FOREST BRANCH NEWS LETTER

BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST SERVICE LANDS DEPARTMENT

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

No. 30. Victoria, B. C., September 1, 1939. 08581

We now understand why "Ye Ed" is universally portrayed as surrounded by an unruly mass of paper, here, there, and on the floor, wearing a ferocious and long-suffering look, large pencil in one hand, phone in the other, and a dead cigar in mouth.

We reckon all these attributes are ours at the present moment except, as it is not Christmas time, there are no cigars within sight. We can sympathize with a guy who has to get out a daily paper and satisfy nearly everybody with it. We believe this is the first News Letter compiled, pulled apart, and generally kicked around by a District Staff in the height of a fire season. But with all our lamenting (grousing to you) it's been fun and we can only hope it will provide spots of entertainment here and there.

How lucky we are these hot days that we are not required to produce anything more serious.

As bad as it may seem, under the circumstances of its inception, we are not apologizing.

Notes and Comments from Kamloops

The News Letter is published, we are told, for the "profit, amusement, and annoyance of the staff." We have thought that under the heading of "profit" much advantage may be gained by a little light discussion on some of the questions raised from time to time at our different Ranger meetings.

We should no doubt steer clear of all controversial subjects wherein language rather than logic would result; but there are many subjects whereby discussion would lead to a better all-round understanding, with resultant improvement.

Take, for example, First Aid Kits..... This was brought up at the last Prince George meeting, as reported in the last issue of the Letter:

> The writer is also opposed to the cardboard container. It is not, in his opinion, efficient; and it is certainly not, again in his opinion, economical. It will not stand up under the strain of tough transportation, and it is also a very unhandy contraption to get at. The contents are ruined very easily, and as a result are discarded before they can be used.

The relative efficiency of cardboard and tin containers was brought to my attention just recently. On a trip involving a 24-mile hike in hard boots on soft feet we arrived at the destination with sadly ruined "dogs." Requesting the Patrolman for use of his casualty case, we were handed one of the old time 3-way tin contain-

ers. How long this kit had been floating around nobody knew; but it had made many a pack-horse trip along that trail. The contents were in good shape and the "hot dogs" were eventually cooled off. Any good kit would of course have done as well, but the point that struck us was....what shape would a cardboard kit have been in, having the same years of service that this tin one must have had. Probably three or four would have been spoilt, not used, in the same time. We also agree with the Prince George meeting that the bandages should be 2 inches wide and that the adhesive tape should be 1 inch wide. Generally, there appears to be room for improvement in our First Aid Kits.

In the records of the Nelson District Rangers' Meeting there are many points brought up worthy of a more general discussion throughout the Branch. To ramble over a few....Ranger MacDonald's opinions on the use of improvement crews are right down our alley. Crews of even three or four trained and experienced men can do a lot of good work in a Ranger's district during the season. Moreover, they are there to take immediate action on fires occurring within their area and can be taken off to act as foremen on any fires the Ranger requires them on. They are a trained auxiliary force right on the spot with an incentive to get the fire out. And trained fire foremen are scarce articles in most districts.

Ranger McParlon's discussion on smoke signals brings to mind our own system. In this we test the lookout and also radio communication. That is, of course, where the lookout is radio-equipped. We set up a portable within easy distance of the victim but not in sight; start our smoke, and listen in. By this means we check the visibility or alertness, and check our radio fire calls. We can also break in and tell the Ranger at the proper moment that the whole thing is a fake over which he need not get excited. Another very good point about our system is we don't have to climb to the lookout. We may remark that when trying out this system with smoke bombs it was a flop. We found that smoke bombs look like a dust cloud to the lookout, even when several are put up. In common fairness to the lookout a decent smoke should be sent up.

Supervisor Brewer's remarks on fire camp organization were well taken. Here is a subject we should like to see, or hear, argued to some length.

On any fire requiring a fire camp to be set up, the organization of that camp comes very close to being as important as the organization on the fire line. The writer has seen a wide variety of fire camps, from the ultra ritzy, with tables, benches, ranges, and fancy hats on the cooks, to the flop under a spruce where a tired crew got a few cans of sardines (always key-less)

While there is no need for the high-faluting trimmings on a fire camp, on the other hand if you want men to work you have to feed them.

