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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN RETROSPECT AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROSPECT

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THE Society has nearly completed its first year in the second quarter century period of its existence. Not counting the first organization meeting, this is the twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Society.

On March 12, 1908, the Canadian Forestry Association was holding a raising meeting in Montreal. Filibert Roth had given one of his inspiring addresses at an evening session. After Professor Roth's address nine men got together to make plans for the organization of a society. Ellwood Wilson made the motion to proceed with the organization. Jacombe was made convener of a committee to draft a constitution and he chose Piché and Wilson to help him. The nine men present at that meeting were: Dr. Fernow, Thomas Southworth, A. Knechtel, E. J. Zavitz, A. H. D. Ross, Ellwood Wilson, G. C. Piché, Marshall Small and J. W. H. Jacombe. I list them in the order in which the names appear in the minutes. Another meeting was held the next evening after a dinner in the Place Viger Hotel, when the committee on the constitution reported and the constitution was adopted. Dr. B. E. Fernow was elected president; R. H. Campbell vice-president; J. W. H. Jacombe secretary-treasurer. The officers and two elected members constituted the Executive Committee. Messrs. Bradley and Piché were elected to the committee at the meeting.

Besides the men mentioned above there were present at the second session of the organization meeting Elihu Stewart, Superintendent of Forestry at Ottawa; W. C. Hall, in charge of fire protection in Quebec, and Reginald Bradley, of the Miramichi Lumber Company of New Brunswick. The following were present as guests from the United States: Overton Price, Filibert Roth and Hugh Baker. There were twelve charter members, twelve apostles of technical forestry of which eight had forestry degrees. Six of them have passed away and two have passed out of the picture as foresters and another has resigned as a member of the Society. We have then three of the charter

members remaining as active members of the Society: Messrs. Piché, Wilson and Zavitz. Let us salute these men who bore the brunt of the work in the formative years of the Society and let us salute the memory of those other early active workers who have passed on to their eternal reward!

When people as a whole suffer severely for a considerable length of time, they begin to question the effectiveness of their political and social institutions. Continued suffering brings at least two well defined reactions. Some people strike out blindly and thoughtlessly; others keep their heads and seek to find the cause of their trouble in order to remedy it. The first class may seek to destroy, to sweep everything away at one stroke and to build an entirely new structure, while the second class attempts to remove only the weak portions of the structure, to save all that is good and to build the new structure upon it. The one believes in sudden and violent changes; the other in slow and orderly progress. The latter realize that most that is good in this world is the result of slow growth. If you wished to construct a strong and enduring wooden building you would not use the fast growing poplar or willow, but the relatively slow growing pine or spruce, that is, if you lived in eastern Canada. So in building up a profession, a political or social structure, you would use only the materials of proven worth through long experience. While there are undoubted exceptions, most violent political disturbances have not been worth what they cost in terms of the loss of human life and property, and in wasted effort. What I mean to say is that their object could have been attained and the foundations of the new order more firmly laid by slow progressive steps. For the most part, the latter is the British way of bringing about reforms.

In common with other professions, forestry finds itself in a difficult position at the present time. The bottom dropped out of it quite suddenly. Many experienced men find themselves without employment; others who have spent considerable time and money in preparing themselves for the profession are unable to enter it; the governments have apparently lost interest in it. In some cases governmental grants for the maintenance of forestry have been reduced far out of proportion to reductions in other public services. The cynic might say this was done because the governments knew that it could be done with less public protest than in any other field of public endeavor. Forestry controls few votes. There may be an element of truth in such statements and in the acknowledgment of it there may lie an indictment of the profession.

In the case of the pulp and paper industry, the other principal employer of foresters, its inability to retain their services was brought about by forces largely beyond its control, most of the constituent members being in bank-

ruptcy or near-bankruptcy. This situation was brought about not so much through blundering on the part of the operators themselves as through the machinations of the so called promoters, big financial firms who were more interested in promoters' profits than in the stability of the industry. They, with at least the passive connivance of most provincial governments, extended the production of the industry far beyond the capacity of the markets even in prosperous times. These practices, if continued, would have seriously curtailed the industry, even had there been no world-wide business depression.

For the reasons outlined above forestry finds itself near the trough of a depression. I said a moment ago that when a group of people find their objects and ideals thwarted, they begin to question and to examine causes, so to-day the forestry profession in Canada is in an acute stage of self analysis. The members are asking themselves what they have done that they should not have done; what they have not done that they should have done. From the resultant meditations and discussions are evolving some pretty clear cut conclusions.

