Nelson District. Some work was also done in the Prince George and Prince Rupert Districts.

Mensuration George Barnes, who migrated to the United States in 1936 to expound forestry to the Mormons, took a busman's holiday this summer and made a study of the rate of growth of the 90-year-old stands in the Lower Fraser Valley. His general conclusion was that they should not be utilized for another 30 years, and even 60 years more could be easily justified.

Soils Work Dick Spilsbury early last spring completed a survey of 150,000 acres in the E. & N. Belt extending along the sea-front from Campbell River to Fanny Bay. This is part of a project which is intended to cover the entire Belt and will serve as a basis for delineating agricultural from forest soils. In addition he has completed a land-use survey of the Chilliwack River Valley for the Lands Department.

Cutting Plans and the Island Working Circle Larry McMullan has made a start on the work formerly carried on by Godwin, but it is a slow proposition. Telford is stationed at Thurston Bay and getting acquainted with conditions in his vest-pocket working circle.

Reforestation Harold McWilliams has had two crews of fifteen men putting up camp, felling snags, and opening up old railroad grades on planting sites preparatory to the 1941 operations. The major areas to be planted next spring are the Stillwater Valley, the cut-over land of the former Robert Dollar operation near Bowser, the area adjacent to Skutz Falls in the Cowichan Valley, and the lands lying between Cowichan Lake Village and Mesatchie Lake. By mid-December nearly 5,000 acres will have been snagged and opened up.

This fall about 175,000 trees are being planted at Campbell River adjacent to Elk Falls and 150,000 at Bowser. F.S. McK.

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Lew Davis, former Forest Ranger, is now a full Corporal with the 2nd Battalion, 16th Canadian Scottish Regiment.

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The arrival is announced of Marc Edmund Gormely, Jr., on Monday, October 21, 1940, tipping the scales at 8 lbs. 15 oz.

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The marriage of William Stanley Hopher, Assistant Forester in the Vancouver Office, to Miss Mary Underwood took place at Lynn Valley United Church, Lynn Valley, on November 1, 1940 at 7.30 p.m.

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Hugh Weatherby, our publicity man, and long considered a chronic bachelor, joined the benedicts on October 14th. His bride was formerly Miss Crete Adair of Burnaby. The young couple will make their home in Victoria.

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We announce with regret the death of Henry Walton Sharpe, who passed away at Victoria on October 8th.

Mr. Sharpe was born at York, Yorkshire, England, near the end of the last century. He came to Canada in 1904 and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company at Victoria and was later transferred to Hazelton. In 1914, he entered the Forest Service as a Forest Guard. His employment with the Branch was interrupted by 3 years' service in France from 1916 to 1919. Mr. Sharpe took the Ranger examinations and in 1920 was appointed to the position of Ranger for Hazelton district, where he was stationed until his retirement owing to ill health, in September, 1937, after which he took up his residence in Victoria.

The members of the Forest Service join in offering their deepest sympathy.

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