The writer can get, and has got, very Captain Blighey with a lazy and ornery crew; but never with a hungry one. There is the well known happy medium. A fire crew should get plenty of good plain food, with such variety as the conditions will permit. We have got sick ourselves during a bad fire season by living on an unrelieved diet of tomatoes and canned beans.

Food, ("grub" on the line) is not, however, the only part of fire-line organization. Supplies of all kinds must be kept up. Equipment looked after, tools kept sharp where necessary, and everything ready for emergency calls. It calls for proper organization, and that can seldom be obtained without trained personnel in charge. Simply dubbing a man "timekeeper" will not acquaint him with all the ramifications of camp organization. Getting men up the line on time, properly fed and adequately armed is good staff work on a fire as it is in a war.

We have seen lots of reading matter on how to fight fires. Some has been worth while reading...but only some. To date we at least have not seen anything printed on fire camp organization. There seems room for an article on this subject. It should be done before some college Professor

steals the idea and gets out a TEXT BOOK. What we want is good plain advice in good plain language by an experienced man. No charts, no curves. The use of the latter should be confined to our feminine fashion expert, if we ever get one on the staff of this paper.

Well, there she is. We don't suppose there is much in the above of any great use; but there's the general idea. A little open discussion usually brings out something of value, besides increasing the circulation of the paper. Others may not agree with our ideas: but if they express their own, possibly from all the clouds enough sunshine will seep through to light up the darkest corners. Perhaps even to clear up for all time the fog of misunderstanding that sometimes hangs around certain of our problems.

There is no foundation to the rumour that the Fire Starters' Union (Interior Local #13), is contemplating an illuminated testimonial to the Forest Branch thanking that organization for the increase in pay. This action by the Branch has been appreciated, however, and the Union is of the opinion that with similar co-operation from the weather man, the industry will again be on its feet.

TRUE JOKE DEPARTMENT

Forest Officer (Management) dictating: "Dear Sirs:- We note you have cut 500 ties under 6-inch face."
Stenographic version: "Dear Sirs:- We note you have cut 500 ties on your 6-inch face."

Supervisor "B", to fire foreman: "Have you got that fire-line through on the east side yet, Olaf?"
Olaf: "Yes, Mr. 'B'. I bane got the yob finished; but by Yimminy, we had to put in three switchbaks up that steep slope."

May be True

Ranger Assistant (weighing Jeep stick...hazard sick to the rest of you) "Heck, these sticks weigh twice as much as they did half an hour ago."
Ranger's dog: "Ha, Ha."

Really True

Letter from the District Office to Ranger: "Please show on your sketch how far the fire started from point of origin."

The variety of jobs the Forest Branch are expected to do is only equalled by the variety of jobs they do do...if you can guess our meaning.

Counting stallions to making examinations for garbage dumps is a mere cross-section of a day's work. Outside of his official duties the Ranger is often expected to do little jobs for the "peepul"...jobs of a wide variety requiring some knowledge, some bluff, and plenty of nerve of times.

We have ourselves acted many a part for the good of the community and the sacred cause of co-operation. We have "fixed" radios in the sparsely settled districts. Thanks to static, we have also got away

with it. We have filled out old-age pension forms, becoming an expert on this and in great demand. (We will probably need the experience later on.) We have carried around remedies for many an ailment. Got up dances for worthy objects, taken in the money, played the "music" and made the necessary speech at the end. We have acted as official home-brew tester. This, however, ended after sampling a concoction made from honey and ants. There has to be a limit. All of which brings us to our latest. Three lads arrived at the office one morn to make an enquiry. Not, as you would think, to get a job with the Y.F.T.P. No, they came to us to join the Navy!

It is perhaps not generally known that at least one ex-member of this Service has attained the honour of Knighthood. This gentleman is Sir Louis Beale, or, to give him his full title, Sir Louis Bernhardt George Stephen Beale, K.C.M.G., C.B.E.

Sir Louis was a Forest Assistant in 1915 and some time in 1916 was appointed Lumber Commissioner in Toronto and on the Prairies, leaving the Service in 1919 to become His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Canada. This office he held from 1919 until 1925 and then went to New Zealand in the same capacity...to Malaya in charge of a special British mission... 1928-29...and was later Commercial Counsellor to the British Embassy in Shanghai.

