

Interview

Natural Forest Management: Reginald D Loomis

The Pursuit of Nature's Way

Interviewed by
Peter J. Murphy



Part of the Forest History Program Interview Series

1987–1989

Original transcripts available at the University of Alberta Archives
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fRI *Research*
Informing Land & Resource Management



About the Forest History Program at fRI Research

fRI Research, originally the Foothills Model Forest, has been conducting research in sustainable land and forest management in Alberta since 1992. The positive impacts from the application of this research (e.g. Grizzly bears, watershed, forest history) to improving forest management and resource sustainability can be seen across Western Canada and beyond. The Forest History Program began in 1996 when Pete Murphy, Bob Stevenson and Bob Udell began a project to record the natural and management history of its Hinton Forest. This project soon expanded to add more reports and to encompass the entire model-forest land base. The program has produced a series of seven books and e-books including an Ecotour, an Ecotour App for west central Alberta, one DVD project and a series of reports about the evolution of adaptive forest management in the West Central region of Alberta.

Learn more at fhp.fRIresearch.ca

The Forest History Program Interview Series

Between 1997 and 2000, the Forest History Program conducted 33 interviews with various people who played important roles in, or were connected otherwise with the development of the remarkable forest management operation at the Hinton Forest of Weldwood of Canada. These were background information that would be used in a series of books and reports that would follow, all initiated by one book project linked to Weldwood's 40th anniversary celebrations in Hinton in 1997. Some of these interviews are posted to the fRI Research website for general reading, others are available only with permission for research purposes. All interviews were professionally edited to retain content but improve clarity but preserve content.

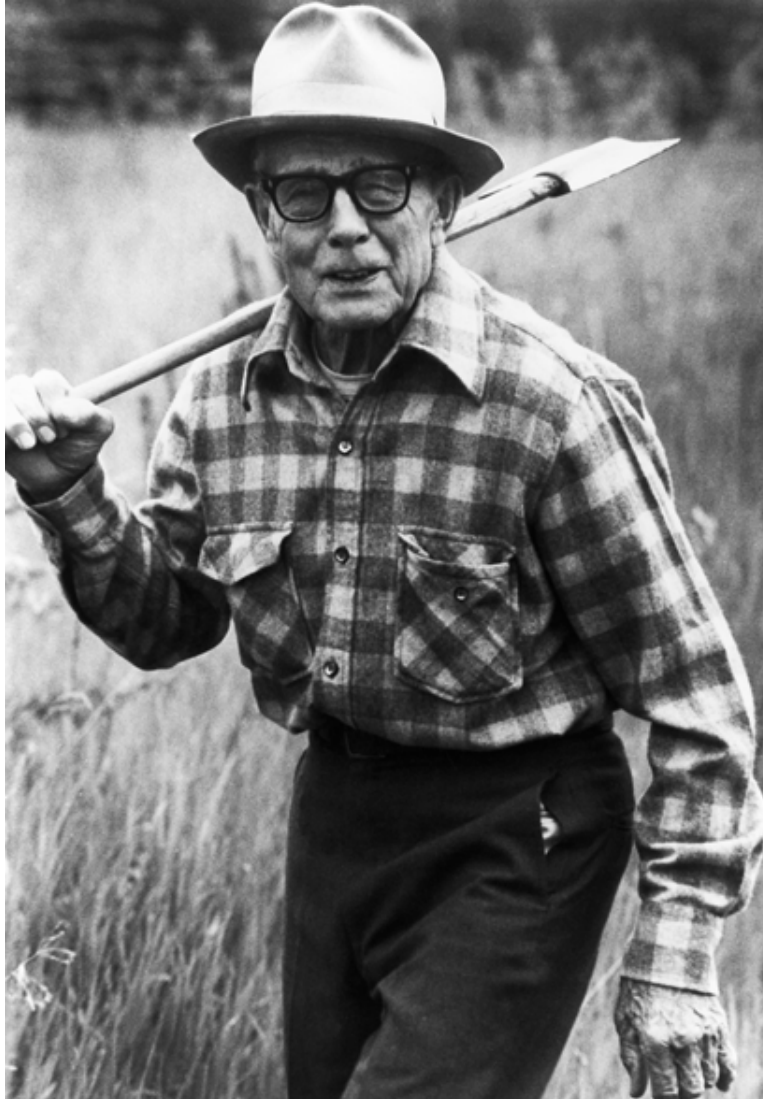
However, Dr. Peter Murphy had previously conducted interviews with Des Crossley and Reg Loomis, the two prominent foresters whose influence permeated the Weldwood history. These interviews are included with the Forest History Program Interview Series, with permission from Dr. Murphy and the University of Alberta, because they are too important to be left out.

