PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS¹

By K. G. FENSOM

Although this is only the second annual meeting of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, as such it is the forty-fourth national meeting of foresters in Canada and the thirteenth time this function has been held in Montreal. There are, however, no precedents as far as this particular gathering is concerned. This is one of the largest meetings of foresters ever held in North America. Also, it is the first time that the national forestry bodies of Canada and the United States have met in joint interlocking annual meeting sessions. The C.S.F.E. and the S.A.F. had joint meetings December 21-28, 1921, at Toronto, and June 27-July 2 at Ottawa, but both these meetings were held in association with the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

This time we are off on our own. We are strictly forestry from start to finish, and I am sure that this meeting will be remembered by all those fortunate enough to be here as an outstanding occasion in the history of Canadian forestry.

We have long wished to hold a joint meeting of this kind. Conversations were initiated in Minneapolis in 1946 with the S.A.F., and the interest generated at that time increased steadily and has culminated in this impressive assembly of Canadian and American foresters.

It is not possible to name all those who have worked so hard and effectively in the many organizational tasks which preceded this meeting. The able Chairman of our Annual Meeting Committee, W. A. E. Pepler, was ably assisted by the Vice-chairman, Henry Clepper, secretary of the S.A.F. As the meeting progresses you will see how effectively the program was co-ordinated by Messrs. Lloyd Van Camp and Dr. Hardy L. Shirley, and what interesting topics for discussion at technical sessions were developed by the responsible Canadian and American collaborators. Of necessity, most of the committees having to do with such matters as hotel arrangements, advance information, reception of guests, entertainment and others, were staffed with members of the Quebec Section, but a major feature of the pre-meeting organization was the intermingling of C.I.F. and S.A.F. members in committee work. These associations have been tremendously productive not only in respect to completing arrangements but also in the sense that worthwhile and enduring contacts have been established.

Many more contacts will be made during the course of this meeting, and it is safe to say not just a few of these will develop into lasting friendships. It is also safe to say that the always good understanding between the C.I.F. and the S.A.F. will develop into still better understanding. We hope that, after thorough discussion of the theme, "trends in North American forestry", there will be additional incentive to look at the broad forestry picture on a continental basis, to relate items that can and should be related,

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to promote the fastest flow of scientific knowledge through states and provinces, and to create the best forms of co-operation all down the line.

The major efforts of the Canadian Institute of Forestry during 1952 had reference to this important meeting. In addition, however, there was considerable committee activity both as regards matters for which special committees were appointed and also as regards standing committees. The personnel and terms of reference of these committees were listed in my President's Reports, five of which were mimeographed and distributed to members in November, 1951, and in January, March, May, June and August, 1952, and it is sufficient to state here that excellent analyses were made of these special items, and that all available reports will be published, probably in the March 1953 Supplement of "The Forestry Chronicle", as will also the reports of the ten standing committees of the Institute.

There has been some confusion and misunderstanding in respect to the terms of reference of certain of our standing committees. Over the years some of these terms of reference have been lost in the shuffle, and since it has usually been left to the chairman of a committee to give direction to it, it is not surprising that there have often been several, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations of committee responsibilities. Standing committees are definitely not research committees. Their activities are in the fields of reporting and investigation, and it is generally understood that their particular function is to present a review of immediate past progress in the specific science which is the specialty of a given committee. These reviews, along with other reviews, constitute an up-to-date over-all progress report of forestry in Canada broken down under subject headings, and their publication each year under one cover in a special supplement of "The Forestry Chronicle" provides a handy and valuable reference, and a means of making quick comparisons as between different years and periods. However, much of the value of such a record is lost unless it is consistently presented on a comparable basis. The main deviation has been that sometimes a committee has elected to study and report rather fully on a specific item in its area of interest instead of covering the whole field in a general way. These deviations have broken the continuity, and it will be the responsibility of your directors, following careful consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on Committees, to clarify and standardize the terms of reference of all standing committees.

Recently a questionnaire was distributed to all members of the Institute. This had reference to "The Forestry Chronicle". Compilation of returns has been completed, there has been clear expression of majority opinion concerning various publication policies. Up to now it has been a matter of guesswork as to what are the ideas of the majority of members. "The Forestry Chronicle", as the official organ of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, is the national technical journal of the forestry profession in Canada. As such it belongs to members of the Institute. Every member has a direct interest in it, and those who prepare the magazine for publication do so in trust for membership at large. It is very easy to listen to and be influenced by one or two strong voices. It is much more difficult to judge as to the

extent that any forceful opinion as to policy and procedure is generally held throughout the Institute. Those who edit "The Forestry Chronicle" must give attention to and carefully consider any opinion from any source. Helpful suggestions are always appreciated. However, when matters of policy are concerned it is essential to appraise a suggestion in terms of depth throughout the Institute, and to take action if this appraisal seems to be indicative of majority opinion. Present policies of the Chronicle were developed on this basis, but as no survey or poll was ever made; it was not known whether or not these policies were a true reflection of majority opinion in the Institute. Many of these uncertainties have been resolved through the medium of this recent questionnaire and as a consequence we can proceed on a sounder and surer basis.

