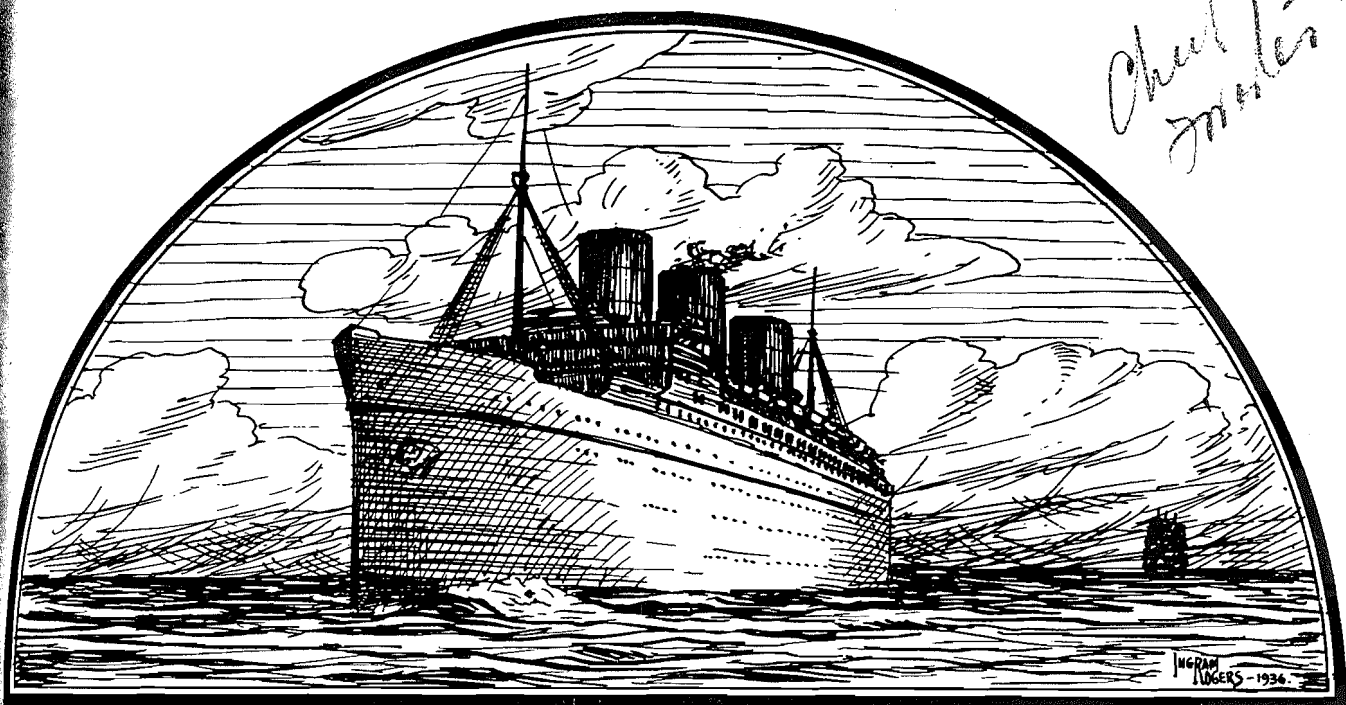




A modern liner contains more woodwork than did any ship of 'wooden' days.

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. 25

Victoria, B.C., September, 1938.

08581

In our last Letter in early July we reckoned we would be able to tell you something about July and August fire weather sometime in September, and true enough too. We could say plenty at this writing but reckon we'll be able to get the general summary into more restrained language in the Annual Report and had perhaps better postpone a review for that vehicle. Suffice it to say that we have experienced and are still enduring one of the driest and most hazardous seasons on record. Conditions are still ripe at the first of September for a major disaster, with destructive and expensive fires the order of the day.

The outstanding features of the past two months have been the closure of all logging operations in the Vancouver District under authority of Section 119 of the Act for a period of three weeks, an entirely new departure--and the Bloedel Fire.

The fire started, according to report, at Boot Lake north of the Elk River on July 5th. It was finally stopped about the 25th on the outskirts of Bevan and Courtenay, some 40 miles from home. In the interval it did everything no well-conducted fire should--burned mature timber, crowned at night, burned up in the evening and early morning. In fairness it must be added that it considerably stopped on the line fences of a few score farms. One old house was destroyed and one cow incapacitated. The cow found its way to the fire-camp mulligan pots so the loss there was not great.

