AN INTRODUCTION OF POLICY

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OVER thirty years ago our Society was founded in Montreal. Some of the nine founders have passed on. Three are still actively interested in Forestry and known to most of you, G. G. Piché, E. J. Zavitz and Ellwood Wilson.

When these nine men founded this Society and when the first constitution was drawn up they expressed above all things, vision of the future. They incorporated into the Constitution, in the definitions of the objects, aims that are just as necessary now as they were thirty years ago. During the early life of the Society they fought for and maintained these objects to advance the practice of Forestry and the interests of the profession, in a country without Foresters, with tremendous success.

The objects of our Society as laid down in our Constitution are:

- (1) To advance the members in theory and practice by discussion of technical and professional topics;
- (2) To promote a better mutual acquaintance among Canadian Foresters and to cultivate an *esprit de corps* among the members of the profession;
- (3) To take such steps as may from time to time appear advisable for the purpose of promoting the practice of Forestry in Canada and the interests of the profession as a whole.

The balance of our Constitution is only essential as a structure to enable us to maintain an organization to accomplish these objects and only needs revision if it fails to allow our Society to carry out these objects.

That is, the main need is to keep the Society actively trying to maintain our aims rather than a continual overhaul of our framework.

With this thought in mind I circularized last year's executive to obtain their reaction to a few queries on both the location, time and function of the annual meeting and the more important point of obtaining their reaction to part (3) of our objects, that is the need of our Society expressing itself on vital questions in Canadian Forest Policy and practices.

I am sure that if we feel the need of expressing ourselves we can solve the mechanics of doing so.

Before elaborating on this point which I feel is the important one for

expression of opinion, I would like to review our other objects and our fulfilment of them.

The initial discussion of technical and professional topics at annual meetings developed into our passing first from the mimeograph stage of a publication of our own with its inscription "The Forestry Chronicle" (issued from time to time) to its publication as a printed medium.

The earliest numbers carried the qualification, which is still maintained, that it is published by and for the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers.

We thus attained two mediums for discussion of technical and professional topics, the annual meeting and the publishing of a private journal.

If you review the back numbers of the Chronicle you will be impressed by the excellence of its articles and realize that the decision to publish and to continue publishing was a milestone in our history.

Our second objective of mutual acquaintance was definitely impeded by our geographical difficulties rendering it difficult for a large enough number of our members to attend annual meetings. Few of us even at this meeting can unhesitatingly call every other member here by name, and our Eastern members in general are not acquainted with our Quebec, Ontario and western members, and *vice versa*.

This difficulty of acquaintanceship and, with it, the necessary *esprit de corps* has been to a considerable extent overcome by the organization of sections, which I unhesitatingly say has brought more foresters together and developed more interest in our Society among foresters than any previous move within the Society. It has brought in and interested our younger foresters and has through sectional meetings developed a local acquaintanceship and a discussion of local problems that greatly exceeds any previous interest. This establishment, or more particularly, this activity among our sections, is another milestone in our history.

None of our activities have succeeded without effort, but through the efforts of our members we have developed and successfully maintained object one and object two. One reason for our success has been the calibre and interest of our secretaries and in that department we now have a firm foundation on which to undertake new responsibilities.

The common query to every organization is "What can it do for me?" While I appreciate this normal reaction I would like to emphasize the fact that in a professional society such as our own the query should be not "what can it do for me" but "what can I do for it?" As this society represents you and me professionally, and as we make our living and support ourselves

by our profession, so should we express ourselves through our Society and aim to place it in a position of leadership in Canadian Forestry.

The need of local professional recognition has been attained in two provinces by legislation, and I feel sure that this development will continue. When it has advanced far enough we will reach the day when our central Society may be the co-ordinating body or medium for these provincial association. When that day comes this Society must have attained the trust placed upon it by object number three if it is to assume its rightful place. This object,—“to take such steps as may from time to time appear advisable for the purpose of promoting the practice of Forestry in Canada and the interests of the profession as a whole,” may be broad in its terms, but it above all assumes and implies leadership.

Have we fallen down in this objective?

I am neither a judge nor a jury, and you must consider that question yourselves.

In considering this point of leadership in Canadian Forest Practice and in the interests of our profession I am not considering any one of us as an individual, but as a member of our Society and our duty through our Society to our profession and to Forestry in Canada.

Our members as individuals are leaders in Canadian Forestry, but have we made our Society a leader?