Dr. Peter Murphy—Interviewer

Interviewer Dr. Peter Murphy is Professor Emeritus in Forestry at the University of Alberta, where he taught and conducted research in forest policy and forest fire management from 1973 to 1995, during which time he also held positions of Chair of Forest Science and Associate Dean for Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry. During his time at the University he was active in promoting the study of forest history and its importance as guidance for the advancement of forest science today. As part of this he initiated and conducted a number of important interviews with key players in Alberta's forest history, most notably Des Crossley—Hinton's first Chief Forester—and his counterpart in the Alberta Forest Service, Reg Loomis who together established the foundation of Alberta's forest management agreement system. Dr. Murphy is the Chair of the Forest History Association of Alberta, and has been a member of the Forest History Program team at Foothills Research Institute since the program began in 1996, where he has authored and co-authored a number of books and reports.

Interview Date: 1987–1989

The University of Alberta Archives holds the original copies and transcripts of this material. This interview has an accession number of UAA 87-53.



*Reg Loomis in retirement continued to work the land.
Photo credit: the St. Albert Gazette.*



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Reg Loomis and Peter Murphy at his Honorary Doctorate Ceremony, U of A.

Photo credit: Peter Murphy. 1992.



Forward

Reg Loomis was one of the first professional foresters to work for the Alberta Forest Service, and the most profoundly influential. At the time he arrived in 1949, Alberta was finally coming out of the doldrums imposed by the hard times of the 1930s and into a period of economic development after the war-time years of the 1940s. Major developments were in the offing which would greatly impact the forest. He was the right person in the right place at that time to guide the province into an era of enlightened forest husbandry.

Reg Loomis was born in 1904 on the family farm acquired by his United Empire Loyalist grandparents near Lennoxville, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. His upbringing in that area of farm and forest developed a strong conservation ethic and respect for the land which served him well. As he put it: "I have always been a conservationist at heart." It has been the foundation of his beliefs and actions.

As a younger son who could not inherit the family farm, he resolved to make forestry his career. Working two years on farms and in the forests after high school to earn enough to pay his way, he registered at the University of New Brunswick. Taking an additional year out to replenish his savings, he graduated with a B.Sc. in Forestry in 1930. A series of part-time and short-term jobs in the difficult years of the early 1930s gave him experience with forest industry and a range of Canadian forest conditions. This gave him important insights for his later work in forest management planning and harvesting. In 1935, he landed a pivotal job with the Dominion Forest Service in Ottawa working with Si Seeley on the pioneering work in developing the use of aerial photography for mapping and interpreting forest conditions.

In 1945, he worked with Brompton Pulp and Paper at Nipigon, Ontario, where he pioneered mapping and photo interpretation techniques to effectively prepare a forest inventory of their holdings. He moved to Nova Scotia in 1947 to work with Hollingsworth and Whitney, a forest products company, to assess their timber limits. It is significant to note at this point there were virtually no forest inventories in Canada, and no indications of the extent or limitations of the Canadian forest resource. In his new position in Nova Scotia, he again pioneered the use of vertical aerial photographs. In both cases he adapted the techniques of sample plot cruising and growth studies to do two of the first rational industrial forest inventories in Canada.

In the meantime, the province of Alberta had contracted a first forest inventory for the southern part of the province, but was having great difficulties with it. Reg Loomis was invited to come to Edmonton in 1949 to oversee the project. He brought with him a vision of sustained yield forest management, and a catalogue of errors in forestry practice to avoid, based on his observations elsewhere. He travelled extensively throughout Alberta to get first-hand familiarity with the forests and forestry, restructured the inventory specifications and managed the work to produce a highly respected product. As the inventory results began to come in, he planned for an extension of it to include the northern half of the province—defying sceptics that there were, in fact, valuable forest resources there as well.

During this time, he resolved to develop forest management plans which were based on the principles of sustained yield, balancing the timber harvest with forest growth. He laid out forest management units on a logical watershed basis, and developed a more rational system for selling timber harvesting rights.