He was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1929; Knight-Commander of St. Michael and St. George in 1937, and is now Commissioner-General for His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, his latest achievement being the organizing of the British Exhibit at the New York World's Fair, and we understand that he has made a great success of this, and an exhibit worthy of the British Empire.

The lads from the U. B. C. who are with us this season as Student Assistants are making a worth-while reputation for themselves. Here's one from Roy Eden (Sicamous).

"The lad from the University, who is getting away to a good start, was standing on the deck of the forestry launch watching the local Ranger Assistant 'Bud', put a tie-wire on the last of a string of poles that was to be towed into Sicamous. A strong wind was starting to kick up the lake so it was high time to be getting out from the rocky shoreline. Bud, in the dinghy, needed just one more spike to hold the log wire and this is what happened... Being somewhat hard of hearing the first lad turned to the Ranger to find out what Bud wanted:

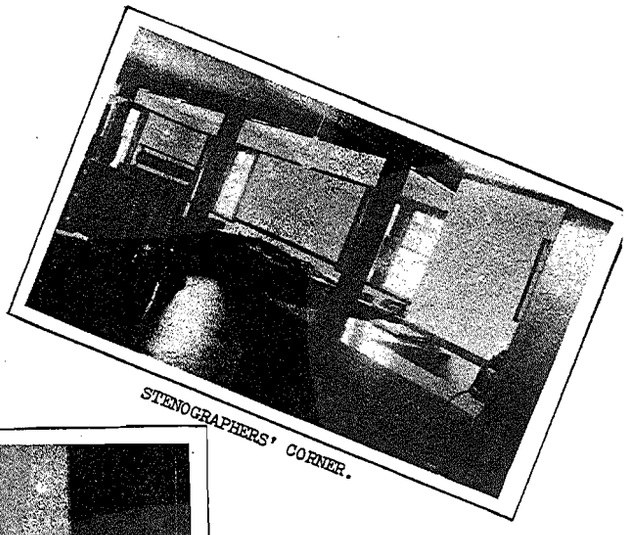
Ranger: "He needs another spike."
University Junior: "Do you want me to take it over?"
Ranger: "Yes, sure. How are you going to get there, walk?

By that time the Junior was stripped, all but his running shoes, and with one terrible flop off the deck was on his way to Bud with the spike between his teeth. The demonstration very nearly wrecked both Bud and the dinghy, but the spike was duly delivered. This was one sample of the co-operation between the boys, and believe me, the R.C.N.V.R. has nothing on the Forest Service Navy for material in the raw."

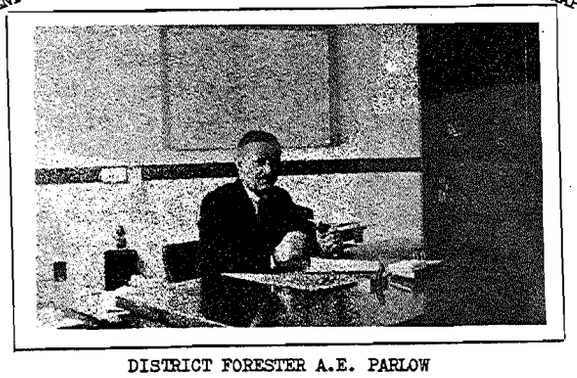
FORESTRY BRANCH LIBRARY VICTORIA, B. C.

NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICES - KAMLOOPS

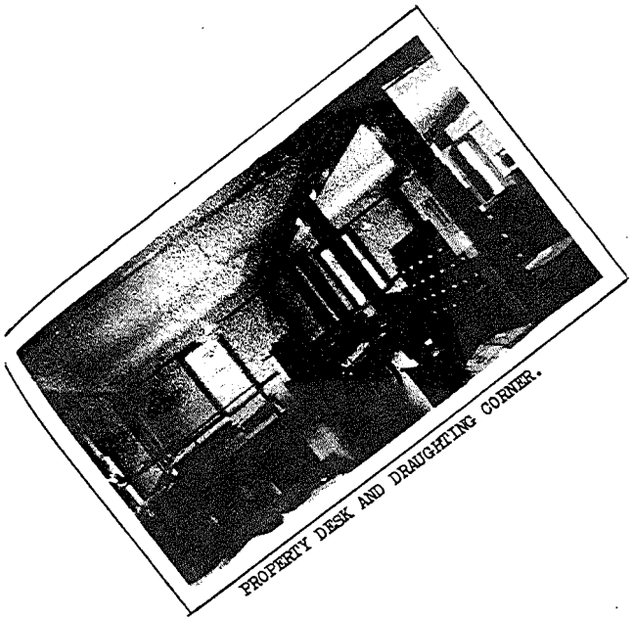
COUNTER SHOWING MANAGEMENT & GRAZING OFFICES



