

The Schoen Lake Tree

This is the story of a tree, the Shoen Lake Tree—a section of which stands on the second floor of the Forestry and Geology Building, U.N.B.)

About 1090 years ago—around the year 865—there spiralled to the forest floor near Shoen Lake on northeast Vancouver Island a tiny winged seed. It fell from the newly-opened cone of a towering Douglas fir, and, more fortunate than its fellow-parachutists, came to rest in a moist, sheltered hollow. A redicle went down, cotyledons came up, and a monarch began to grow.

It grew well. The wet Pacific winds brought abundant rain, the giants about it gave shelter from the occasional gales, and winters were mild. Fire except from lightning, held few terrors, for the red man with his taste for cooked food was a scarce animal, and the white man was unknown.

Over in England at this time another monarch was beginning his career: Alfred the Great, now king of Wessex, was soon to be ruler of all England. Our tree was then an infant of a half-dozen years. When Alfred died in 899, 28 years later, the infant had become a sturdy youth, and boasted 11 inches across the butt, and perhaps 50 feet in height.

The tree was 130-odd years old when the first white man sighted eastern North America. (This was Heljulf, the Norseman, who sailed from Iceland in 1000 A.D.) By this time it had added another 11 inches to its butt diameter. The Battle of Hastings, 5000 miles to the east, was of small significance to the tree. More important was the battle for water and space, for now, at 200 years of age, it was pushing its green pyramid into the stubborn canopy some 80 feet above.

When King John sweated at the Magna Carta signing in 1215, our tree was sweating also, for the piercing of the canopy was one of the most critical periods of its existence, and competition was everywhere. It was now three feet across, and still young. The diameter steadily grew:

1431—Joan of Arc burned at the stake 52 inches
1492—Columbus reached America 56 inches
1513—Balboa discovered the Pacific 57 inches
1564—Shakespeare was born 57 inches

And the years piled up:

718 years old—Sir Humphrey Gilbert takes possession of Nfld.
743 years old—Quebec founded

Hy-A-Watta

On the shore of Lake St. Nora,
On the sands laid down by water,
All the young men are assembled
In the lodge of forest learning,
Listening to the monstrous story
Of the wonderful adventures
Waiting for them in the future
Told by Site-les, son of Auger.
"Fifty years from hence," he told them,

"Management will be no problem;
Leave the forest grist for chippers,
Let the soils become degraded:
Automation will replace us,
And the young men leave the woodland."

"Hark you!" shouted young Boy-oo-cos,

As he entered in the doorway,
"I am tired of all this talking,
Tired of all the old man's stories."
Then from forth his little soils bag
Forth he drew with joyous manner
Maps of depths, regimes and patterns:

Blueprints for the distant future.
"We must cultivate the forests,
Know what trees for growth require,

Become farmers of the woodlands,
Match the species to the soil.
Should the soils become degraded,
Then 'tis time for 'mellioration,
Time to change decay organic,
Time to hault process geelsolic.
Should the trees show leaves chloroic,

Should the height growth be in question,

These are problems in nutrition:
Fertilize with salts of potash,
And in lime or super-phosphate;
Fertile soils provide the answer.
Even deserts and the wasteland
Will all fall before our secrets."
And the name of young Boy-oo-cos,
Lingers still among the listeners,
And in winter when the snowflakes
Whirl in eddies 'round the lodges,
"There," they cry, "comes young Boy-oo-cos,

He is dancing through the forest;
He is gathering in his harvest."

* The text of this narrative was found by K. A. Armon on a piece of birch bark imbedded in the C horizon of a soil pit excavated in Block 17 of the University Forest. The Huroquos title may be freely translated as "Soils in the Future."

"Annual Ring," 1957.

Four years later Captain George Vancouver circumnavigated the island. And, inevitably, there came in 1825, a botanist, one Douglas from Scotland. He was greatly impressed by these giant and abundant evergreens, and honored them with his name. Thus our patriarch, now a noble 960-year-old and until now variously called spruce, hemlock and even pine, received its present name of Douglas fir.

Things now began to happen in the sprawling land across the Johnstone Strait. The men of Canada began to draw lines upon their country. They fashioned a Dominion of four provinces, in 1867, and a few years later added three more—Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia. Now the tree stood on official Canadian earth. The creation of Alberta and

Saskatchewan in 1905 made this Canadian earth a continuous nation—"A Mari Usque ad Mare"—though stubborn Newfoundland was to mar the beauty of the phrase for a few decades yet.

