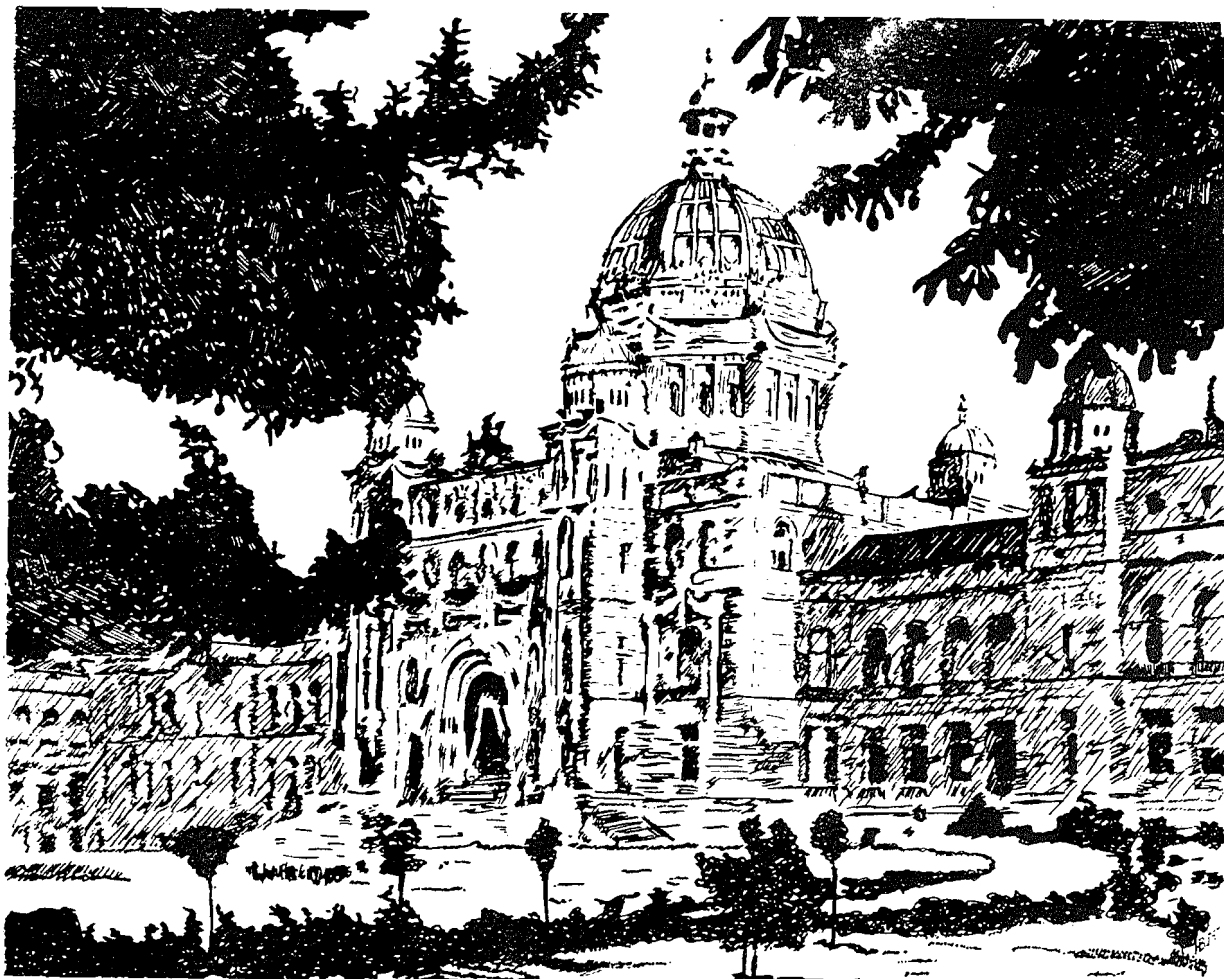




FOREST BRANCH NEWS LETTER

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

No. 36

Victoria, B.C., September 26, 1940.

