FIFTY YEARS OF FORESTRY

Fifty years ago nine Foresters met in the City of Montreal and organized the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers, the parent of our Canadian Institute of Forestry.

In the same year a School of Forestry was established at the University of New Brunswick, and only the year before, the first Canadian Forest School opened its doors at Toronto University.

At that time it took vision and courage to enroll as a student of forestry. Opportunities for employment were limited, and neither the public, nor governments, were too much concerned about protecting and perpetuating our forests.

It is true that a few voices had been raised against the reckless cutting and burning of forest wealth, and some legislation had been passed to restrict destructive logging practices and careless use of fire, but forest protection and forest management had developed little beyond the expression of pious hopes.

Our first Foresters, who found employment largely in Government Service, were young men imbued with missionary zeal, and their first, and most difficult, task was to convince the public that some change was needed.

In the minds of most people, lumbering was a temporary phase preceding land clearing and settlement, growing trees should be left to God, and a forest fire was an act of Providence.

In spite of indifference, and sometimes open hostility, the first Foresters played a role out of all proportion to their numbers. Largely through their efforts the public was aroused, needed legislation was enacted, and competent forest services were organized by the Federal and Provincial Governments.

In time Faculties of Forestry were established at Laval and the University of British Columbia, and with the rapid expansion of the Pulp and Paper Industry during the 1920's and again in more recent years, a growing stream of Foresters found a wider field of employment, enabling them to play a more important role in the industrial development of Canada.

Our Institute, with some 1,700 members scattered from coast to coast, has played its part in the better care and better use of our forests, and will play a still more important role in the future.

Forest fires and other destructive agents are slowly but surely being controlled, and with better management and complete utilization, the productive capacity of our forests can be doubled and possibly trebled.

While other materials have replaced wood in some of its former uses, scientists are discovering many new uses for wood, changing it into a wide variety of substances undreamed of a few years ago.

We who are members of the C.I.F. can look back over the past fifty years with satisfaction and pride. We have surmounted formidable obstacles. We are contributing to the wealth and well being of Canada, and the future holds many a challenge which we, as individuals, and as a group, should be happy to accept.

G. W. I. CREIGHTON, President
Canadian Institute of Forestry