

Forest Management: *The Search for Balance*

Canada's forests are both an integral part of the environment and an important contributor to the country's economy. The history of the relationship between environmentalists and those in the forest industry has been one of understandable conflict, with the interests of the latter entailing that trees be cut down and the interests of the former demanding that they not be. Trees, however, are a renewable resource, and, through proper forest management, the interests of both environmentalists and forest industrialists may be preserved. This means that the country's economy and the health of the forests themselves will be assured.

With exports valued at \$23 billion, Canada is the world's leading exporter of forest products. Over one fifth of all logging and wood and paper production is Canadian.

Accounting for 10 per cent of Canada's value-added goods production and with a trade surplus of nearly \$19 billion, the forest industry is a major contributor to our positive trade balance.

In addition, the forest industry directly employs almost 300 000 people, with twice that number employed by companies supporting the industry. About 350 towns and communities exist solely because of this industry. Still on the rise, the industry grew by 71 per cent between 1982 and 1987. Indeed, few countries rely as heavily on forests for their economic and social well-being as Canada does.

Renewable though they may be, Canada's forests are not inexhaustible, and clearly more than just the livelihood of the forest industry depends on proper forest management. Deforestation affects plane-

tary recycling of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen and is a major contributor to global warming. As an integral part of the plant and animal ecosystems, which include forests, human existence itself is dependent on the health of our forests.

Fighting the Forest's Natural Enemies

It should be noted that the forest industry accounts for only about half of the trees lost in Canada. An equal number of trees is destroyed each year by fire and pests. In 1990 alone, over 9 000 forest fires burned in Canada; while humans are responsible for many, the greater number is attributable to natural causes, particularly lightning.

The Government of Canada, along with the 10 provincial governments and private industry, has assumed the task of eliminating our parks and forests of the effects of these hazards. In addition to developing safer chemical and biological pesticides and herbicides for strictly controlled use, Canada has become a world leader in the prevention and combatting of forest fires. Canada is one of the world's largest exporters of water bombers, the only effective means of fighting fires in remote areas, and, at home,

uses computer technology extensively to help predict the number and location of fires in a given season.

Reforestation: the Key to Survival

Of all the methods used in maintaining our forests, none is as important as reforestation. Canada's planting record indicates a tripling of the area planted between 1975 and 1990 and a four-fold increase in the number of trees planted. Canada currently plants one billion trees annually, two trees for every one cut. A recent study has shown that the net growing volume of Canada's forests actually increased by 693 million cubic metres, or 2.5 per cent, from 1976 to 1986.

Our role in reforestation doesn't stop there. Canada is a leader in research to improve both the quality and the survival of nursery seedlings, as well as to achieve a better balance between young and mature trees.

Through reforestation, improved fire prevention and combatting technology, and the use of safer insecticides and herbicides, Canada has taken a strong position in ensuring both industrial growth in the forest industry and the maintenance of the environment. The future of our children, and theirs, depends on it. 🍁

Through proper forest management, the interests of both environmentalists and forest industrialists can be preserved.



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