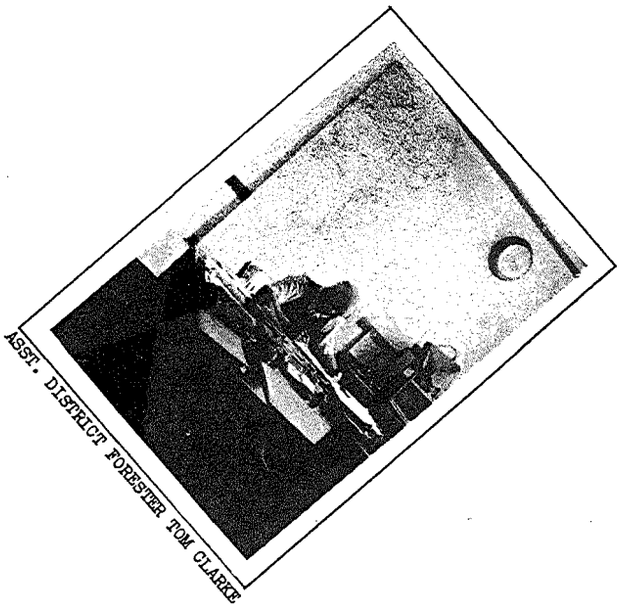
STENOGRAPHERS' CORNER.



DISTRICT FORESTER A.E. PARLOW



PROPERTY DESK AND DRAUGHTING CORNER.



ASST. DISTRICT FORESTER TOM CLARKE

On good authority we have heard of a curious happening at Victoria. That is, an unusually curious happening. Curious happenings at that...but enough. It appears that one of our favourite stenographers, who shall be nameless, applied for holiday leave starting July 24th, which was granted. The great day came...and so did our absent-minded lady. Yes, she forgot she was on holiday and was there bright and early with the rest of them. We are dumbfounded, and there is nothing else to do but to bust right out in poetry:

Oh lady, how could you perform such a thing,
Vacation so rare, why forget it.
With us, in July, we would give our right wing
To beat it, nor would we regret it.
Was it ennuied effect of Victoria clime?
Sense of duty, or habit? but drat it!
Don't do it again for the very next time
They'll likely be keeping you at it.

ATTENTION Dog Fanatics!

We have met many dog owners in the course of years, and, exercising great restraint, have listened to the lyrical descriptions of the wonderful sagacity shown by the various mutts. We have even heard persons (female) talk baby-talk to and shower misplaced affection on those irascible streaks of misery known as "Pekes." Recently we met a Mr. Miller at Penticton, and while speaking to him were told of the several wonderful things his Cocker spaniel could do. Said spaniel at the time playing around our heels.

Mr. Miller was smoking a tailor-made at the time of which about an inch was left. "Watch this," he said, and with the true cigarette smoker's nonchalance, tossed the glowing butt over his shoulder to the path. Immediately there was an excited and indignant yelp, and two relatively large paws came down on that butt. For about 10 seconds there was a whirlwind of dust and the butt was torn asunder and decently buried. All but one small piece. This the pup eyed with suspicion. It was easy to see that he suspected a spark might be left in that poor shred. So he picked it up and ate it.

We point with pride to this noble canine, for there, Gents, is a DOG.

Radio

We are still finding further uses for radio and the latest has some good points about it that may well be passed along for others to try out.

Ranger Perrin (Penticton) cannot use a radio in his office owing to strong local interference. He has a lookout, Campbell Mountain, which is radio-equipped and also has a phone on the local circuit. By the simple expedient of placing the phone receiver close to the speaker of the radio on the lookout and holding the phone transmitter close to the radio microphone, Ranger Perrin can be put through direct to any of his radio-equipped lookouts, and carry on a conversation direct from his office via phone and radio.

