

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 53/44 THE STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTRY IN CANADA

An address by the Minister of Resources and Development, Mr. Jean Lesage, made at the Fourth American Forestry Congress, Washington, D.C., October 29, 1953.

... The widespread interest with which the deliberations of this Congress are being followed and the calibre of the people who attend it both attest to the importance that the United States attaches to its forests as a factor in the national well-being. I can assure you that we in Canada have an equally lively recognition of our responsibilities to our forests as being one of the world's great producers of forest products. It has always been a source of great comfort to us that your country and ours have followed so closely the same objectives; we have been able to benefit on many occasions from your experience and we like to hope that from time to time we have been of assistance to you.

Value of Canada's Forests

Canada has the largest reserves of potential forest products in the free world outside of the tropics, with a total area of some 1,300,000 square miles in all classifications. Only Brazil and Russia exceed this figure. Our productive forest area, however, is now estimated at 764,000 square miles, which is about the same as that of the United States. Of this area, some 500,000 square miles is classed as accessible.

Our forest industries indirectly touch almost every Canadian everywhere in Canada, and about one out of every 14 Canadians is directly dependent on forestry and its industries for a livelihood. These industries account for 15 per cent of the annual net value of production of all Canadian industries.

Almost all types of forest industries are important in Canada, but pulp and paper is paramount. It stands first in value of production, in employment, in total wages paid -- and by a substantial amount, first in capital invested. It is the largest industrial buyer of goods and services in Canada. It uses one-third of all the electric power generated for industry and Canada is the second largest producer of hydro-electric power in the world.

I might mention that we have added nearly 1,100,000 tons to our productive capacity since 1946, an increase which is almost exactly the same as your own newsprint capacity today. Moreover this expansion was accomplished by private producers who successfully responded to the opportunities of an expanding market, without subsidies, special tax concessions, official floor prices, or any other form of government intervention.

Canada's forests are of singular importance to you in the United States as well as to us. Our forest products, which account for almost one-third of the total value of Canadian exports to all countries, represent one-half of the value of our exports to the United States, and the United States - as you know - is our best customer for our total exports. For many years, production of woodpulp and newsprint has been continuously accelerated in Canada to meet the urgent demands of the U.S. market. We supply you with a constant seventy-five to eighty per cent of your newsprint requirements, even though your woodpulp industry is about twice as great as ours. And recently, United States markets have attracted nearly half of our very considerable production of lumber, another historic economic link between our countries which has persisted from the sometimes chequered early years of our mutual development.

Administration of the Forests

Over 90 per cent of the total forests of Canada is owned by the people of Canada, either through the provincial governments or the Federal Government. Neither the provincial governments nor the Federal Government sells timber land - only the right to cut timber. Long-term leases are provided where big initial capital outlays require a guarantee of continuity, as in large pulpwood operations. A variety of timber berths, pulpwood berths, timber sales, and cutting permits is in force, varying according to the particular government which is concerned.

At this point, I think it will help if I explain briefly the respective jurisdictions of the Federal Government and the provincial governments over forestry. Under the British North America Act, which is usually referred to as Canada's constitution, the ownership of and administrative jurisdiction over the forests which lie within the ten provinces is vested in the respective governments of those provinces. The only exception is that the Federal Government administers the forests on the relatively small amount of land owned by that government in the provinces, such as the 30,000 square miles of National Parks, lesser areas of uncultivated Indian lands, and the five federal forest experimental stations.

However, there is a large part of Canada which, because of its sparse population, has not yet received provincial status; it comprises the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, and it is the one and a half million square miles which lie between Hudson Bay and the Alaskan boundary and stretch from the 60th Parallel northwards to embrace all the islands of the Arctic Archipelago. The Federal Government administers the forests in these two territories; but, while the area involved is vast, much of it lies above the tree line and most of the rest is lightly forested because of climatic conditions. In effect, only 8 per cent of Canada's total productive forests is under federal supervision.