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In these days of sudden developments we are never sure that a news item will be news by the time it is printed. A year ago a single move among the permanent staff was a scoop; today we are seriously considering keeping track of the personnel through the use of property receipts, losses, and transfers. But a year ago we did not consider our war quite so seriously as we do now. A year ago there was no Timber Control Board. A year ago there was no Timber Director for the Dominion; there wasn't even an Assistant to the Timber Director of the Dominion. A year ago there was no Forestry Corps. A year ago everything was almost routine and good and rosy, and we sat on the end of our spine in front of the fireplace scratching out house plans on the margins of expense sheets, not realizing that a year hence we would be scratching at our thinning hair in a vain effort to uncover a leading line for this News Letter.

In the light of all that we summarize our batting averages from the last issue to date as follows:

Major A.E. Parlow of Kamloops is now O.C. of #6 Company, Canadian Forestry Corps.

O.V. Maude-Roxby and C.L. Armstrong, both also of Kamloops, have Rankings of Captain and Lieutenant respectively under Major Parlow.

L.S. Hope of Prince Rupert has joined the machine-gun section of the Canadian Scottish at Victoria.

J. Boydell, Ranger at Revelstoke, is now Lieutenant in the Rocky Mountain Rangers.

A.C. Kinnear of the Economics Division has joined the Engineers.

In the Fort George District Assistant Rangers E.F. Taggart, W.D. Hay, A.J. Kirk, and Patrolman A. Smith have joined the colours. Les Woods and Thos. Ridler formerly on the temporary staff, have both enlisted in the 2nd Canadian Scottish as Instructors. "Les" slogged his way up from the Flanders mud to the Royal Air Force in the last war, and "Tom" became a musketry instructor after being wounded several times.

F.J.G. (Barney) Johnson is back in his old stamping ground with the Navy.

W.E. Jansen, Assistant Ranger at Ganges has forsaken boating for soldiering.

C.L. Sandey, Launch Engineer, Vancouver; J.H. Wilcox and C.J. Wright, Lookouts, Kamloops; H.G. Mayson, A.B. (Pop) Ritchie, Assistant Rangers, Kamloops; are all in uniform.

Alex Gordon, Victoria, is a Lieutenant in the Forestry Corps.

Latest tally: 15 permanent and 19 temporary men enlisted.

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Fire Control Notes Extraordinary

On the strict understanding that no quotation of policy (direct or implied) will be derived from the following, we publish a portion of a recent preliminary fire report:

Cause: Lightning. Remarks: 5 men - .075 acres - cost \$85.00. Under control.

A simple calculation reveals that similar action on a fire of one acre would call for a crew of 66-2/3 men. That's what we call getting the fire young and bringing it up to suit yourself--to say nothing of the problem of double-decking the fire crew.

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While the two northern Forest Districts have been enjoying the lightest fire season in years their southern contemporaries have been paying the piper. Kamloops' report of 178 fires as a direct result of the electrical storm of July 12th is topped only by Nelson's report of 99 fires in the Nakusp Ranger District alone from an offshoot of the same storm. This should be some sort of a record.

Ranger J.W. McCluskey is now sporting the moniker "Blitzkreig" McCluskey since his authentic prophecy of the disastrous electrical storm noted above--and right to the day too! However "Blitzkreig" McCluskey's prophecy loses some of its prophetic romance when it is learned that he has made the same prognostication for every 12th of July since the big flood.

The Nelson District, either in spite of or because of its overload of fires this season, has reported enthusiastically on the use of a 35 Cletrac and Bulldozer on some of its larger fires. A "Kitten" was also found indispensable in transporting materials and equipment.

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If the Workmen's Compensation Board officials are not grey-headed and furrow-browed by now they should be. Take for example the excerpt from a W.C.B. Form #6:

Question: What were you doing at the time?
Answer: Running away from fire.
Question: Was it for the purpose of your employer's business?
Answer: Yes.
Question: Was it part of your regular work?
Answer: Yes.