That this works was made known to the writer personally. While waiting at a service station for gas he was nailed by the service station man for the phone. Taking the receiver he found he was wanted by Ranger Fraser (Princeton), who was speaking through the radio at Campbell Mountain. Using radio procedure, he was able to carry on the conversation by phone from Penticton, via the Campbell Mountain phone and thence direct through the radio into the Princeton office. This is about 44 miles by air line and the conversation was perfectly clear and strong.

This may sound somewhat complicated as written; but the procedure is really very simple. Here's probably a better example...The lookout on Baldy Mountain wants to speak to Ranger Perrin. At the scheduled time he contacts Campbell Mountain and asks to be put through. Campbell Mt. calls the office at Penticton on the phone, gets the Ranger, places the phone receiver close to the radio speaker and holds the phone transmitter up against the radio microphone...then lets them go to it. Naturally this will not work if the reception is poor; but with any kind of fair to good reception it seems to be the clear rig.

REMARKS TO A REFRACTORY PUMP

(Addressed by Jon Anon)

Thou cursed mass of greasy metal, sitting there upon the sod.
Now I rant and much berate thee, tell thy faults to all the gods.
Two days since I did but test thee, and ye ran like startled hart.
And now, thou foul, inanimate object, ye sitteth and refuse to start.

Ah Yes! 'Tis now a different story; there is work now to be done.
Now's the time to shirk thy duty, lie and bask there in the sun.
For I packed thee up the mountain, thirsted till I'd e'en drink mud.
Galled and blistered to my backbone, climbed until I've sweated blud.

Over rock and under windfall, up five thousand feet or more;
Torn apart by clubs of devil, laboured I like Popeye's Toar.
Eaten up by winged insect, recipient of every woe,
I have heaved and lugged and tugged, and thou, thou slug, refuse to go.

Gad! But how thy makers praised thee, as fresh caught sap doth new wed bride.
But I, for two red rusted nickels would hurl thee down the mountain side.
Yes, they said, "But spin the starter, then dodge quick to 'scape the flood.
That sweeps with Mississippi fervour, churning forest fire to mud."

With bold and high imagination they thy merits voiced with pride.
But to those sons of old Munchausen, I with raspberries thee deride.
Where are these wat'ry emanations? from thee I've seen nary bit.
All the moisture thou hast spouted, I, on beerless days, could spit.

Three full hours now have I begged thee, prayed, cajoled thee, all in vain.
Taken out thy blasted innards, put them back in place again.
Now peeved, I take thee by the throttle, twist thy neck till sockets jump.
Phut! Phut! What!! What!! By Gosh she's started...
Grab the nozzle! GOOD OLD PUMP!!!