He was involved in establishing the first forest management agreement area for the new Hinton pulp mill in 1954, and insisted on the unprecedented requirement that industry commit itself to forest renewal as part of its forest management responsibilities on these public lands. This led to innovative conditions in cooperative industry-government agreements which set high standards



and developed a positive tone. He was offered the job of chief forester for this new company, but turned it down in order to see his vision through for the provincial forests of Alberta.

To address problems in reforestation, he set up the first silviculture section within the Alberta Forest Service. In order to rationalize allocation of timber harvesting rights, he developed what became known as the Quota system which required timber operators to harvest only the growth capabilities of the areas in which they were working and, at the same time, to accept responsibility for forest renewal, either by doing the job themselves or paying to have it done.

He saw the land as a complex ecosystem comprising many resources. With these in mind, he inaugurated other programs to address erosion control problems and management of watersheds, forest recreation, and developed environmental standards for petroleum exploration in the forested areas. These programs were incorporated into a new Land Use Section within his Forest Management Branch—later becoming an important Branch of its own.

Reg was married to Elva in 1931, raising two fine sons, Stuart and Jonathan. Upon retirement in 1969 they built their own log home on land adjacent to Sandy Lake northeast of Onoway, practising farming, forestry, and nature conservation on their own land. These activities include extensive tree planting, and cutting and hauling his own wood fuel for home heating. His keen sense of husbandry is reflected in this statement which he wrote shortly after his retirement:

"There is no other planet like this one. If we do not look after this planet properly, there is no other place for the human, and we will perish—along with all other living things."

These interviews were conducted at his home on his farm located close to Sandy Lake in the County of Lac Ste. Anne #28 near Onoway. We had three sessions: April 29, 1987; May 12, 1988; and October 28, 1989—a span of some two-and-a-half years! The long intervals were a reflection, in part, of Reg's full seasonal cycle of activities—working his land, tending the crops, harvesting, and bringing in the fuelwood to heat his home. The delays were certainly not a result of disinterest. It is impressive how the thread of the story has been maintained and how his philosophies and beliefs have been so consistently stated—a reflection of his dedication and commitment.

In addition, the hospitality of Reg and Elva is much appreciated. Theirs is a warm and pleasant setting in which to have held these discourses.

Acknowledgement with thanks is extended to Judy Jacobs and Chris Dacyshyn who transcribed the tapes and incorporated the editorial comments. Their contributions are much appreciated.

Peter J. Murphy



Reginald Douglas Loomis—Chronological Biography

- 1904 Born in Lennoxville, Quebec
- 1930 Graduated from the University of New Brunswick with a B.Sc. in Forestry
- 1930 Dominion Forest Service—growth and yield studies in Ontario
- 1931 Married Elva
- 1933 New Brunswick—International Paper Company
- 1935 Dominion Forest Service, Ottawa—forest inventory studies using aerial photos
- 1945 Nipigon, Ontario—Brompton Pulp and Paper—pulpwood inventory including base map construction
- 1947 Nova Scotia—Hollingsworth and Whitney—timber limit surveys and base map construction, and forest inventory preparation
- 1949 Edmonton, Alberta—first head of new Forest Surveys Branch, Alberta Forest Service. Developed the forest inventory and forest management planning, negotiated forest management aspects of the first Forest Management Agreement for the Hinton area.
- 1959 Director of Forest Management Branch, Alberta Forest Service. Developed Quota system for rational forest harvesting, instituted silviculture and reforestation programs, integrated land use planning procedures, and worked towards responsible forest husbandry.
- 1969 Retired—built log house on his farm in the County of Lac Ste. Anne #28 adjacent to Sandy Lake near Onoway, a practising conservationist.
- 1992 Honorary Doctorate Awarded by the University of Alberta in recognition of the role he played in advancing the science and practice of forestry in Alberta



1. Introduction—The Loomis Farm

Tape 1: 29 April 1987

Peter J Murphy I'm here with Reginald D. Loomis, or Reg as we know him, in his log home adjacent to Sandy Lake near Onoway, Alberta. Reg and Elva have been living here since their retirement in 1969—almost 20 years ago. Reg, it is a pleasure to be here sitting in your porch in the front of your home. We've always admired this log place. I understand you built it yourself.