Here and There

F.S. McKinnon has recently arrived back from a visit to the Kananaskis Forest Reserve in Alberta.

George Silburn and Ian MacQueen are hurling invectives at the inclement weather in the Fort George District, their reconnaissance and lookout visibility mapping respectively being affected by the continual downpour.

Ed Charlesworth is in the same District keeping his eye on the scaling activity besides--but we promised Ed we wouldn't say any more.



Jack Benton and plane, bulging with camera and accessories, landed at Prince George recently enroute to Sifton Pass and Lower Post.

W.G. (Cinema) Henning has been showing Forest Branch films throughout the Fort George District and reports capacity houses and enthusiastic reception of the entertainment and instruction presented. W.C. Saunders has been accompanying him organizing Young Ranger Bands.

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R.H. Chestnut's contribution to the last issue of the News Letter was read with interest and stirred recollections of another old-time logger by the name of Rogers, possibly the same man.

It was back in those dim, dead days--1864 if our memory doesn't fail us--when the first mill in B.C. was flourishing on what is now the site of the Assembly wharf at Port Alberni. At that time Bull-of-the-Woods Rogers had his timber beasts patiently whittling away at the six-foot firs with axes brought out from England, and which bore a striking resemblance to ye olde time executioner's weapon. Bull-of-the-Woods Rogers was not long in expressing vituperatively his opinion on the suitability of those "off-with-her head" contraptions, and, being of a resourceful



nature he set about to design an axe that could be swung all day from a spring board, and which would bite effectively into an undercut without wedging itself there. And as timber grew thick along Roger's Creek he decided that his new axe should have two cutting edges in order that his fallers might apply the effort of thier back-swing to the tree behind them. (Rumour was rampant that the Bull-of-the-Woods had hired out from Edinburgh.)



But Bull-of-the-Woods Rogers did not possess any great "larnin'", and consequently did not pen any florid descriptions, nor did he pencil any detailed drawing of his new axe, but as aforementioned, his quality of resourcefulness being not strained, he sat himself down and whittled out of good, dry, red cedar a full-sized model of a double-bitted axehead, differing not a great deal from the falling axe in common use today.

Second only to Bull-of-the-Woods Rogers' pride in his adjectival expressiveness was his love for quality in his woods tools. So when the opportunity presented itself he shipped to the Sheffield Steel Company in England the model of his new axe with brief and blunt instructions to forge from the best Sheffield steel and return pronto 100 axeheads as per his model. In due course, weeks, months, yes, years later, the good ship bearing his order docked alongside the mill and Bull-of-the-Woods Rogers stomped proudly aboard with his troupe of timber beasts to take delivery of their new stream-lined axeheads. But as box after box of the axes was opened the air in the ship's hold became as blue as the sky at its mast. The axeheads down to the last one were perfections of Sheffield craftsmanship; but they all lacked that one small detail of practical perfection--there was no eye for the handle!!

Several hours later, when the air had cleared sufficiently about Bull-of-the-Woods Roger's head to allow the halo to stagger back to its original precarious position, he set himself to thinking. Yes, now that he did think of it, he hadn't whittled an eye for the axe-handle in his dry, red cedar model.

And for years and years those blind axeheads lay about in an old warehouse in Alberni, and it wasn't so many years ago that the last one disappeared from the warehouse floor. And we'll bet you could still dig out the odd one from among the litters of junk in the old-timers' woodsheds--we betcha!

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And then there was the prospective Assistant Ranger who thought that his answer of "Charlie McCarthy" should have given him 100% rating on the question which read: "What is dressed lumber?"

Right on the heels of that, Hazel-Hoe, some time ago, is purported to have said that the difference between a mosquito bite and woolen underwear is that two hands are adequate for a mosquito bite.

We have a complaint from a Forest Officer, who prefers to be anonymous. He made up the mosquito lotion recommended in the previous News Letter according to formula, applied it generously and presented himself before friend wife for approval. Friend wife ejaculated, "I'd rather have the mosquitoes."

