Forest Policy Issues and Developments

by

Pat Duffy

Research and Technology Transfer

Every organization — government, industry or education — has to assess continually its objectives and structure. Sometimes, these assessments result in major changes in direction and emphasis, more often they are followed by relatively minor adjustments. The subject of past research and the needs, effectiveness and support related to it have for many decades been subjects of discussion and reports.

While forest management and therefore the problems related to it were minimal, as occurred until the past 20 or so years, debates on the effectiveness of research were largely irrelevant. Indeed, to a very large degree research in the area of "forest management" consisted in the documentation of small scale or experimental applications of textbook silviculture and the application of conventional mensurational methodologies to natural and planted forests. The work, records and publications of both federal and provincial research agencies attest to this.

What has been occurring recently has been a rapid increase in level and commitment to forest management across Canada. Foresters and technicians in implementing forest practices have had to do this with forests that for the most part did not conform to their textbook models. They have also had to undertake the implementation in a social and economic climate which often called into question not only what and how they were practising forestry, but whether they should be doing it at all. Finally, when those with the problems of the "real" forest tried to apply known forestry knowledge the results were often disappointing due to lack of or misapplication of that knowledge. This resulted in condemnation of the scientist for not communicating his results in a readily understood and applicable form to the practitioner, or a rebuking of the practitioner for not spending significant time poring through the scientific literature for the latest knowledge in order to keep "up-to-date".

The reality was, of course, that if the scientist did the first, he/she would not be doing what they were supposed to be i.e. science, and in the second instance, the practitioner would not be tending to his/her job. While these may be viewed as extremes, there is no doubt that in general, they result in "bad" science and "poor" practice.

¹Forest Plantations — The Shape of the Future. Weyerhaeuser Science Symposium 1980.

²Baskerville, G. 1979 — Transfer of Technology in Forestry Paper presented to the Atlantic Association of University Presidents, mimeo.

This conclusion is substantiated from many sources. Recently,¹ in a review of future forests, the following statement was made — "By and large, forest science today is imitative and repetitive. There is very little being done in forestry that has not already been done elsewhere, particularly in agriculture."

In Canada, Baskerville in a provocative discourse on the same subject² stated "Internal inconsistency in the profession has resulted in research being battered, and responding like a weathervane in a cyclone, as it engaged in fad science." "... attempts to simultaneously achieve the application of science and to do good research result in neither."

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has been cognizant of this problem, particularly, because of its own research activity and overall responsibility for resource management. The Ministry is now examining its role in the generation and use of science and technology. In July, 1983 the Deputy Minister, Mr. W.T. Foster, announced that a strategic plan for forestry, fisheries and wildlife research would be prepared in which "... two underlying policy principles will be paramount:

- a) structures for the transfer of science and technology into operations and/or policy are to be strengthened;
- b) all avenues will be explored to determine where research can be carried out most effectively outside Ministry facilities."

Further, "... I do not see the generation of scientific knowledge by the Ministry as a legitimate role in the present circumstances. The funding and direction of research so that specific knowledge is available to government does however fall within the traditional role of government."

This review of research and the associated institutional structures represents a new departure and as a consequence, has aroused considerable response, much as a result of misunderstandings and an inevitable reaction to maintain the *status quo*.

What is abundantly clear to many, is that if forest management is to progress and meet the challenges of the future, there will have to be significant support for research and science in the institutions best suited to their undertaking and effective forest management of our forests. In addition, there will have to be an organizational arrangement which will result in the development and application of new knowledge and expertise generated from science, capable of transmission in a form that can be used by the practitioner. Generally termed "technology transfer" Ontario has a prototype model already in existence in its Hybrid Poplar Unit in the Eastern

Region. A second group — the Northern Forest Development Group has been located in the Northern Region.

These and similar field structures together with a new provincial structure will provide for an enhanced development of forest management, and at the same time create even greater opportunities for science.

K.A. Armson

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Mr. Patrick Duffy, Chairman
Working Group of Policy and Economics

I have just perused my June 1983 Forestry Chronicle and note that B.C. is still the only **Province** contributing to "Forest Policy Issues and Developments".

This is exactly what happened the last time this feature was attempted so I hope that you can get my colleagues from the other Provinces "off their butts".

Regards,

Yours truly,
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Chief Forester

Forest Policy Issues and Developments (British Columbia)

Forest and Range Resource Analysis

The Ministry of Forests Act stipulates that British Columbia's second Forest and Range Resource Analysis must be submitted to Cabinet by September 30, 1984. Terms of Reference for this report have been made public and discussions initiated with Government agencies, the forest industry, public groups, etc. Currently, the first draft of the analysis is being written.

Coastal Fishery/Forestry Guidelines

It is planned to undertake a major revision of the Coastal Fishery/Forestry guidelines in BC in order to reflect new research information and knowledge. A recent workshop involving foresters, biologists, loggers and scientists made significant progress in bridging management practices and research results. The first draft of the new guidelines is being drafted and these will be tabled for public review prior to any implementation program.

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