

The prospect of shortage is particularly intense in New Brunswick, where the province has literally frozen softwood harvests at current levels over the next growth cycle of 40 years.

In New Brunswick we actually are a net importer of wood. We do not have to talk about 10 or 15 or 20 years in the future being short of wood, we are short of wood today. That is why we are managing more intensely than any other province in Canada.

We are short roughly 300,000 cords of wood a year. This is about half of a pulp mill's production for a year. In fact, it is the full production from crown land for the Canadian Pacific mill in Dalhousie. The rest they get from Quebec and from their own sources. So it is important that we not only manage what we have, but that we also protect what we have.

— Honourable Morris V. Green, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, New Brunswick (Issue 22:25).

There are many factors which contribute to wood shortages, but a high rate of both managed and unmanaged harvesting has been the major cause, by man but even more by fire, insect and disease. The best example of wild harvest is probably the spruce budworm epidemic that affected all of Eastern Canada during the late 1970's, the latest of a long history of such attacks. For the period between 1984 and 1986, Forestry Canada estimates that 16.5 million hectares were devastated on average each year by the spruce budworm throughout Canada. Major losses by fire occur every year, with 1989 being the worst example ever in Manitoba, where more than 3.4 million hectares were destroyed in 1,143 separate fires, representing 9% of the total productive forest of that province.

A review of timber statistics over past years has revealed a rather startling truth of which many Canadians may be unaware : *On average, the volume of wild harvest of our forests each year by fire, insect and disease equals or exceeds the annual commercial cut in Canada!*¹⁴

Thus, as we calculate the values of our inventory of standing timber, we must always bear in mind that *the forest is harvested by nature as well as by man*, and in mammoth clear-cuts at that. Management efforts to preserve the forests must include intensive protection efforts against nature's disastrous harvests.

While many observers feel that the Canadian forest is in a state of alarming transition which will lead to serious wood shortages, others remain guardedly optimistic about the state of our country's forests, despite some constraints in the supply of wood fibre which are evident for the next few years. These analysts point out that Sweden was also expecting wood shortages back in the 1960's, but with an accelerated response in research and