Generous use was made of tractors and bulldozers in line construction and the complete fire was eventually corralled.

We have a list of notes on that fire sufficient to write half a dozen News Letters in which figure the assistance rendered by the Navy, emergency use of radios and tractors, Freeman King's fire camp organization, Mrs. Conway's midnight coffee and midday meals for the 24-hour shift at the Campbell River Station, Terman's spectacular fire-fighting on the Elk River Timber Company's operation with their Super Pete (whose last name we know but don't know how to spell) and a score more.

It is seldom that we have a fire that will test our resources and our resourcefulness as this did. Certainly there are valuable lessons to be learned by a careful review. We hope we can get Operation Office to give us the benefit of some of them in a later number.

On making an inspection trip in the Interior Gregg has some remarks to make further to those which appeared in the last News Letter. These have to do mostly with gadgets, inventions, etc., discovered in various Ranger and Assistant Ranger caches.

Hose-folding

Bob Little of Invermere and his Assistant Ranger, Barbour, fold their hose rather than roll it. They figure it is more quickly strung out on the job. To fold it a folding frame is made of angle iron 24" x 16" with a space just wide enough to accommodate the discharge hose. The folding is a two-man job, one man holding spikes at the turn and the other handling the hose.

Canvas Water Tank

At Invermere a canvas water tank was seen inherited from the Dominion. It measures 43" x 38" x 10", fits a 1930 Ford but is still useful in later models. It is handy for filling hand-tank pumps.

Accounting for Tools on Fires

Supervisor Pym requires all fire fighters to bring their tools off the fire and in camp a special enclosure is set aside where all these tools must be kept. Now that some of Bob Allen's fire fighters have taken to sleeping with Pulaski tools Pym may encounter some difficulties. It is a fact, though, that some of the more enterprising fire fighters at Jordan Creek took Pulaski tools to bed with them so that they would be sure to have them the next day.

Spring covers

Later and de luxe model cars have the springs covered. Assistant Ranger Damstrom covered the springs on his car with sacking. The springs were first well oiled, the sacking cut in strips and wound on puttee-wise. He gets a quieter ride and the chances are in time less broken springs.

"Want" Book, etc.

Geo. Palethorpe, New Denver, utilizes old forms as scratch pads by putting a coating of glue along one edge. He also has a "want" book, in which he jots down from time to time requirements and uses these notes when he comes to make up the Annual Report. In Victoria we think this is a splendid idea to increase the Estimates away beyond what we can hope to get. Nevertheless, it has its points.

Tight Axe Heads

Assistant Ranger Jeffrey at New Denver seems to be an expert in hanging axes. Ordinarily we are using our axes most at the driest time when the heads are most likely to be loose. To overcome this Jeffrey drills a 3/16" hole down through the centre of the wedge about half to three-quarters of the way down the axe head. This drill hole is then kept full of raw linseed oil until the wedge has soaked up all it will take, then a plug is put in the hole. Axe heads are reported to remain absolutely tight throughout the driest seasons.

Packboards numbered

Geo. Palethorpe has his packboards numbered and issued accordingly. It is just an idea to ensure getting them back.

Filling the oil base of Paramount Juniors

We all know what an awkward job this is. Palethorpe has a grease gun, the contents of which he has measured. Four guns equal $\frac{3}{4}$ pt. This is a quick and convenient method of getting the oil into the Paramount Juniors.

Protection for Pulaski Tools

The boys at New Denver figures the vicious looking Pulaski was something that needed protection for travel. They were careful with the original box in which they came and converted it to permanent use with a locking top.

Tools charged on Fires

Jim MacDonald at Creston has substituted for Form 56 a sheet whereby record is kept of equipment charged on a fire, equipment returning, equipment missing and food transferred from project to project or fire to fire.

If you want further information in connection with any of the above-mentioned articles or ideas the parties mentioned will be glad to give you any required details.

"Separate History" - Divide Fire - Prince Rupert District No. 70.

