THE FORESTER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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EARLY HISTORY

The first forester to enter private practice in British Columbia was the late Dr. Judson F. Clark. Dr. Clark is known as the originator of the International Log Scale Rule. Previous to establishing himself in British Columbia, Dr. Clark was Professor of Forestry at Cornell University, and forester for the province of Ontario.

Dr. Clark arrived in British Columbia in 1904, and shortly after formed the firm of Judson F. Clark & Company. In 1910 Dr. Clark contacted C. A. Lyford and P. L. Lyford, who were at that time engaged in compiling a working plan in Quebec for the Riordon Paper Company of Montreal. The Lyford brothers joined Clark, and formed the firm of Clark & Lyford Limited, of Vancouver, in 1912.

Clark and the Lyford brothers were therefore the first foresters in private practice in British Columbia. R. D. Craig practised for a short period around 1910. Craig was co-author of "Forests of British Columbia" by Whitford and Craig, a publication well-known to B.C. foresters.

P. L. Lyford maintains an office in Vancouver at present, while C. A. Lyford practises in Seattle.

A great number of timber cruisers have operated in British Columbia from 1906 up to the present. Eustace Smith, of Eustace Smith Limited, is the oldest, at present maintaining an office in Vancouver. H. Gardner & Company, formerly Gardner & Baxter, is also represented in Vancouver, and Ryan-Hibberson Timber Company of Victoria ranks with the oldest established organizations engaged in commercial timber cruising activity.

The main activity up until the beginning of World War II was:

1. Cruising, mapping and appraisals.
2. Management of timber properties for non-resident owners.

PRESENT FIELD OF PRIVATE PRACTICE

The field for the forester in private practice is now considerably enlarged. Timberland management and administration is carried on as is commercial timber cruising. However, the commercial timber cruise is giving way to the more intensive forest inventory, where volume and quality estimates must include all possible forest products, together with information on site and stocking of young growth.

Over the past few years exchange of holdings has been frequent, requiring appraisals of timber, logging equipment and development values. The field of aerial survey has advanced, requiring larger scale aerial photographs and the compilation of forest planimetric and topographic maps by use of air photography. The recent passing of Section 32A of the British Columbia Forest Act, allowing the establishment of forest management licences has created a demand for forest counsel for the establishment

of sustained yield forest management licence units. The compilation of logging base maps, logging plan designs, development and operating plans for logging operations, are an increasing requirement as operators move gradually into areas where they are faced with more difficult operating problems. Insurance underwriters require fire hazard appraisals on camps, equipment, and felled and bucked timber, and the field for fire control planning increases with the establishment of forest management licences. The above are only a few of the fields of activity facing the forester in private practice in British Columbia today.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE FORESTER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

The organization of a forest practice involves problems not encountered in practices of law, medicine or accounting. Whereas the latter operations are conducted in offices and adjacent court houses or hospitals, the forester conducts operations both in his office and also at widely dispersed points, often many days travel time from headquarters. When the forester is in his office he is required by his clients to be in the field, and when he is in the field his clients desire him at his office. It is therefore practically a necessity to have both field and office assistance.

The forester in private practice must be fundamentally a business man as well as a forester. Whether operations are conducted alone or with an organization, all the fundamental activity of a going business concern must be covered. These activities are as follows:

- a. Sales.
- b. Operations.
 1. Field.
 2. Office.
- c. Accounts and Records.
- d. Finance.
- e. Collections.

Briefly, the forester must have some type of sales division, since prospective clients must know what services can be purchased. After the job is obtained, the actual forest operation must be carried out, which involves usually an investigation in the forest or mill, the field operation. On conclusion of the field investigation, information must be compiled, plans drawn, reports written, and this involves the office operation. Accounts and records then become a most important function, since without a properly organized recording system the forester readily donates both services and supplies. Sufficient finance must be available to purchase supplies and pay for assistance until such time as plans and reports have been submitted, and the client pays the account. A knowledge of credit and collections is fundamental. Many new enterprises have gone under as a result of neglect in this direction.