Reginald D Loomis Yes and no. I helped to build it. We had two Metis chaps from Gunn do the carpentry work. You know, the finishing work and everything, but all the corners were made by me and my axe. They're dove-tail corners as you know. It takes quite a little effort to get those corners so that there's no rock in the logs; they have to be—the corners have to be the same—interlocking—dove-tail corners are not necessarily parallel...

Murphy No. They're sloped.

Loomis That's right. The slopes have to be the same at each end otherwise the log would have a rock to it.

Murphy When you got going on the building, how long would it take you to do one round of logs? Do you recall?

Loomis It's rather hard to determine—it would take quite a while for each corner, you see, to dove-tail the end of each log. I imagine that with two doing a log, it would probably take at least an hour. I had young high school boys working with me, but mostly I'd work on it myself.

Murphy Well that sounds like a pretty good time, because it's important to get a tight fit.

Loomis Yes, and, well dove-tail corners are not necessarily arranged so that there's no crack between the logs. In fact they have to be separated, as far as I understand, in using the dove-tail corner. That's why we have the chinking here.

Murphy Yes, so the weight comes on the corner of the logs.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy Where did you get the logs?

Loomis They came from Swan Hills.

Murphy Oh, you had them trucked in.

Loomis They were trucked in here the length that I had told the operator. He brought them here in those lengths. In fact quite a few of them we had to cut, you know. The only thing is, the specifications of this type of building required a log longer than what I asked for in the first place. We had a different type of building in mind when we got the logs, so we had to shorten up the building a bit to fit the type of logs we had.

Murphy Yes, that's the problem with the building logs in this country, they're limited by size. These must be lodgepole pine then.



- Loomis** And the logs have to be as straight as possible. The contractor was one that worked for Imperial Lumber, Johnny Kuharchuk...
- Murphy** Oh, yes, I know his name.
- Loomis** Johnny Kuharchuk is a first class man. You couldn't do anything for him, without him wanting to compensate you double or three times. And he gave me these logs. Brought them here. And wouldn't take one cent.
- Murphy** He wouldn't take any?
- Loomis** No.
- Murphy** Isn't that astounding!
- Loomis** A year or so before retiring from the Forest Service, I had gone to the area he was logging—he was in a little trouble with Edo Nyland.¹ Edo was trying to get him to do something that there wasn't any real need for at that time, because Edo was thinking of the old timber berth sales, not the new quota system—in which it wasn't really necessary to be so concerned about boundaries, you see. The type of timber was mature, and suitable for cutting. The boundaries didn't really count because he had a volume quota for that certain area.
- Murphy** Oh, I see. Yes,
- Loomis** The assignment of the timber was controlled, mind you, but he didn't have to stay within the confines of a timber berth, which Edo didn't understand. I went up there and got that straightened out. Johnny, he's an excellent fellow. I never saw anyone who was so anxious to pay back anything you tried to help him with.
- Murphy** That's good. It's good that you were able to do that. Sometimes we get too hung up on what we see as rules rather than looking for what we're actually trying to achieve.
- Loomis** Yes. At that time, you see, Edo didn't understand the set-up very well, and he was giving Johnny a real hard time.
- Murphy** It's good that you could intervene. How did you come to select this place to live, Reg. When you moved to Edmonton, you were in the west end.
- Loomis** Well, you see, when we first came to Edmonton, in '49, Stuart, our oldest boy was only seven, and the youngest boy Jonathan being four years younger, was three years old. I didn't believe at that time, and still don't, that children, particularly boys, should be confined to a city. We were looking for a place where we could take them out into the country as much as possible. That's the reason why we got this place.
- Murphy** So you acquired it before you retired.
- Loomis** Yes. Not the whole area we have now, you see. We acquired 2.2 acres down over the hill to start off with in 1956. That was a portion of a quarter section. The rest of the quarter was in Sandy Lake, that is the north-west portion, only 2.2 acres was on dry land. We got that first. Then we swapped with the chap that owned this

¹Forester for the Alberta Forest Service at Whitecourt



land here with a quarter section a mile west of where I was planting trees—planted twelve, thirteen thousand with the idea of reforesting that piece of land.

Murphy Good for you.

Loomis I was afraid that we'd lose our privacy with the 2.2 acres, so I agreed to give him the quarter section, 160 acres, for about 24 acres of this quarter section where the house is. That's how we got this part.