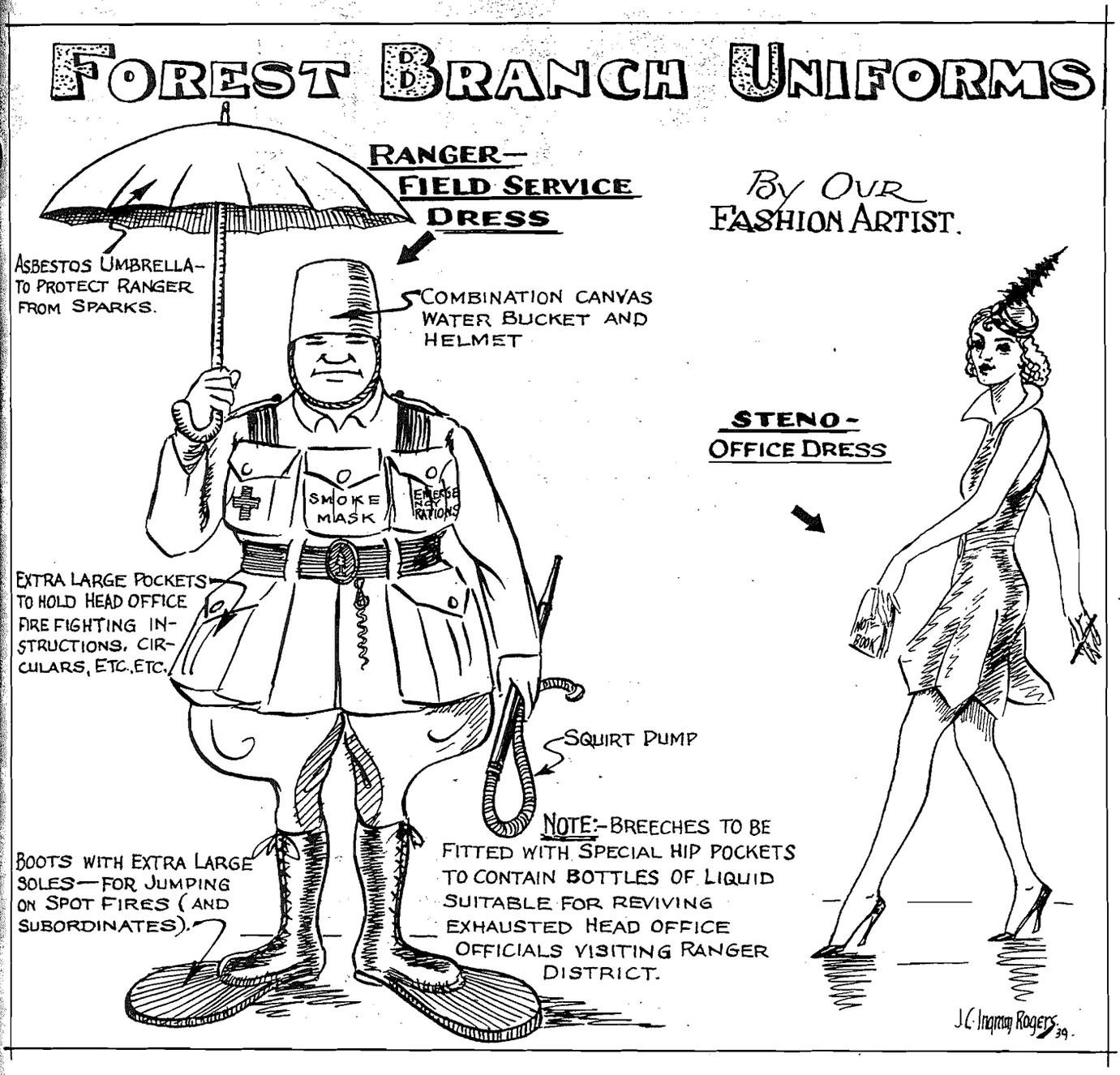
FASHION DEPARTMENT

The good old perennial, uniforms, seems to be coming to the fore again, and our Fashion Artist, always alert to the trend of the times, submits the accompanying sketches depicting his idea of what the well-dressed Forest Officer will be wearing in the course of the next few months, or years.

To uniform or not to uniform has been a question for heated discussion as far back as we can remember and we note with interest a decidedly modified reaction to the idea in recent years. Four or five years ago we were still firmly wedded to our dirty overalls and tin coats. Uniforms were an impractical ideal in the minds of a few ambitious laddies who persisted from time to time in trying to foist their folderols on a bunch of he-men who would have nothing to do with them. Now, behold, ranger meetings express their unqualified approval and pass resolutions recommending their adoption. Don't get us wrong in this. We speak as one who, in the light of long practical experience, is still sentimentally attached to the same dirty overalls. Equipment

will get oily and dirty; dirty oil will transfer itself to hands; and where, I ask you, is the natural place to wipe a dirty hand? Overall legs were ordained for the purpose and they are always there.

We have sat pretty much on the fence throughout this controversy, and certainly we reserve opinion regarding our artist's ideas of suitable dress, but are inclined to think that these reformed Rangers will put us all into uniform before we are much older.