I do not know whether it would be more proper to say that "The Forestry Chronicle" acquired a new editor in 1952 in the person of Kingsley Harris, Vancouver, British Columbia, or that the new editor acquired the Chronicle. Certainly I can say with confidence that it is a mutually advantageous partnership, and that the editor's duties have been discharged with dispatch and acumen. We are fortunate in having been able to entice Kingsley Harris to undertake the frequently onerous task of acting as our editor. Under his guidance the quality of the Chronicle has been maintained, and there is every reason to expect that it will prosper and improve in the future.

Two new sections were organized in 1952, the Manitoba Section and the Saskatchewan Section. There has been a considerable growth in C.I.F. membership in these areas in recent years, and this splitting of the old Prairies Section into two groups will provide more opportunities for more members to meet and discuss problems together. When the C.S.F.E. was decentralized and sections were first established, there was some doubt as to the wisdom of the move. Today sections are the strength of the Institute, and it has been abundantly proved that the concentration of activities within a localized area in the form of organized sections is good for the profession and good for the individual. There will inevitably be fluctuations in the comparative status of different sections. There will be ups and downs at the section level just as there will be at the national level. However, in 1952 at the section level there were no really weak performances, and all section activities in terms of meetings, papers given, committee work, co-operative projects and so on, comprised a formidable total.

The aim of the national body is to create such conditions and furnish such assistance as will stimulate and encourage the growth of sections. Each section must continue to develop in accordance with local requirements, and they must be as free as possible to expand without hindrance or restriction. It is only natural, however, that there should be a minimum of uniformity throughout the country, and that each section should conform to the Institute by-laws in the indicated essentials. This minimum uniformity is an expression of common membership in the national body and shared ideals and objectives in the cause of Canadian forestry. Without it sections tend to be too isolated in respect to national thought and feeling. In other words, it is

equally as dangerous, from the standpoint of professional unity, for a section to be too remote and independent as for it to be coddled and regimented. As in most things, the happy medium gives the best results, and your executive is striving to bring about this condition, and to effect a balance between section responsibility to the national body on the one hand and national body responsibility to the section on the other. The perfect balance may never be achieved, but present adjustments can be improved, with goodwill and understanding through the piece.

We are thankful that there continues to be controversy about our new by-laws. Complacency breeds stagnation, and I for one do not want to see the day when there is no healthy controversy within this Institute. It was never expected that the by-laws in their present form would be the final word, but changes cannot be effected other than by the sustained persistent efforts of those who espouse causes and who are able to convince others of the rightness of their views. In any organization of this type, where there is strong feeling for the collective voice, I do not see how other than the right view can prevail over the long term.

We had some interesting and vigorous discussion on membership qualifications at our directors' meeting on Sunday, November 16th. One of the issues had to do with the privileges of affiliate members. It seems that these privileges are differently interpreted in different sections. According to our by-laws any member of the Institute in good standing, either active or affiliate, is entitled to hold office at the section level, though affiliate members are not permitted to hold office at the national level. Nevertheless, some section by-laws forbid the holding of any section office by an affiliate member. Uniform interpretation of a by-law is as essential as the uniform interpretation of a product standard, and steps are to be taken to incorporate this uniform interpretation as part of every section by-law.

The other issue had to do with qualifications for active membership, it being suggested that these should be revised so as to permit the inclusion of practical foresters without university degrees provided they were considered to have satisfactory qualifications by a Board of Examiners. As you know, the old C.S.F.E. was so wide open as regards membership that, strictly speaking, it did not rate as a professional society. We now have absolute professional qualifications in our active membership group, but nothing is ever final, and it will be for members to decide whether we have swung too far in the direction of exclusion or whether we would appear to have achieved the proper balance in our present differentiation between active and affiliate members.

Dr. R. E. Balch was our distinguished representative at the recent Sixth British Commonwealth Forestry Conference. His wide experience in the affairs of the Institute were placed at our disposal, and doubtless he will have some interesting comments to make during the course of this meeting.

Canadian forestry in 1952, after rapid advances in the period 1945 to 1951, appeared to be marking time and gathering strength for the certain opportunities of the future. Institute-wise we must now begin to think more

in terms of membership consolidation rather than in terms of membership increase. Our problem is to put the younger member in the picture, give him responsibilities and jobs, and so better qualify and equip him for the day when he will take over.

It has been a privilege to have had colleagues like Arthur Pepler and Dave Love, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Institute. Both have had heavy years, and both have made notable contributions. My thanks to them on behalf of the Institute, to the Board of Directors, to the editor and members of the Editorial Board, to the chairmen and all members of committees, to all members of the Annual Meeting Committee and all those who assisted in this momentous meeting, and to those too numerous to mention who have made and are making the Canadian Institute of Forestry what it is today.