

Farm housing presents problems peculiar to itself, and may require separate legislation. Government assistance that would eliminate down payments altogether and make possible mortgage rates even lower than 4% would be one possible solution.

The chief legislative requirement is a true "public housing" bill, under which the Dominion government would be enabled to pay annual subsidies to local housing authorities, to cover the gap between economic rents and the rents that people in the lower income third

can afford. The Dominion government should also be permitted to provide most or even all of the original capital funds, at low rates of interest and with very long periods of amortization. Tenure in such public projects should be limited to families with incomes below (say) \$1200, and rents should be graded according to income.

There are indications that whatever government is in power after the war it will undertake some sort of housing program. It is up to the people of Canada to make sure that adequate housing legislation is passed in time.

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## Maritime Forests and Their Future

By B. W. FLIEGER

**I**N this sixth year of war we see the great encounter on the fighting front close at hand. On the working front at home we pause sometimes to view the galaxy of plans which grows in brightness against the day when people quit the fight and turn to gather up the fragments of a peaceful life.

These, which the skeptics call plans for the bright new world, are compounded of pick-me-ups to counter probable after spree jitters and tonic ingredients for long term improvement. They are the result of much overtime work of excellent quality by interested persons.

All efforts to chart the good channel in the post war years regardless of the real urgency, the cost, and the obstacles in the way, fall readily into two classes. First, those plans which for obvious reasons can count on the support of the public, and second, those which for their continued success and fruition depend upon the sympathy and co-operation of a large bloc of our people but which are presently looked upon with detachment and sometimes outright hostility because

there is a general lack of understanding in the public mind of current conditions which are unsatisfactory. Planning which contemplates radical change in the future use of the forest resource of the Maritime provinces belongs at this time in the second category.

### The Endowment of The Forest

Why is it that people on the street are not talking forestry in the same breath with the rehabilitation of our fighting men with public health and social security and full employment after the war? Why is it that men high up in the political and financial worlds refer to forestry in vague terms after they have spent themselves in painting the other futures for us? Truly it is because we in Canada and in particular in our Maritimes have, with less cause than others, grown ignorant of the responsibility that attaches to a great endowment of forest. In fact we are far removed from a clear cut conception of the peculiar nature of this resource after over two centuries of free exploitation of the land. But this is natural, all things considered, and does not deviate

so far from our general attitude as to constitute in itself a paradox.

There are among us those who believe that the so far unimpaired tree fertility of our land near the sea is our guarantee of forest wealth. Others gauge forest values by the quality and quantity of wood on hand. Some persons imagine that we must prosper because we are near to the greatest wood using market and still others like to think of values in the high degree of accessibility of our forest area in respect of wood extraction. This is the kind of declamation that finds its way into the press and occasionally on the radio. For all we know it may be in the schools! By itself it is vain nonsense. High time it is that we labelled these and other advantages OUR OPPORTUNITY. We must begin to realize that by our use of the natural forest, we establish the forest values<sup>1</sup> and cause values to shift. What we do is conditioned partly by our attitude to the forest itself.

It is more reasonable to speak of a weakness in the forest than to talk of—say a wood shortage, and much easier to understand once we grow accustomed to it. In fact we could do much good if we put a stop to wood worries and concern ourselves more with the source of supply.

Wood in and out of the tree has a place in the sun and if signs are right our indispensable material now and in the future.<sup>2</sup> Strange, that we who are so well endowed with forest that we are the envy of many peoples, and have in our control the fortunes of the forest, have so far *ploughed back into the resource* in money, in study and in work for the improvement of this great source of production *less by far* than has been spent in building up any other industry. There is a contradiction for you! In the Maritimes we find the same story in Government, Corporation, and citizen policy. The discrepancy between production, revenue, and investments in forest improvement

is nothing short of amazing. If it is to continue we must relate the "spruce log" to Santa Claus and Harry Houdini as well as Charlie MacCarthy.

### Past Experience

We have indeed reached a point in our forest development where bold planning for the future is forced upon us. Before casting ahead into the future a random glance back into the evidence, which is the past, is in order.

For instance take the case of land use. Theoretically, we believe that the best soils are for the farm crops. From the beginning we have settled on the land without benefit of the vital information necessary to land use planning, viz. *dependable* soil surveys. Our method has not changed materially. It is one of trial and tribulation and error in which the settler endures and experiences the grief which comes of not being able to make ends meet and the authority fails too often to evaluate and profit from the error. For mistakes in land clearing we never get a complete accounting. Seldom is it realized that a subsidy has been paid to temporarily destroy production—to lose forest and not gain a farm.

Also there is the colonization scheme which is not bona fide, the agricultural feint to gain title to forest. On such areas the practice of forestry is by divine right. The fanatical urge to own land without an accompanying fervor for proper use is a disturbing note in our social mosaic.

When circumstance favors agriculture, forestry gives way. Land use planning will make the converse true as well. We should for our own good come to a more complete understanding on this point. It is highly doubtful that the vagaries of political expediency or the desires of pressure groups will provide the answer—a balance with farm and forest each in its best locale.

Then there is our long struggle in forest protection. Those who have worked to make the forest safe have the comfort of knowing that their accomplishments are real. But it has been a losing

1. Finland prior to the war captured a large share of the world business in birch veneer. The Finns are endowed with a birch much inferior in every way to our Yellow birch.