But what worries our Forest Officer is whether his wife meant she preferred the mosquitoes to the lotion or to him.

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Forest Branch S.P.F. sets are doing yeoman service in keeping the Topographic Survey parties in the Lower Post country in touch with civilization. On Sunday, July 21st, a radio report from the Stewart party revealed that "Bill" Moffatt had been struck by lightning five miles from camp while erecting a cairn on a mountain top. Fortunately the bolt did not strike the cairn and "Bill" recovered a few days later after being carried out by a rescue party and he is now none the worse for the experience. The force of the strike caused him to fall a considerable way down the mountain. A plane was held in readiness at Fort St. James to bring him out to hospital if necessary and radio contact was maintained with the help of Martin Starrett of the Babine Patrol, Albert Biederman on Pilot Mountain Lookout, and Prince George sets.

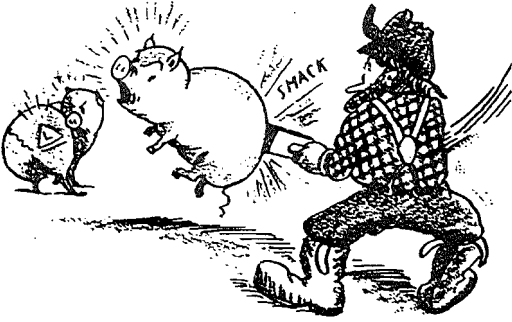
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Shades of the past! We have a letter from Bill Hall who states that he is on some boat, going somewhere, to do something. This new "Secrecy Act" has absolutely no respect for editors of News Letters. But Bill also says that he left Jerry Andrews in England somewhere, and also says he is feeling fine somehow.

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As we go to press we have received a laconic radio report from Dome Mt. Lookout: 4.45 P.M., mostly cloudy, showery, visibility 3 miles, nothing further to report except that there is a grizzly nosing around my cabin below, will have to wait until he leaves before I can go down to eat! Station CY8B off and clear. (No further report has been received and we are unable to advise definitely which has eaten: the bear or Einar Jensen.)

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There's many a slip between something and something or other. And just look what it can lead to! It took two years of correspondence between the Department of Agriculture, the Victoria Office of the Forest Branch, the Prince George Office, and the Pouce Coupe Office to fathom the mystery which the following letter unravels:

District Forester,
Prince George, B.C.

Mr. X. was recently interviewed regarding his application for Timber Mark.

Early in the fall of 1938 Mr. X. wrote to the Department of Agriculture, Victoria, for a registered "Hog Brand" to be used in identifying his hogs when shipped in mixed carloads.

Evidently Mr. X's handwriting is not of the best and the copy of the letter forwarded by the Department of Agriculture to the Forest Branch quoted Mr. X. as wanting a "log brand".

When in due course Mr. X. received an application for a Timber Mark he became somewhat skeptical of what action the S.P.C.A. might take in the event he should use a stamping hammer with which to brand his hogs. He promptly dropped the matter.

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Following receipt of report on Kamloops Fire No. 75, discovered and extinguished by David Raymer, aged 5 (as reported in our last Letter), it occurred to us that David would be a good man with whom to park a few fire-fighting tools.

Tom Simmons accordingly scoured the town for shovel and bucket adapted to five-year-old hands and these we sent forward in due course. We would like it understood that these tools were not toys. They were good, honest fire-fighting equipment on small scale. Joss Wood presented them and reports as follows:

"In reply to your letter of the 16th inst. and footnote thereon, shovel and bucket were duly presented on Sunday, July 21st, and if there was one proud boy it was David. This is an occasion I think he will be a long time in forgetting.

"To my way of thinking, the effect on the parents, relations and all the adults who were there will be far-reaching. This applies also to a number of tourists who were at the lake; they all were very deeply impressed to think there was such intimate relationship between the head office and the field, and the comments passed were very complimentary to our organization.