Before stating these conclusions, however, I would like to review some of the accomplishments of the forestry profession since the Society was formed.

1. Twenty-five years ago the amount of standing timber in the Dominion could be only guessed at in the roughest possible manner. There were no agencies in existence for the systematic stock-taking of the country's forest wealth. Since that time reasonably accurate surveys have been completed for the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia. The greater portion of the commercial forested area of Quebec and at least one half of New Brunswick have been surveyed. Until suspended by financial exigencies, the Dominion Forest Service was well started on a stock-taking, growth and yield survey of the whole country by the sample area method. The result is that although much remains to be done we are in a position to make fairly accurate estimates of our forest resources.

2. When the Society was formed, while there were forest fire prevention acts on the statute books, public opinion did not demand their enforcement. We can say without injustice to anyone that fire protection in those days was only in an experimental stage. There were not as many hundred fire rangers in the whole Dominion as there were thousands four years ago, and not as many thousands of dollars spent in fire protection as millions of dollars were expended when the depression hit us. The development of roads and trails, railway patrol, lookout towers, telephone communications, the fire-fighting pumps, and the air patrol; the organization of the forest regions into districts in charge of specially trained men; the conception that fire protection is a very serious business proposition; all these have taken place since

the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers was formed and the vigorous recommendations and unceasing activities of its members towards this end have been the chief factors in bringing these things about.

3. When the Society was formed the Dominion Forestry Branch had only three technical men in its employ. There were no provincial forestry branches, although organizations were in existence out of which these institutions have since developed. In the late "good times" in the neighborhood of 125 technically trained foresters were employed by governmental organizations. About the same number were employed in the pulp and paper industry where practically none was employed twenty-five years ago. Of the eight provincial forestry branches, six have charge of the carrying out of the timber cutting regulations on Crown lands.

4. Forestry education was just getting started when the Society was formed and at that time there were no graduates from forestry schools in Canada. The few foresters in the country had been trained in the United States. I am unable to state exactly, but I would estimate that between three and four hundred technically trained foresters have been produced by the four schools within the past twenty-five years. This is in addition to the graduates of the Quebec Ranger School.

5. When the Society was formed, organized tree planting was in its infancy. There was probably no conception of the present planting programs, especially of the co-operative programs expressing themselves in the county and municipal forests. Strangely enough it is difficult to determine the actual area now under forest plantations in the Dominion, but, taking the number of trees distributed by the various organizations, dividing it by 1200 trees per acre, and deducting ten per cent for failures, I would estimate it at something around 185,000 acres, of which probably not more than 40,000 acres is primarily for timber production.

6. The realization of the necessity of forest research and provisions for carrying it on have developed almost entirely within the past quarter century. Practically every province has considerable areas set aside, or in the process of being set aside, for this purpose. In addition to this many pulp and paper companies until recently were co-operating with forestry organizations in establishing experimental cutting areas, in planting and direct seeding experiments and in the more practical problems, to them, of transportation and utilization. From the standpoint of the future these are the most important developments in forestry during the period under review and they have all been instigated and led by the members of the Society.

7. When the Society was formed there were no forest products laboratories. All of their widespread and significant contacts with the lumber and

pulp and paper industries have developed in the past twenty-five years with the whole hearted co-operation of the industries. They were originally organized through the initiative of members of our Society and a considerable portion of their staffs are foresters.

8. The creation of marketing boards, such as the White Pine Bureau, the Spruce Bureau, the Hardwood Bureau, the Quebec Forest Industries Association, the Quebec Forest Products Commission, the British Columbia Lumber Commission and similar organizations in other provinces, with all their significance to forestry, are comparatively recent developments. Some of these organizations are in charge of foresters, others employ them and they all promote and support research in the properties and proper uses of wood.

9. Since the Society was established there has been a great advance in forestry legislation in every province of the Dominion. The forest protection regulations have been improved and strengthened and most of the provinces have enactments that provide for the practice of forestry on Crown timberlands. In practically every case members of the Society have participated in pointing out the need and in preparing the initial steps of the legislation.