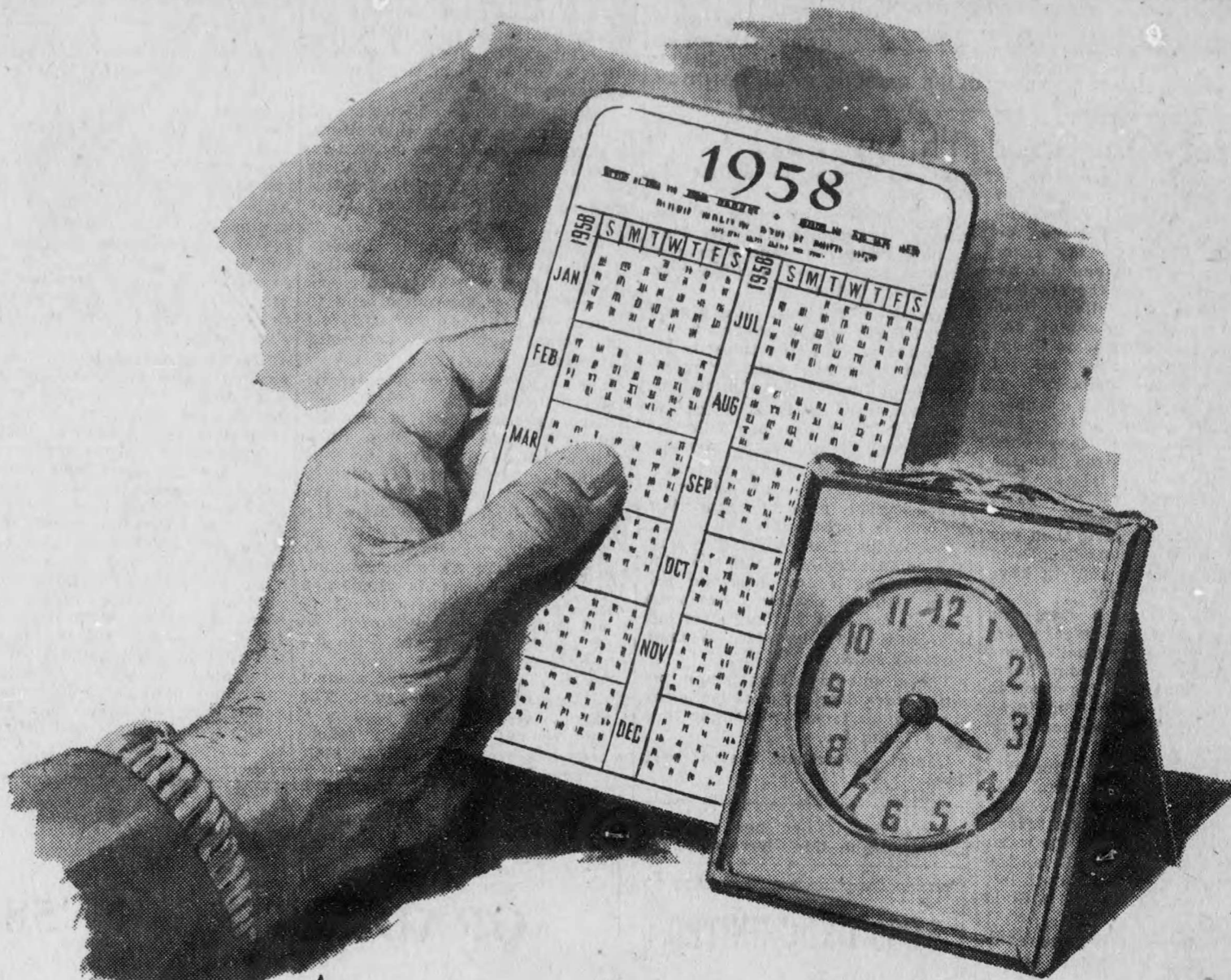
World War I found the tree nearly 1050 years old, and the rumble had scarcely died when World War II thundered into being. By this time the diameter growth had slowed to a small millimeter a year. Only a fraction of an inch more was to be added before its death.

In 1952, the year that Queen Elizabeth II ascended the throne, and Canada's first television station opened in Montreal, some men came to the grove of giants. They were from Canadian Forest Products Limited, (which holds extensive timber licenses in the area)

and they had come to cut trees. Among those chosen to be felled was our 250-foot patriarch, and the power saw soon made yellow sawdust fly.

Thus a small biped called man wishing to make for himself a house, a bridge, or a ship, undid in minutes the work of 10 centuries—and rightly so. History that day came to a standstill for the tree, and the long cry of "Timber-r-r" was its death-knell.

**Deadline Date
for Intramural Water
Polo entries, Saturday
November 9th**



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