However, although the provincial governments have complete jurisdiction over by far the greater proportion of Canada's forests, the Federal Government has also a valid interest in conserving and developing these forests and can properly give assistance in doing so, provided that such assistance is given in agreement with the provincial governments concerned. For example, in cases

where a forestry problem spreads beyond provincial boundaries or where it is of such a type and of such a magnitude that it requires a truly national effort, joint federal and provincial action may be desirable.

It was in accordance with this principle, and recognizing the danger of losing our forests unless proper management for sustained yield were more widely undertaken, that the Parliament of Canada in 1949 passed the Canada Forestry Act. This Act provides the statutory foundation for a national forestry policy; its keynote is co-operation and its purpose is to promote policies which will ensure a continued yield from our forests. In its conception the Act owes much to U.S. legislation in this field, and we surely have benefited from your experience.

Under the Act, the Federal Government can now enter into agreements with the provincial governments, or with corporations, or with individuals to develop and conserve Canada's forest resources. Specifically mentioned are such matters as protection from fire, insects and disease; the taking of forest inventories; silvicultural research; watershed protection; reforestation; forest publicity and education; construction of roads and improvement of streams in forest areas; improvement of growing conditions and management of forests for continuous production. In the few brief clauses of this Act provision is made for federal assistance to the provinces embracing virtually every field of forest activity - and under a single agency, the Forestry Branch of the federal Department of Resources and Development.

Under the authority of the Canada Forestry Act, the Federal Government has already concluded agreement with eight of the ten provinces and large sums of money have been spent to assist these provinces in completing and maintaining their forest inventories and in the reforestation of provincially owned lands. In announcing these agreements my predecessor as Minister of Resources and Development pointed out that a forest inventory is essential before a policy to achieve sustained yield can be successfully planned, and that reforestation is badly needed in certain cut-out areas which will not regenerate themselves naturally and where forest cover is necessary not only for the development of forest projects but also in the interest of soil conservation, flood control, cover for wildlife, and other uses.

Another field in which the Federal Government has long contributed to better forest management is in research. Our first laboratory for research in forest products utilization was established in 1913, just three years after the opening of your world famous laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin. In 1918 a full-fledged silviculture research division was established. Forestry research is now carried on in Ottawa and through five district offices and five forest experimental stations situated in different regions throughout the country. It covers silviculture and forest management, forest inventories and fire-protection research. It is designed to provide solutions to many technical problems encountered in improving forest management. Forest products research is undertaken in two forest products laboratories, one in Ottawa and one in Vancouver. It covers such fields as wood utilization, wood preservation, timber mechanics, and wood chemistry. There is in addition a research sawmill in Ottawa.

Several of the provincial governments undertake forestry research, as also do certain of the forest industries and several of the Canadian universities. Closest co-operation is maintained at all levels, and as two examples I might mention that the Federal Government assists the Pulp and Paper Research Institute of Canada, and, in the field of public education, gives help to the Canadian Forestry Association.

Yield and Utilization

Today's mounting tempo in wood utilization is giving added impetus to our plans for balancing yield with exploitation. Every province in Canada now has, in one form or another, legislation requiring the preparation of management plans designed to promote the principle of sustained yield in forestry.

In the field of silviculture and management research, concentration has been upon problems of regeneration, growth and stand development, and harvest cutting methods, in recent years especially. In particular, a number of the wood-using industries which have long-term cutting rights on extensive forest areas are co-operating in forest research programmes dealing with these problems on their own limits. This work is being done jointly with the federal and provincial research organizations.

Concurrently, federal authorities are studying problems of forest taxation and land tenure, and sustained yield management studies on commercial limits will provide models for estimating cost factors for similar forest areas. New developments in the use of aerial photographs and in methods of forest sampling which have been adopted are enabling us to secure fuller data on the extent, nature, and condition of our forest resources as a basis for policy determination.

For many years the growth of our great forest industries was based almost entirely upon the softwood portion of the forest, but more recently increasing attention has been given to the utilization of hardwoods. This is true not only in the manufacture of lumber, but also in the manufacture of wood pulp. This trend may allow us to treat our natural mixed forests as a whole, instead of removing the softwoods only and leaving residual hardwoods to take complete charge of many areas.