A review of our own publications and of the minutes and reports of our meetings of the last fifteen years shows in general a desire to evade or possibly not to bring up issues on policy. We have a few notable exceptions. Dr. Howe, Ben Avery, Walter ab Yberg and Ellwood Wilson have on various occasions stressed the need of a clearer definition of policy and the need of setting and attaining objects to keep our Society alive.

Our members have faced issues and have not lacked the courage of their convictions when it comes to internal reorganization, but as a Society have we had a good fight for the advancement of constructive or improved forestry in Canada in the last ten years? We are an independent Society. We have not only the right but the duty as a professional Society to express or support views that will lead to improved forestry.

Our sections have in some cases expressed themselves, and as a group, not as individuals, achieved some recognition and results.

Our method of trying to attain results by resolutions has definitely failed, so that I feel that the time has come for a free discussion on what our present objects are and the means we intend to use to try to accomplish them.

You may say "Where are our problems?"; "What are our problems?"; "Are they local?"; "Are they Dominion-wide?"

Certainly we have local problems, and I feel our sections will recognize and act on them, but we have problems which may arise in any province and which should be discussed and acted upon by our Society.

The support of the Society as a whole to back up a section in a local problem may be needed, and we have also found that speaking as a group our section has brought about improved government action because the recommendation came from all our members and not from government employees only.

To illustrate our problem I will quote two items from a recent copy of a trade journal:

B.C. FORESTRY PLAN DEFENDED BY PREMIER OF B.C.

"My advice is that members refrain from trying to keep the public mind unsettled over this problem. I say to the public, notwithstanding the statements made in this House and by the Chief Forester—who is trying to excite public interest and by propaganda increase the departmental appropriations—that this industry is sound. I'm tired and sick of these people who say we have not done anything about the future."

Under caption "Did Ontario Lose 50 Millions" one of our members broadcasting lately, referring to the fires in North Ontario of last summer, said: "if the area ravaged by fire as given in the Red Cross Society's letter is correct (I am inclined to think it is much too high), if 3,000 square miles or near 2,000,000 acres are in ashes and ruins, a very conservative estimate of the timber values destroyed would be fifty million dollars, and this in an area relatively accessible to the market for timber and pulpwood.

"Forestry is a science of managing woodlands in such a manner as to keep them as highly productive as possible. The duties for several years of the chief or provincial forester in Ontario have been restricted to the valuable but relatively insignificant work of promoting conservation and tree planting in southern Ontario. To the best of my knowledge his authority does not extend to the timber areas of northern Ontario, by far the most important part of our forest domain."

If these are not problems which our Society should know about and take action on, then I am afraid we have overlooked our primary need as a Society.

I do not feel that on five minutes' or a half hour's notice we can discuss and form judgments on problems such as these, but if you feel with me

that our proper function is to try to give leadership, a representative committee on policy might be set up to consider questions on policy in order that a course of action for the Society can be discussed at our annual meetings to obtain a good cross-section of opinion. Synoptic reports to members unable to attend could be prepared and distributed if the question required a ballot. I feel sure that the mechanics of obtaining a cross-section of opinion from our members can always be worked out.

The problems that suggest themselves are numerous. I would like to quote from Ben Avery's paper published in the Chronicle of September, 1933, under the title "Need for Society's Programs:"

"A definite proposition is more apt to stimulate thought and beget action than an abstract idea. It does not require a great amount of searching to discover a concrete project to be undertaken. What is Canada's forest practice? What has been and what is the result of that practice? What changes in that practice are essential to maintain the production of wood or the beneficial influence of the forest? Can the Society answer those questions? To what source should the Canadian press and the Canadian public turn for the answer to those questions if not to the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers? Have we the information to furnish to the Canadian public and to the Canadian press? We have not.

"Here, then, is a project; to determine forest practice in Canada; to determine the forest condition resulting from the practice; to determine the adjustments required, if any, in that practice in order that the production of wood or the beneficial influence of the forest may be maintained. It is a large project, for Canada is a large country. Is it too big for the Society? The challenge has been posted many times in the press through the printing of information dealing with Canada's forest conditions and requirements, that the Society could neither confirm nor deny."

Another definite need in our Society that suggests itself is a review of present Canadian Forest Policy and its adequacy.

None of these answers will be found here today, but if we are to maintain leadership in forestry we have to get the answers for these and similar problems from our members, for if the answer is obtainable they are the ones who have it and if unanswerable now they are the ones who should first find the answer.

This, I feel, is the Society's business, or more correctly, its duty.