If Foresters Don't 'Get With It', They May Find Themselves Without It

It is becoming a custom for each President of the Institute to write at least one editorial for **The Forestry Chronicle**. I bowed to custom only after asking the Editor what I should write about. He provided me with a dozen or so worthy topics, but there his guilt ends.

Of the suggested subjects, I chose to start with the recent and much-publicized **Algonquin Park** controversy, for surely few Canadian foresters can have escaped the flood of words which that dispute has released. I do not intend to get into the play-offs between the Dickey-bird Watchers and the Rapacious Timber Barons; I am not even going to involve myself in the rights and wrongs of the case — great though that temptation is. In fact, I am going to blame you, the members of the C.I.F., for the fact that, **as your President**, I am almost speechless in the debate on the use or abuse of Ontario's best known park.

Elsewhere in this issue, one of our colleagues — Keith Horton — says that, as a professional group, we are "a rather ineffectual lot", and he berates us for losing "a public-relations battle to a loud preservationist group" in the **Algonquin Park** affair. It should have been possible for this Institute at the national level to have made an authoritative and constructive statement on the principles at issue without being accused of meddling in provincial affairs. I expect that practically every member of the C.I.F. holds quite strong views on the topic — on one side or the other, but what should be the Institute's official position on it? All that the officers of the C.I.F. have to guide them are two policy pronouncements both of which are inappropriate and both

of them are a quarter of a century old — for that is the venerable age of our latest, officially approved, policy statement!

Until about the time of our 1943 "Statement of Forest Policy", foresters were popularly looked upon as professional conservationists — fire fighters and tree planters. Today, although foresters are fighting fires much more effectively and planting many more trees, a sizable segment of the public regards them as apologists for what it conceives to be the predatory despoilers of the forests, namely, the forest industries of the country. What has happened in the interval? Has the forester or the public changed? I suggest that both have changed considerably.

Today the typical Canadian forester is much more concerned and knowledgeable about the "environmental" values of the forest than was his predecessor of a generation ago. During the same period the "man on the street" had become much more familiar with the forest scene than his father was, although he may not have any greater understanding of it, and for that state of affairs surely foresters must accept a large measure of blame. We have failed to speak out as we should; and on occasions we have spoken out as we shouldn't.

This brings me back to my challenge that you, the members, are responsible for the fact that your association's officers have so little that is useful to contribute to public discussion of such topics as the proper use of **Algonquin Park**. For the past three years this Institute has been groping its way towards some sort of policy guidelines to replace the 1943 statement which is badly outdated. The process is still going on, but, if the Institute

is to be more influential in shaping forest policies across the country, the matter should be given a higher priority than it is getting. All members can help to speed up the procedure by actively promoting discussion of the draft guidelines now in the hands of all Section officers.

At the National Forestry Conference of 1966, it was clearly and emphatically stated that, within a generation, the demands which are likely to be made on Canadian timber resources will probably exceed the supply which could be sustained, unless some very drastic action is taken without delay. Long before the end of this century the forest industries of some regions will face shortages of preferred species if not overall scarcity.

During the same period, an ever-larger proportion of an ever-growing population will be demanding greater opportunities for forest-based recreation. The same expanding population will be demanding more and more water for power, for manufacturing, for household use and for recreation. All this will intensify the need to keep watershed forests in a productive condition, that is, productive of fish, game, and water as well as of timber.

There will be great changes in the Canadian forestry scene during the next few decades whatever foresters may or may not do or think about them. We must make sure that time and events do not pass us by. We should lose no time in sorting out our thoughts on the complex issues which face us as resource managers — otherwise we may wake up to find that others have taken matters out of our hands.

E. S. Fellows