Five members of the Young Ranger Band of Burns Lake, Albert Gerow, Charles Nourse, David, Kenneth, and Sam Gerow, aged 15 to 19 years, returning from a fishing trip at Augier Lake, found a fire spreading and just starting to go strong on the shore of Divide Lake, 10 miles north of Burns Lake. All the tools they had were an old axe, a frying pan and a 3-lb. billy can, but they immediately started in with this equipment to try and extinguish the fire. They found a couple more cans as they worked. Finding it a bigger job than they could handle they sent Sam, the youngest member, with the team and Bennett buggy, to notify me. Sam must have covered the 10 miles in record time, judging by the condition of the team. We had just come up from the Lake here, after a pump test, when Sam arrived, so the outfit was already loaded on the car and ready to go. Assistant Ranger O'Hara and Ranger Assistant Mills arriving at the fire found it well under control but it still took 2½ hours steady pumping and grubbing to get it completely out.

The fire was in a patch of old burn and heavy windfall by Divide Lake and had almost reached the green timber when it was discovered. It was also right in the middle of one of the best tie stands left in the Babine Forest. When found it covered 1½ chains by 1 chain and was getting a good hold in the heavy stuff of the old burn windfall. It was fortunate that these Young Rangers discovered and tackled the fire when they did, and without loss of time. Another hour under present explosive conditions of the woods would have meant a bad and costly fire and a serious timber loss. D. O'Hara brought the lads in when the fire was out and they were a grimy, sweat-streaked crew. I congratulated them on their splendid work and told them they had pay as well as thanks coming to them. Without hesitation they replied that they had only done what was right and did not want any pay. I told them to talk it over and come and see me later. They stayed with their original decision.

The site of the fire is a favourite campsite for fishing parties. We have since cleared a space, built a fireplace and put up a notice. "W. Wilson"

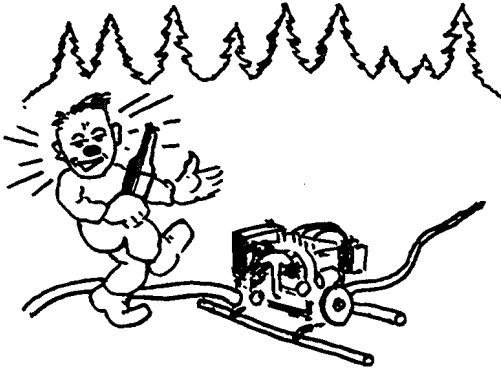
MEMORANDUM

To Chief Forester,
Victoria, B.C.

From District Forester,
Kamloops, B.C.
June 25, 1938.

Attention "Operation"

In the matter of checking Paramount Junior Pumps, it has been found necessary for the present to check the oil in the base regularly until the unit is adjusted.



The matter of a suitable measure for the $\frac{3}{4}$ pint of oil has been duly considered, and by some rare phenomena it has been discovered that a beer bottle of any brand holds exactly the amount of oil required.

Strangely enough, these containers can sometimes be found in the proximity of a Ranger's cache but they are not always available in sufficient numbers; also, being somewhat fragile, they must sometimes be replaced.

With this in mind I have been very respectfully requested by members of the Service to suggest to "Operation" that this type of measure be acknowledged by the office as a standard measure, and that

a suitable quantity of them be supplied to all Rangers using this type of pump.

Naturally the field staff believe that it would be better to use new sealed containers for this purpose, and they solemnly assure me that if we adopt this unit as a standard measure they will be delighted to check the oil in our Paramount Junior Pumps as often or oftener than we require.

I am therefore submitting this matter to you for consideration.

Yours respectfully,

"Wm. C. Spouse"
Assistant Mech. Insp.



Introducing WALTER HENNING, Quesnel.

It seems Walter came of good old Huron stock but being a little delayed did not get into the fresh air until "home" had been moved to Vancouver--Mount Pleasant to Vancouverites--and so he is a native son but looks a bit pale compared with a Haida. Even though bleached, he spent his early years spearing salmon in such places as China Creek and tributaries of False Creek. He picked more than a ton of wild blackberries on sites now occupied by gas stations, city halls and churches.

Walter went to school. He pioneered learning at such places as Mount Pleasant, Model and King Edward High. Then he took a business course and for a time was a book-keeper. He has lately found this experience valuable in adding up arrears in grazing. Law next took his eye and he was right in the way of becoming a Blackstone or a Darrow when along came warfare in which he took a four-year course, graduating in driving a motorcycle on the darkest night, without lights, as expertly through trenches and shell holes as on the broad highway at midday. He really made his name though as seige gun artillery on the top-ranking baseball teams in the Canadian Corps.