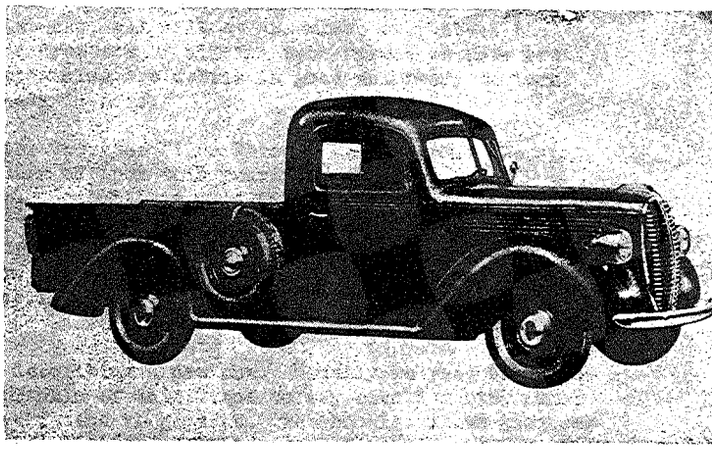


A GROWING FAMILY

Over a space of time our Car family has grown considerably, and particularly during the past few years. Digging back into our musty records we find that in 1917 we had exactly 14 cars--all Fords and all Roadsters, with the then familiar "little red box" installed in place of the duck-bill. Our total today is 238 units, or an increase of 1700% in approximately 20 years.

It is a far cry back to those days, my masters, when you sat right up in the air and tore along at 25 miles per, with curtains flapping and with very little shelter from the stormy blasts. Compare those cars with the ultra-modern streamlined model you drive today, with all its doo-dads and dingusses, closed cab, heaters, and what have you, and yet they still talk about the "good old days". Bah! (The determined-looking albeit "uniformless" gent in our first illustration on the following page now rates something like a Chrysler).

- 1917 -



- 1939 -

The following particulars of our modern fleet may be of interest:

Light Deliveries	146	Coupes	28	2-ton Trucks	8	Coaches	3	2½-ton Trucks	4
Sedan Deliveries	18	Sedans	23	1½-2-ton "	5	Suburban Carryall	1	5-ton "	2

The coupe is an entirely new member this year, and lest you should wonder what a "carry-all suburban" is, it is merely a glorified station wagon and is likely to be mistaken for a hotel bus. As the Department to which it is on charge may be touchy we will say no more about it.

While on the subject of cars, the bloke who tries to keep some sort of track of them often wonders why, in these days of efficiency, one company has 10 figures for their serial numbers, or something like this: 9131480283. Why don't they use some of the alphabet and cut 6 figures out? Anyway, our system of numbering the cars does help, otherwise it would be necessary to write these 10 figures every time one referred to a car of that particular make.

We are also now the proud possessors of 6 "Cats" and 2 "Kittens", and we can foresee the time coming when we shall have the aeroplane added to our transportation system.

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Listening in on an Operation discussion involving the whereabouts of cars:
Gregg: "The only way we can be sure where these D----D cars and trucks will be is to take off the wheels...Then they'll stay put."
Comment: Sure. But some of the things sent up from the Coast stay put without taking the wheels off. We believe half the engines were retained.

.....

Those Certain Cars

We recently sluffed on long-suffering "George" a car we found difficulty in placing elsewhere. It was a change from his light delivery, anyway. Leaving town with his newly Simonised acquisition, George drove home at this usual stately place. He has one of those districts where party lines abound, and they are amazingly efficient...if you know what we mean. His road home parallelled one such. Arriving at his headquarters village he was met by a small but sorrowful-looking crowd, but none the less curious. They were not there to meet George, however. No. They were there to view the corpse! Yes, it was one of those cars we gave George. Car No. So-and-So was promptly dubbed "The Hearse." Flash....George has just phoned to say he has now been mistaken for the official dog-catcher.

.....

There are probably many forest officers like the writer who would have at various times offered their souls and what was left of their shirts for a really good reliable back-firing gadget. There are doubtless also many forest officers who will ask, "What's wrong with the Hauck torch, or the Hauck brush burner, or the common railroad flare?" There are others who will remind me of certain types of cigarette lighters. We are not interested in any of these pieces of equipment. What we want is something that will burn what we want burned, when we want it burned. For, in our opinion, back-firing a guard is one of the most jittery jobs on the fire-line.

The conditions you want are such that the ground debris will burn well, but not too fast. Also such that your fire will not climb into the tops. It must burn briskly enough, however, to clear off a good swath towards the main fire before things start to heat up. If you start too early, it won't burn. If you start too late, it's just too bad. You may not be able to hold your guard. There is usually a period in between when everything will go along smoothly; but that period is seldom of any worthwhile duration. You have to work fast while it lasts.

To send a crew along the line with matches is both a waste of time and a poor example. If a gas or coal-oil torch will work for you, that is so much the better. The best idea we have yet struck is an ordinary hand-tank pump full of coal oil, and a spray nozzle. One man goes ahead and sprays the line; another follows with a coal-oil torch. This will start your back-fire and, if worked properly, will leave a line of fire along the guard with very few misses.