- A notable contribution by the woods industries during the past few years has been the closer integration of manufacturing plants to effect better utilization. We have a good many examples where there is little or no waste once the wood has been delivered to the sawmill -- and a marked tendency to take everything usable out of the woods. The "mill burner" for the disposal of "waste" is a thing of the past at up-to-date plants. The industry is doubling the yield capacity of the acre overnight without, may I say, "benefit of forester".

Multiple use has been a feature of administration of provincially owned lands, and is being extended in all provinces. Two notable developments in recent years seek to combine the principles of multiple use with basic watershed protection. These are the Southern Ontario Conservation Authorities, which are an outstanding provincial example of

voluntary integrated planning at the community level; and the joint federal-provincial undertaking, the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board which is developing its area on multiple-use lines, along with its primary function of protecting the forested watershed of the Saskatchewan River system.

Protection of Canada's Forests

A major obstacle to the introduction of better forest management is the menace of forest fires and of insects and disease. On the average, nearly 2,000,000 acres are burned annually in Canada and the estimated values destroyed amount to some \$4,000,000; but, as you know, these estimated values fall far short of the actual loss involved. Putting it another way: the merchantable timber burned equals one-third of the yearly consumption of our pulp and paper industry. The present rate of fire loss is estimated as double the rate that could be tolerated for the practice of sustained-yield forestry.

Fire protection continues to be a principal concern of all provincial administrations, and accounts for about half of all expenditures for forest management. The vast extent of our coniferous forest, lack of an adequate road system in many regions, and climatic conditions, combine to make fire protection especially difficult, though very great improvements in organization and methods have been achieved over the past thirty years. A wide use of aircraft is common. Provincial fire-protection services afford protection for all forests except those occurring within organized municipalities. Quebec and Newfoundland are unique in that, besides the provincial services, fire-protection associations have been formed by owners and lessees of forest properties to provide protection for their own holdings. The Federal Government, as I have mentioned, pursues basic research in fire protection and has, among other things, pioneered in the development of methods of measuring forest-fire danger which are widely used by the protection services.

Protection of the forest from loss by insects and disease will doubtless become easier, at least in the accessible areas, as better silvicultural practices are followed -- especially in the removal of mature timber subject to mortality. An example of the timeliness and flexibility of federal co-operation with the provinces to combat grave insect infestation in provincial forests is illustrated in recent spraying operations against the spruce budworm in northern New Brunswick. Here, some 4,000 square miles of pulpwood forests are seriously threatened by this insect. Federal financial participation in the cost with the government and forest industry in New Brunswick will be one-third of an estimated \$9,000,000 covering a three-year period for the operation.

Conclusion

I trust I have indicated, although briefly, the nature and scope of our activities in Canada in the development and use of our forest wealth. We have, after a half-century of organized forest direction, provided a legislative and professional framework which will permit us to attain, in time, the three-fold objective to which we mutually subscribe, namely: effective forest protection, maximum renewable yield of the most suitable forest species, and multiple resource use.

I feel that views on forestry matters in my country and yours are much closer than might ordinarily be assumed. Aside from views on policy, we have common geographic, climatic, and other factors over large areas, even to the species composition of much of our neighbouring forests.

Our economic interests as well as the historic association of our two countries are such that we must inevitably - as we have in the past - find many opportunities to discuss together our common problems. We were gratified to note the presence of several distinguished representatives of American Forestry as observers at the Sixth British Commonwealth Forestry Conference held last year in Canada. American delegates were valued participants at the pre-conference on forest-products research which preceded the main discussions.

In fact, I might mention that the last few years have seen a growing inter-change between our two countries in professional forestry matters; and we are happy to provide the fullest hospitality and aid in the inspection of our facilities in both forest and forest-products research. Our association in forest-products research has grown increasingly intimate, and we would welcome closer contact especially in the fields of silviculture and forest-management studies. Canada, I am happy to say, takes its international commitments with great seriousness, as does the United States. We are faithful participants in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and have, on many occasions, provided technical assistance on forestry under the U.N. programme. You may be assured that whatever co-operation and assistance it is possible for us to provide are yours to command.

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