Murphy You consolidated very wisely. It's a lovely property.

Loomis Yes. Then we bought 80 acres across the road so actually we have about 110 acres all together. And to me, it's a nice little farm. It can be developed, and I hope it will be developed, so that it'll be a Loomis place as long as possible.

Murphy I'm sure it will be.

Loomis The boys are interested. Both of them are interested.

Murphy That's excellent.

Loomis When we got the 2.2 acres, we built some round log buildings down there. We used to come out here weekends and holidays—all the time I was working from an office in the city. Then when it came time to retire, we were thinking of some place, i.e. I definitely couldn't stay in the city—retired. Elva was willing to live out in the country. At first we thought this would be too lonely for her, so we looked at other areas, even in B.C. We finally decided to develop here, but being down over the hill wasn't very suitable for Elva, so we built this log house located higher up, where it wouldn't be as confined for her as it would be down over the hill.

Murphy It's a lovely location.

Loomis It is. We think it is. The road allowance goes from west to here and then it goes north. Sunrise Beach is over there north east, and most people there were pretty anxious to get another road outlet. The county had built one from the north; but they were afraid fire would bind them in there.

Murphy And they needed another way out?

Loomis They wanted another one, and the possibility was for one to come right by our door. Instead of having that done, we gave the County two acres on the north side of our 80 acres, and we also bought i.e. paid the difference between what the guy who had the other 80 adjacent acres wanted - paid him \$1362.00 in order for him to allow the County to go through and build that road. So they would not come through here, and it looks as though we've got our privacy.

Murphy That's good. It was a worthwhile investment.

Loomis Yeah. Another aspect, I think is very important, is that our present furnace has two fire boxes. One is for the burning of oil, which only is used at night or when we are not around to put wood in the furnace. The other is for burning wood, which is used most all the time when heat is needed like winter. The wood is cut from our own land. Dead, dying or diseased trees or improvement thinnings, etc. This is important, if one is a



conservationist, because the type of fuel used by most people is finite not renewable, but fuel wood is renewable within 100 years or less depending on time to maturity of the species of tree used.

2. Early Days in Eastern Canada

Murphy Reg, just for the record, and to provide a framework, could we talk about the chronology of the main events in your life. For example, when you were born, and where you went to school, when you went to University of New Brunswick, and when you came here, and the main things you were doing in between.

Loomis Well, I was born on a farm near Lennoxville, Quebec, actually born there, not in a hospital. That's in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. That part of the province was settled by English-speaking people for the most part. My great grandfather, for instance, bought the old farm I was born on, in 1842. It is still a Loomis farm.

Murphy Where had he come from?

Loomis He immigrated with his parents from the United States during the time the United Empire Loyalists left there.

Murphy Oh, he was a United Empire Loyalist.

Loomis In fact I have a certificate that says that I'm a U.E. Loyalist descendant.

Murphy What part of the States was he living in?

Loomis The New England states—either Vermont or Massachusetts. I am not sure at this time. I think more likely Massachusetts. And on my mother's side—my great grandfather's name was Weyland—he was a Colonel in the British Army. He came over here from England with a thousand men to fight the Americans in the 1812 war. He fought at Lundy's Landing and Chrysler's Farm and such places. For his services he was given—my mother said 1800 acres—but I think actually it was 1000 acres, in Wolfe County, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. She was born there on part of the land which he gave to a son, my grandfather.

Murphy So your family's been in that Eastern Townships area for a long time.

Loomis Yes, and I probably have as old a Canadian background as any Canadian.

Murphy The family goes back a long way.

Loomis Went back to the late 1700's.

Murphy That's great.



Loomis I went to school, at country schools. There were two country schools about a mile or so away each in different directions from the other that I went to. They were taught by one person, i.e. all the grades were taught by one person.

Murphy In one-room schools.

Loomis One room schools. Until grade 7, then I went to a school at Waterville, which was a village about two and a half miles, or three miles from our old farm where I was born—that is, I went to high school there.

Murphy Did you walk?