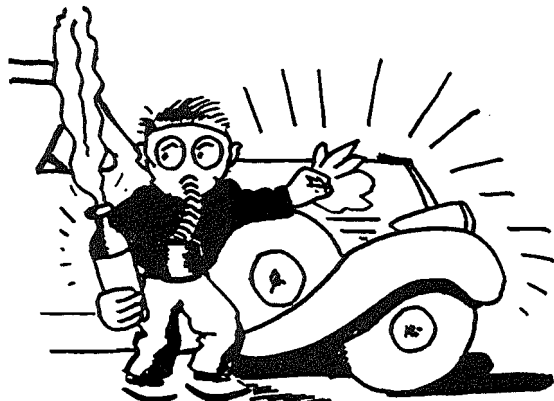
Since war days Walter's time has been divided between the Forest Branch and the Timber industry. He knows the game from the inside out and the outside in. His activities have taken him from the wet belt of the north coast where wind and reefs are nightmares, to the sunny climes of the Gulf Islands, and finally to his present abode at Quesnel where he is familiar with everything from gold mines at old Barkerville to prime steers in the Nazko.



Socially Walter's long suits are dancing and bridge at which he thinks he is a slicker. Naturally this unfortunate complex has cost him money. He says he loves to play rotten golf, so he enjoys himself exceedingly.

Walter's philosophy is: "We are all in the process of attainment, although we may never reach the heights we can still persevere."

The accompanying photo came to us inscribed, "Ronald and his Dad on his first birthday", but we don't believe it. They must think we're a credulous bunch here at Victoria.



Last spring we bought a cream coloured car. As Irvin Cobb said in one of his articles, "Don't ask me why--I'm not arguing with you, I'm telling you." Besides, we wonder why too. Well, a week ago we ran on to some fresh tar, at a safe speed as we thought. Nevertheless the car got well spattered from stem to gudgeon.

At a cost of an expensive tin of stain remover, some hours hard labour, and considerable profanity, we got some of it off and decided the rest could stay there till it rotted off. Then a friend in need told us about carbon di sulphide.

You can buy carbon di sulphide at modest cost in almost any drug store. It is poisonous and inflammable. In the bottle, you might take it for clear clean water; but not after you remove the cork. For concentrated odoriferousness it is only exceeded in our experience by pure essence of skunk, but the way it lifts dry tar and stains from a car when used in conjunction with a bit of clean cloth is marvellous to behold; and it doesn't seem to lift anything else.

The tar season is pretty well past but we reckoned you might like to know about it anyway. Incidentally, our car shines again in all its pristine creamy splendour and we're looking for a good used gas mask against our next encounter with tar and carbon di sulphide.

Kamloops District has prepared for the use of the field staff a very convenient and useful chart for calculating fire payroll wages on an hour basis. Harry Parker says "In the event that any of the districts require a supply of these we have the stencil on file and can prepare any quantity desired."

Copied from No. 7 "Bulletin of the Society for Preservation of Native Plants of British Columbia."

"On the East Saanich Road, V.I., a man and woman, occupants of a small car, were each seen to throw a lighted cigarette into the grass beside the highway. A Californian following behind, accelerated and, cutting across, forced the smaller car to stop. Without mincing words the visitor was heard to say 'There's a heavy fine for that sort of carelessness where I come from. I'm going to report this incident.'"

We are happy to announce, in the ranks of the old timers, that Bill Lowry is back at work and, amongst the juniors, the arrival of Jane Frances Hodgins. Both effective July 1st. Bill is working pro tem on the Young Men's programme. Jane is enjoying indefinite leave of absence.

The entire staff will deeply regret the loss of Norman Pite, who died at the Jubilee Hospital, Victoria, on August 1st. Associated with the Branch from the time it was first organized in 1912, he was one of the little band of six to receive the first 25-year silver service badges in 1937. His fine character and personality will keep his memory green in Forest Branch circles for many a day to come.

H.H. Smith assumes the duties of Chief Accountant as from September 1st. C.R. Scharff becomes Assistant Accountant from the same date.

Ernie Mathieson has moved on temporary assignment for a few months from Prince Rupert to Prince George.