I have tried to outline the main developments in forestry since the Society was organized. I think we have no reason to feel discouraged over that progress as a whole. To what extent the Society officially is responsible for this development is difficult and perhaps impossible to assess in specific terms because so many of the factors concerned are indirect in their action. It seems quite true, however, that the Society is not as influential in directing public policy during the past ten years as in the earlier years of its existence. This may be due to a growing feeling among the members that the promotion of public policy is not the proper function of the Society, that it should confine itself to the development of the technical aspects of forestry and to the promotion of the individual interests of its members. This does seem to be the intention of the framers of the constitution. Certain clauses, however, are broadly enough stated so that the Society might legitimately enter any phase of forestry development. Special needs and emergencies may change the course of any organization. It may well be that we are facing these at the present moment. If the organization that has entrusted to it by constitutional command the work of public education in forestry and the formulation of public policy in forestry matters, refuses or fails effectually to carry out its constitutional commands, it may be incumbent upon the Society in the interests of forestry temporarily at least to take over the work of the Canadian Forestry Association, or perhaps better stated, those portions of it that are not being adequately promulgated at the present time.

Coming back to our more permanent problems about which there may be

not so much difference of opinion, I may say that there is considerable discontent among the membership over the apparent impotency of the Society at the present time. This is a good sign and I am sure that the older members of the Society welcome it. Only the stream that is getting somewhere has ripples and eddies in it; only dead waters are placid.

The criticism, in addition to lack of leadership in public policy just mentioned, is often directed at the annual meeting. It is said that too much time in the business session is devoted to revision of the constitution, a topic that is not of particular interest to the younger members. These criticisms have some point for the Secretary's book shows that the constitution has been thoroughly overhauled three times and has undergone six amendments. It usually took three years to overhaul the constitution and from one to two years to get an amendment through, so it is safe to say that in fifteen to eighteen of our twenty-five annual meetings the principal topic of discussion in the business sessions has been constitutional revision. This is significant, but what the significance is depends upon one's point of view. It might mean an aspiration towards perfection of organization. On the other hand it might mean that the members were more interested in the structure of the organization than in its functions, or one might interpret it as an expression of unformulated discontent on the part of the membership venting itself on the basic laws of the Society.

Criticism is also directed at the character of the papers read at the annual meetings. It is said that they are too hastily prepared; that the program as a whole is not sufficiently representative of our problems, or on the other hand that it is too representative, that is, it covers a too wide field; that too little time is allowed for the discussion of the papers; that the younger members are not given sufficient opportunity to read papers or to take part in the discussions.

These criticisms are aimed at obvious defects in our organization. Some of them have been discussed at previous meetings and steps have been taken to remedy them but thus far without satisfactory results. I believe that the fundamental defect in the Society at the present time is the lack of the spirit of co-operation, too much of the spirit of "let George do it." The executive officers have a hard time of it. Practically all the work is left to them and then they are criticised for not doing more. Take the papers read at the annual meeting for example. When I was the president ten years ago I tried three months ahead to arrange the program and met only with disappointing results. The same condition holds to-day. While constitutionally it is the business of the executive committee to arrange the program, the work usually falls on the shoulders of one man. It takes time to prepare a paper carefully

and especially if the paper is to be discussed satisfactorily by some one he should have it in his hands at least two weeks before the annual meeting. Other organizations do this and there is no legitimate reason why we cannot, but we can do it only by overcoming the spirit of non-co-operation among the membership. If the programs of our annual meetings are unsatisfactory the blame lies largely on the membership as a whole, not entirely on the executives of the Society.

I believe that to make the Society more effective we must do one of two things. We must do something to stimulate greater interest and co-operation among the membership or we must have a salaried Secretary. Eventually we must have both. I think we could stimulate interest among the membership by having more frequent meetings. It is almost impossible to develop coherence and unity of purpose with only one meeting which usually not more than one-third or one-fourth of the membership attend. This brings up for consideration the sections of the Society. We must not let them die; we must do something to keep them agoing. They should be the centers of local interest with their opportunities for frequent meetings. We should also have summer field meetings for the Society as a whole. Other organizations do this very successfully, why can't we? They would create greater interest and help knit the Society more closely together. The sections might also hold summer field meetings.

I believe the time has come when we should discuss ways and means for the establishment of a salaried secretary. The Society of American Foresters reached about the same condition we are in now and got out of it through the appointment of a salaried secretary. In the beginning there was much opposition on the basis of inadequate revenue to support such an officer but he has been such a success that the Society even in these hard times would not consider going back to the old system. As I recall the circumstances, his salary was guaranteed for the first few years by special subscriptions from the members, but before this fund was used up his efforts had resulted in enough new memberships to pay his salary from current revenues. While this result could not be repeated here, I believe that the appointment of such an officer would materially increase our revenues and would put enough pep and leadership into our Society to make such an appointment abundantly worth while.

