

VISIT TO BLOOMFIELD STATION

AUGUST 5, 1970

A brief was presented by Reverend W. E. Hart supported by Mr. Scowsbow dealing with the small woodlot farmer of rural New Brunswick. In addition to the members of the Committee, Gordon Fairweather, M.P. and Mr. Sherwood, M.L.A. were in attendance.

The following are the main points which came out of the presentation and discussion:

New Brunswick is 85 percent forest and the demand for pulp-wood by the year 2000 is estimated to be four times the current demand.

Between 1861 and 1961, the amount of cleared land that is reverting to forest is indicated by the fact that 15,826 acres were clear in 1861 in King's County, and in 1961, only 7,858 were clear. A woodlot must be greater than 600 acres to provide even a meagre income.

Large companies are buying up small woodlots (free-hold land). Reverend Hart believes that a small owner can produce and sell pulpwood cheaper than the large companies. However, the demand for pulp-wood is such that the large companies can use only their land to meet the demand, keep the mills fully busy, and hence, buy from the small woodlot operator at the company's price.

Pulp and paper companies are monopolies in buying and selling wood pulp. Of the crown land, 45 percent of the New Brunswick total, over 80 percent is leased to large pulp and paper companies. Even the 29 percent which has small holdings is not necessarily owned by small operators.

Reverend Hart on Sweden—Sweden has an efficient forestry industry because there are very strong forest owner associations. They export a finished product unlike New Brunswick. They have strong buying and selling cooperatives. They train wood cutters as a profession and provide full time employment unlike New Brunswick which has no trained wood cutters, and provides work for only six months of the year.

Mr. Sherwood suggested that the takeover of the small holdings by the big companies is on. He says that 30 percent of the New Brunswick economy is based upon agriculture, that people get off the land for purely economic reasons (the Swedish situation is different in that there is not as much inducement for the Swedes to leave the farm because the difference in income attainable in the cities and in the rural areas is not that much different).

Scowsbow is a farmer and is concerned with the exodus to the cities which he feels is basically caused by the large rise in agricultural productivity which has resulted in larger, more viable farm units. He says that farmers would be happier to be poor on their farms, than poor in the city.