2. The universal raw material of the Germans. Nazis in the woodpile.

battle with fire<sup>3</sup>. Specifically, our progress in detecting outbreaks is in no way matched by improvement in preventing fire and in putting fire out. The explanation must be that a few people can build detection tools into an efficient fire spotting system without a stir in the pool of public opinion. For the rest improvement will come when the mass of the people understand fire well enough to co-operate in controlling it in the forest. Before we can have such a situation we must believe in being careful with fire, then we must place the total forest area within reach of the fireman in time to get the fire out while small; and finally John Public must have the desire to be the reserve fire fighter without pay. This he now is legally and for a consideration, but all too seldom in reality and because of a civic pride. When it is taught in the school why we should not play with matches and our people have it brought home to them that something, not replaceable in their time, is lost when the precious earth-skin of soil is heated to the point of degradation—and even sterility—then we shall be getting along with our education and will banish uncontrolled fire from the forest.<sup>4</sup> Whereas complete protection against burning up is possible in our time, the more insidious damage due to natural periodic dominance of other forest enemies presents a problem not nearly so simple to solve. Our battle against the insects and the fungi and the weather is in its initial stage. Our secret weapon has not been divulged to the enemies. It is progressive forest management supported by a public which is aware of these dangers, and having an understanding of the forest organism. Future models will contain much improved detection equipment, will have much more mobility, speed, and authority, so that dangerous trends may be detected in time, foci of infection destroyed, and salvage promptly carried out.

3. Fire statistics are conservative probably for fear of disturbing credit. In New Brunswick statistics admit to over 1500 square miles burned in the last twenty years.

4. The Germans had to come to this continent to study the effect of fire in the forest on large areas. They had only experimental burned areas at home.

In respect of cutting there is much confusion in thought largely due to our transition from a region of wood surplus which demanded cutting—any kind—to one in which it is ever more apparent that cutting must be designed to suit the forest. More emphasis will perforce be put on “what to leave?” rather than on “what to cut?”. Even lumbermen these days are prone to say that we are cutting too much—more than the growth. To speak of depletion and of overcutting while waste abounds is to measure productivity by abuse rather than by efficient use.

On the intangible side of forest values we find the pattern changed but little. What have we gleaned from our long acquaintance with wild-life, fish, and the fur trade that could now be put to use in planning better for the future? To be sure we have laws and we do try to keep out of jail (with some measure of success if the statistics are correct). The laws are not understood and breed neither honour nor respect. The people who observe the rules are those who will do better when the rules become more the result of scientific investigation and less that of the seance.

Not all of our evidence is in the forest. If we examine into production that popular measure of regional robustness and prosperity we must conclude that too little is made from what we have, and too much is wasted. There is also a poor balance between our high bulk low price raw material exports and our processed or end products which has not changed for the better with the passage of time. If we continue in this manner with the forest and other resources nothing short of a subsidy will keep us in the Maritimes and enable us to enjoy the same kind of living as other Canadians. We have played up to the full the factors beyond our control which have mitigated against a better economy—so much so that some people are beginning to believe that we cannot make things from wood in these Provinces. We must prove them wrong. Our forest industries can be expanded, diversified, and made more efficient. It remains for

us to be willing to try, to be able to stand the gaff in competition and to remain in business regardless of offers to the contrary.

### Planning Their Future

Perhaps from this fragmentary sample which is more freakish than biased we can hazard a glance into the future of the forests. If our sample is good then it is evident that a good deal depends on whether we slough off the coma into which we are sinking and attain a full forest consciousness. This means that we have a tough educational problem on our hands—education at the top and bottom and in the middle and don't forget the top. If we hope to make our forests take on a new and greater significance in our way of life it must be after we understand that like ourselves our forest is a natural population of natural individuals and, therefore, complex to the human mind. It is dynamic in its reactions to stresses from within and outside. Possessed of great recuperative and regenerative qualities it so far has maintained itself in our land more or less intact against its ever present enemies. We must find out how to make it stronger and more productive, protect it and crop it through a sustained program in which we must be prepared to invest money.

When the war is ended we will find in our forest a huge work-pile that has been building up for years because we thought we could not afford to tackle it. Now it assumes the stature of a back log of employment if paralysis should strike again. Priority should be given, regardless of conditions, to naturally working out in the forest such closely related things as the rehabilitation of those who need it, sensible work at fair pay for those who desire it, the rehabilitation of the forest by removal of many of the physical obstacles to a better management of the resource. We must get ourselves ready to support and pay for a large scale plan of works, projects in the forest designed to facilitate more complete protection, more timely

and sensible cutting, the gathering of better and more up to date information, and the full enjoyment of recreational benefits.

Finally, the stage seems set for better forest management in all that the term means to a professional forester. Wherever on this earth we find forests sustaining a highly developed and stabilized life it has been the case that people imbued with the pioneer spirit have had the desire to work out a solution to the problem of how to use the forest and have it unimpaired—and have done so. Never in the history of man has it been otherwise.

The Bunyan march of the logger from river mouth to height of land cutting and slashing and leaving behind a wake of waste to clutter the scene and in the wasting away slowing up renewal, is behind us. It was a phase of development and a necessary one. We still must find the keys to the new era of forest use.

Here then is our broad future in forestry. Education in the real sense for our people is the importance of understanding the relation between man and forest. Setting our forest house in order as soon as hostilities are over will provide work at the best possible time to get the things we can no longer do without. These two provide the base for the ultimate—good forest management. What a green-golden opportunity!

Once again people are thinking deeply—of other people. Some of necessity, others spontaneously, and still others to be in the fashion wave during wartime put aside the trivia of defenses against constructive thought and now are experiencing a revival. Future events will show whether this is a mere ebullience of feeling or a renaissance stimulated by the crashing events of this century and a growing complexity of life. Are we in the Maritimes planning now for the future of the Maritimes or are we merely paying lip service to new ideas, inwardly dreading the thought of having to keep up with the times?