However, like other ideas, this has its drawbacks, and will at the most, only start the fire, which should be ready to burn. This is the same drawback of all the back-firers we have yet come across. In short, they will start a back-fire providing the debris is good and ready to burn. By this time, usually, everything else is good and ready to burn.

Along the lines of research, we tried out the Forester Flame Thrower last season. We thought it sufficiently good enough to purchase a number of them this year. This gadget is a simple torch arrangement attached to a hand-tank pump. Coal oil is used in the tank. The fuel comes out of the business end in the form of a spray, and passes through a lighted torch at the end of the attachment. As it passes through it ignites and throws a flame up to 12 feet. When on occasion the spray does not ignite, it at least covers the debris with a highly inflammable film which will soon catch fire from the flame-thrower itself. This gadget is not quite the rig we want, but it is the best we have struck yet.

We have recently received an advertisement describing a new one. Usually we read the manufacturers' description of his products with a good sprinkle of salt...not to say ribald mirth. This one, however, sounds good enough for a trial, which we intend to give it. The booklet shows pictures of this gadget burning stumps, splitting rocks (by heat) cleaning out overgrown ditches, etc.

Our mounting respect for it somewhat faded when it showed the flame-gun being used for thawing out frozen pipes. That seemed to bring the thing down to the sissy class again. The gadget we want will not be safe to turn loose in confined quarters. We want something that if turned on inside a building would promptly burn it down. This rig, however, has a valve which controls the heat. Heat generated, say the makers, goes up to 2000 degrees. Something along the lines of the Flammerwerfer that "Jerry" used to warm us up with. Burning coal-oil, range oil, fuel oil or similar, it gives a flat flame, which is to be desired, and weighs 17 lbs.

This may be the clear rig, anyway, it seems worth a try...for we do want a back-firer. Something really devastating...something that will frizzle off a guard while the dew is still holding the main fire. And we'd rather not wait till we go down below and meet the Chief Fireman.

.....

HERE'S TO US

The horse and mule live thirty years
And nothing know of wines and beers;

The goat and sheep at twenty die
And never taste of Scotch and Rye;

The cow drinks water by the ton
At eighteen she is mostly done;

The dog at fifteen cashes in
Without the aid of rum and gin;

The cat in milk and water soaks
And then in twelve short years it croaks;

The modest, sober, bone-dry hen
Lays eggs for six, then dies at ten;

ALL ANIMALS ARE STRICTLY DRY-
THEY SINLESS LIVE THEN SWIFTLY DIE.
BUT SINFUL, GINFUL, RUM-SOAKED MEN
SURVIVE FOR THREE SCORE YEARS AND TEN!

From: "Veld Trails", Johannesburg, S.A.

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We have a lengthy clipping from the "Vernon News" of August 10th anent JACK McCLUSKEY (Vernon), on completion of 25 years' service with the Forest Branch in that District. We hasten to add our own congratulations and regret that our esteemed competitor, the News, should have beat us to it. Going to press about once in two months, however, makes it somewhat difficult to catch events on the appropriate date. We are glad to note that, so far as appearance and action go, Jack gives promise of turning in another 25. We'll hope to be the first to offer congratulations on completion of his 50th year.

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We are advised on good authority that Mary Elizabeth Andrews was duly checked in at 3.45 P.M., July 16th. Congratulations and cigars are in order.

Assistant Ranger Frank Johnson (Barriere) is now the proud father of a daughter. And when we say "proud" we mean PROUD.

Frank's superior officer, George Mayson (also Barriere) goes one better. George is now a "Grand-pop! We are not going to say anything about this; about being proud or such. But we will say that if that is George's chest sticking out he wants to keep traffic signals in mind when turning corners.

We are pleased to note that we have only births to record. No marriages noted, but if the rumour we hear from the cow country is true, there's another good man sinking fast. We would not have believed it in this case; but there you are. Luv is a wonderful thing and catches the best of us...mostly when we are least aware of it.

Nobody has gone and died on us, so this ends our paragraph under social notes. Being a respectable paper, so far, we are not mentioning any parties held.

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. This number edited .
. - by - .
. T.A. Clarke, Kamloops.
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