"Still another effort in the line of conservation must be recorded from this lodge. While all the men were away on fires Mrs. Thomson saw a lightning fire. All the tourists' cars were locked and her own was away, so she went on foot to the nearest phone to report it and get help--5½ miles in 55 minutes."

We think we should do something for Mrs. Thomson too, but can't decide what it should be. A bicycle or a car seems to be indicated but are afraid we wouldn't get away with it. We will have to content ourselves this time with hoping the lodge will put in a telephone line before the next lightning fire finds Mrs. Thomson alone with the responsibility of reporting it.

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Another Bear Story

With the publication of the explanation of Property Loss Certificate covering one compass box made by Assistant Ranger Gilmore...it is expected that the News Letter will be flooded with bear stories.

Doubtless there will also be ribald comment made by the skeptical people one so often, unfortunately, meets in all walks of life. One such comment has already been made in fact, and by the Editor. He surely cannot be in earnest when he suggests that the bear put the coat on and used the compass to run lines through his berry patch. A bear does not need compass lines of course, and it is equally obvious that the coat would not fit.

One hesitates to relate a bear story, no matter how true, for it is certain to receive ridicule; which to a sensitive nature such as the writer's, is very painful. However, I will tell this story; not so much for its obvious truth as for its illustration of the primitive reasoning powers shown by the animal:

It is the custom around Campbell River for grown-up men to wear a bright red "bone-dry" hat during the hunting season. This is not for adornment, as some ladies may suppose, but from some queer idea that it will protect them while in the woods from the city hunter infesting the bush at this time. I myself scorn such weird beliefs, for I reason that the hunter can see me easy enough without attracting his attention by wearing a scarlet lure. But to get on with my story....

While cruising a piece of timber early this summer, I had a feeling that I was being stalked. Turning round suddenly, I confronted a fair sized bear. As in the case of Mr. Gilmore, I immediately handed him my coat. This seems the usual procedure in such cases. While he examined the coat I took a seat in a handy Maple. The bear apparently did not

like my coat (my compass being in my pants pocket.) Neither did he like my next offering, my biltmore stick. Still not thinking of my compass, I fell back on my lunch, which was tied up in a big red bandana handkerchief. This satisfied him and he went off in a direction N. 25 E. Having no lunch now, I went off back to the boat in a direction S. 25 W. which, while somewhat longer, was much better going.

So far there is not much to this bear story. In fact it runs along the commonplace. But, now read the sequel.

This summer a local lady was out picking berries and while on a fair sized bush, heard another berry picker on the other side. Curious as to this person, she peered around the bush and saw a head covered with a bright red snood affair. Being chummy she addressed the other party, who also turning round proved to be my bear, with my bandana tied around his head.

The bear had reasoned that while wearing the snood he was safe from hunters...very faulty logic of course, but still showing reasoning power of approximately the same order as that of the red-topped hunter.

The critics will howl with glee of course and point out that if the lady was picking berries during the summer it must have been a long time to the hunting season. To the skeptics I will at once admit this. I am not trying to explain the bear's reasoning; I am merely reporting facts. Perhaps he hadn't seen a calendar for some time...or possibly he expects an early winter.

I realise that with the printing of this simple anecdote I will be placed, with Mr. Gilmore, in the "Believe It or Not" class. It is the penalty we nature observers have to pay...which is why I will not relate the story of the Bear and the Striped Pants and other bear stories equally as true as the above. (J.A.P.)

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We report with deep regret the death of Harold (Joe) Smith at Vancouver on July 15th last. Joe joined our ranks as Assistant Ranger on his return from overseas in 1918. He received his Ranger appointment in 1921 and became Supervisor in 1923, in which capacity he continued in the Vancouver District to the time of his death. He leaves behind a host of friends in the Service.

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E.G. (Si) Oldham rejoices in the arrival of Penelope Jane somewhere around August 27th. Si was a little vague about the date; or perhaps our memory is slipping a bit.

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We are indebted to Harry Forse, Prince George for this Letter; also for the original pen and ink sketch of the Parliament Buildings at Victoria on our title page.

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