Loomis First I walked, or rode horseback most of the time. I used to take the railroad track because it's quieter. Then later on—there were some people in Waterville who required a chore boy, they owned a snath factory, in other words the wooden part of scythes. The snathes were mostly made out of wood—young white ash—the sapling type. The wood had to be shaved by hand, and then had to be dried and bent. The people who established the plant or factory originated from the United States. I think probably, if I remember rightly, it was Vermont. They built the snath factory in Waterville. At the time I am speaking about they happened to be the only manufacturers of snathes in the British Empire, so I was told. The snathes were even sent to Australia.

Murphy Isn't that interesting. A virtual monopoly.

Loomis The wonderful part about them—they didn't seem to worry about people being always on the job. They took things quite easy but always made money. They had quite a large house in Waterville. They had 10 acres of land adjacent to it. Mrs. Ball, the mother of the family who originated the snath company, was originally an American. There she taught school, down in the eastern States. Her husband had died just prior to me coming onto the scene. She was looking for somebody to look after the furnace, and look after a small Jersey herd, and do other general things like that for room and board. She took me on. It was a darn good thing she did, too, because I couldn't spell worth a damn before that, and she would spend many nights teaching me to spell and other things, i.e. helping me with my homework. I had to get up early in the morning, therefore in the evenings when she was helping me I would get very sleepy, but she kept me at it because she thought to make a pupil out of me somehow.

Murphy That she did.

2.1 Interest in Forestry as a Career Stimulated Continued Study

Loomis No doubt she had a very large influence on me, also because she was the one who told me about Forestry.

Murphy Oh, she was the influence, was she?



Loomis She actually started me in Forestry. I was looking ahead a little bit, wanting to get a job, or a way of life that kept me outdoors. It looked as though, being the youngest of the Loomis family, I wasn't going to have the old farm. Although instinctively I'd like to have farmed, it appeared I had to think of something else, and she suggested Forestry.

Murphy Good for her.

Loomis Then I started to inquire about where to go, and of course, money counted a lot. New Brunswick seemed to be the most likely place. Being a Quebecker, I should have gone to Laval. They had a Forestry school there, but I wasn't a French-speaking person, so it was kind of useless for me to even think of it.

Murphy Had you considered University of Toronto at all?

Loomis On account of the fact that it was further, and they didn't seem to be so much down-to-earth as—I found out afterwards—that the students from New Brunswick were more practical in their approach to Forestry than the Toronto people were as compared to the New Brunswick people. In New Brunswick they seemed to teach a way of approaching a job in a more practical way. After I'd been out and associated with graduates of both Universities, it always appeared that this statement was basically true.

Murphy I'd be inclined to agree. They had the Forest right there, and seemed to have that inclination.

Loomis That woodlot, it helped an awful lot.

Murphy Yes, I quite agree. Did you go to University of New Brunswick, then, directly after high school?

Loomis Yeah, but in the last year of high school, we had—you see the high school students were actually taught by one person. They had hired for that year, as principal of the school, (they had the lower grades there also, because of it being a village school) but the principal usually did practically all the teaching of the subjects for the high school students. I made out all right until he came that last year. Because he didn't give a damn whether you had homework to do—he said he didn't believe in it—so if he wasn't going to believe in it, the students of that class didn't either. And all of those people, women and men (some were really clever students)—as it turned out the whole class failed.

Murphy Isn't that sad!

Loomis The examinations were based on ones coming from the Quebec provincial Department of Education.

Murphy You had to write the Quebec departmentals?

Loomis Yeah.

Murphy I remember doing those myself.



Loomis I saw this coming, so it was useless to continue on at school. Not long after I felt the only thing to do was prepare myself as best I could to enter University and study forestry. Of course under the circumstances it would be necessary to write and pass entrance exams. I wrote Chancellor Jones of the University of New Brunswick and told him the situation. He wrote me back and gave me the subjects I would have to pass to enter the university. For the next year I spent most of my spare time which was evenings and nights and Sundays studying the subjects he had informed me were necessary. The rest of the time I worked at anything at all in order to obtain money to go to University. I knew my father could not help, having been burned out just previously. I managed to earn and save around \$250.00. With that as a starter, I went to Fredericton, wrote and passed the entrance exams. The money took me to Christmas. Besides, I tutored two children whose father allowed me a room in their house. I wrote the term papers and did well. The term ended at Christmas of course, just half the first year and no more money. I went home, tried and failed to borrow to go back, until I was invited for an evening at Balls, the snath factory owners. By that time Mrs. Ball had also died. Her son Stuart was manager and had invited me up to his home. During the evening he wanted to know how I was making out. I told him as far as the studies were, "Fine." I told him about my money problem. He said, "Reg, you go back and finish your year. Next summer you will get most of it back when you get a job." That is what I did. And he saw me through the next year. It only cost \$600.00 all told for a year at university, for me that is. I had to stay out a year.