The degree of performance required of foresters in private practice is much higher than that expected of foresters in Government or industrial employ. In the first place, the great percentage of the clientele arrives at the forester's office in some difficulty or trouble. It is usual rather than unusual for the client to desire his project carried out "yesterday".

Management usually accepts its own forester or forest organization that has been planned and budgeted for. On the other hand the private forester or forest organization is usually looked upon as an additional expense, and is therefore viewed with considerable scrutiny and criticism. The forester or forest organization in private practice therefore must perform with the utmost efficiency to give satisfaction to the client.

As a result, the problems of the forester in private practice differ greatly from those of foresters in Government or industrial employ. To date foresters in private practice have pioneered their field alone. One of the greatest needs at present to those practising is a common meeting ground, where foresters in private practice can discuss and assist one another in their problems.

SPECIALIZATION

One of the most pleasant and satisfactory fields of endeavor is specialized forest practice. But forestry is still young, and the stage of private forest practice at present is comparable to the early period of the general practitioner in medicine. At present, specialized forest practice is mainly limited to college professors, or those with some other income, since we have not reached the stage where there is sufficient continual demand for such specialized service. Specialization in the field of private forest practice will undoubtedly come in the future, but the demand will be developed by the applied forester in general practice.

THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES

The general conception is that the clientele of the private forester is made up of small companies that do not maintain a forestry organization. It is true that small companies and absentee timber holders do form a portion of the clientele, but large companies that maintain their own forestry organizations form an equal division of the clientele of the forester in British Columbia. It has been found that large companies require private forest services for two reasons, one, to supplement the work of their own organization, and two, to obtain an independent opinion on projects of major importance.

There is an indication that the field for private work with large companies will tend to increase rather than decrease. Many phases of forestry, such as forest management, require intensive investigation and analysis over a considerable period of time. Then the work is reduced to checking and revision planning. There is therefore less and less justification for the maintenance of a permanent forest organization as time goes on. This trend forces foresters into operations, which actually is the place where they can exert the greatest influence, and be of greatest value.

Management, on the other hand, receives many advantages from the employment of a private organization. In the first place there is the advantage of having an organization of varied experience on many types of problems and operations. The many personnel problems that confront management from any division of company organization is eliminated when they delegate these problems to another organization. Due to the fact

that the private forest organization is continually subjected to criticism and competition, the service rendered is generally superior. Further, considering the cost of office equipment, accounts and management, the services of the forester in private practice can be obtained at the same or at a lower cost than even the largest companies can maintain their own organization.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The practice of private forestry in British Columbia is not limited to that province alone. Foresters in private practice in British Columbia can carry out assignments in other parts of Canada, and other continents. Experience has shown there is a steady demand for limited services outside of Canada.

ETHICS

One of the most important single factors contributing to the success of a private forest practice as in any other practice is the ability of the forester to keep the confidence of his client. For many years lawyers and accountants have been able to serve clients who are strong business competitors. Foresters are now serving competitive organizations and carrying this responsibility to the satisfaction of all concerned.

For many years competitive forest industries were reluctant to entrust information such as their timber holding position to a forester in private practice. That this trust is now being given by private industry without fear is one of the best indications of the new strength of private forest practice.

THE FORESTER'S OUTLOOK

For many years the limit of the foresters' activity has been government service. Of recent years the forester has established a place in private industry. Now there is the trend towards the establishment of private forest practice. This should lead to even a larger outlook. Legislation is the greatest single influence on forest practice in Canada. As the number in private practice increases let us hope that foresters will be found as members of the governments of the provinces and the Dominion.

THE FUTURE

The number engaged in private practice is increasing with the increasing demand for forest services. This is one of the strongest indications of the gradual attainment of maturity of the forest profession. The gradual increase in numbers of those practising their profession in their own right, free to think and act without influence, should be a decisive contributing factor towards the future development of forestry in Canada.