In order to increase the interest of the members I believe that we should formulate a few definite policies, not generalized statements, but a few concrete propositions around which the membership could rally. I believe that just now we are letting a psychological moment pass by us with little or no heed. I refer to the greater use of the unemployed in forestry work. I confess that

perhaps owing to blundering of my own, this movement got off to a bad start but I believe that with a united front on the part of the Society it can be recaptured and made effective. The opportunity for such work is just as great here as in the United States, where over three hundred thousand young men are at work improving forest conditions in making roads and trails, constructing telephone lines and lookout towers. Contrary to the general opinion in this country, besides planting considerable areas they are actually making improvement cuttings in the forest, particularly thinnings and release cuttings. Coniferous regeneration on thousands of acres has been released from the overshadowing hardwoods. All foresters know that we have many thousands of acres on burned areas where the cost of such work would be self liquidating in terms of increased production of the stand.

As you know the governments wish to abandon the policy of direct relief and go back to the original policy of relief through public works. This policy was reiterated a few days ago at the conference of the provincial premiers at Ottawa. Public works to the governments apparently mean highways and buildings, not forestry work on public lands, at least as we understand forestry work. The Dominion government now has about thirteen thousand unemployed men at work in the woods, but only a small portion of them, perhaps not more than one third, is doing what by a very liberal interpretation could be called actual forestry work. There is certainly the need and the opportunity for a great many more.

As a public relief measure forestry work has some decided advantages over most other forms, particularly in its relatively small overhead cost and relatively small cost of maintenance after the work is done. The construction of highways as a relief measure was abandoned in some provinces because the money actually paid to the manual laborers was such a small proportion of the total expenditure. That would not be the case in forestry work where the greater percentage of the expenditure would go to the laborer and he would put his money in circulation in the local community of his normal residency. The latter is or should be the primary object of unemployment relief work and this can be achieved better in forestry work than in almost any other form. Compared with the upkeep of highways and buildings, the upkeep of improvement cuttings in the forest is small. About the only charge would be for fire protection and in the case of Crown lands that would be taken care of anyway. In fact, such operations in the forest would undoubtedly reduce the fire hazard and so also would the disposal of slash and debris in the forest. The cost of the latter would be self liquidating in terms of young growing stock and merchantable timber saved from destruction by fire.

We have a good case for the greater use of the unemployed in forestry

work and one that I believe would be supported by the public if properly presented to them. One of the members has suggested that we organize a convention to be held in Ottawa where this matter could be publicly discussed and other forestry matters as well. This is an idea worth following up. We will never accomplish very much unless we have the courage of our convictions and the courage to bring them forcibly before the people.

Another suggestion for a concrete object for the Society to support is the more extensive establishment of demonstration areas like that at Petawawa. We already have a good many of these scattered all over the country but they are for the most part in places too inaccessible to the general public and so do not achieve their primary function of educating and demonstrating to the public that forests can be made to supply wood products profitably without destroying their productive capacity. Such forests should be established if possible along travelled highways and not too far from large towns that would serve as markets for the so called minor wood products. I would include in this program an extension of farm woodlot demonstrations because they exhibit the same idea and because they would be located where a large number of people could see them. Accessibility to the public is the most important thing in any demonstration area. Reforestation is sold to the public. Why? I believe chiefly because forest plantations have been seen by hundreds of thousands of people. It is estimated that more than a hundred thousand people have seen the St. Williams plantations in Ontario in the past twenty years. In comparison with these, how many people in eastern Canada have an opportunity to see a forest or a woodlot subjected to regulated cutting operations? Very few. If we had put an equal amount of time and energy in developing demonstration forests under regulated cutting as we have in planting in the past twenty-five years, we wouldn't be here as we are to-day crying what must we do to be saved. We could write and talk about forestry until we were black in the face, as some of us have been doing for twenty-five years, and we wouldn't accomplish as much for forestry in the forest, from the public education standpoint, as one successful demonstration. As a society we have been sadly negligent in this direction. Let us concentrate on it henceforth?

I believe that by concentrating our efforts on one or more objectives with renewed courage and activity we can win back the interest and co-operation of the membership and very soon pull ourselves out of the slough of despond, but a few cannot do it; every member must put his shoulder to the wheel.