2.2 First Forestry Summer Job

The Federal Government was my employer, sent me to Manitoba. I spent 16 months there and then finished the other two years with Mr. Ball's help. Our son Stuart is named after him.

Our job in Manitoba was surveying for forested areas suitable for pulpwood for a mill built a year or so before at Pine Falls. At that time no one knew anything about wood resources for that pulp mill. There were several—8 or 10—parties out exploring.

Murphy What summer was that? Do you remember what year that was?

Loomis I went to University—I started in the fall of '25, so that would be about '27.

Murphy 1927...So that's when the Pine Falls Mill was first built.

Loomis The Pine Falls Mills was built just prior to us going out. Anyway, at that time prior to 1930, the federal government administered or looked after all the natural resources in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Murphy That's right.

Loomis And maybe B.C. or part of B.C.



- Murphy** They had two blocks in British Columbia—one was the Railway Belt along the CPR, the other was the Peace River Block.
- Loomis** Well then, between the federal government and the company, they had eight field parties going in the field—confined mostly to Lake Winnipeg. Dick Candy was in charge of the party I was put on. I don't know whether you know him or not, he used to work for the federal government. Our party was sent up the Poplar River located on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. At that time there were maybe a few Indians there. Few people had ever gone up the Poplar River before. And I can remember going up there—the Poplar River extended out into quite large lakes—and coming up there one evening—you could hear the loons there—really lonely, but lonely in a nice way.
- Murphy** Yes, I know what you mean.
- Loomis** We were up there and travelled around. Most of the area we found was badly burned. There was very very little pulpwood that we could find.
- That was the first year that aerial photographs were used, insofar as I know, for interpreting forest cover.
- Murphy** Isn't that interesting?
- Loomis** They were not vertical photographs, though, they were obliques. We used oblique photographs that year. For the first time as far as I know these were the first air photos used for this purpose in Canada.
- Murphy** That would have been of tremendous assistance, I can imagine.
- Loomis** Yeah. They were a big help. You could locate pretty well where the timber was.
- Murphy** And where you were.
- Loomis** Yeah. I had never been on with a crew using canoes for transportation before I took that job. I couldn't swim very damn well. And prior to us getting to the field there they already had some of the parties out, and one chap on one of the crews was drowned. Because of inability in swimming and otherwise a novice, "Well, I can't swim worth a hoot." The chap that got drowned was tangled up in the tow rope, you see. It happened at the foot of a falls. The rope got tangled around his feet, and therefore got drowned. As a novice I started out as bow man where experience was not too necessary. There was a fellow from Winnipeg who I worked with, he was my compassman, and he had had prior experience with canoes, so he took the stern. That year, that was the way we worked. However, the next year we went back up there and went down the Nelson River, and I became sternman and I was able to run the rapids well. We started from Norway House the second year.
- Murphy** This would be the summer of '28?



Loomis Yes. We left Norway House to go further down the Nelson River. There were about four or five different channels, I think. Anyway, I was with Si Seeley. We had come up Lake Winnipeg to Norway House in a passenger boat. It was operated by steam, i.e. a steamer—it was quite long, and being built for passengers there were cabins we could sleep in—it was quite comfortable.

Murphy Was it a sternwheeler? Do you remember how it was driven?

Loomis I think it was a sternwheeler. Anyway, the winds on Lake Winnipeg would be quite strong, and sometimes the boats would have to wait in the lee of an island for the wind to die down. The reason I am bringing this up is because the previous year I was not too sure of myself in a canoe, but the second year I had sufficient experience to handle a canoe. We asked at Norway House what channel would take us easily down the Nelson River. We knew that the Nelson River from that part of the lake expanded into several channels. The extreme west one was a very, very, large one and accommodated the largest flow of the Nelson River. No one ever travelled by canoe on that one. I don't know why. But anyway, these_ other channels—one of them had portages around bad rapids, and had been used ever since the Hudson's Bay people had started in that country. We knew that there was one, and we thought that at Norway House they'd know, so we asked them. And I guess they wanted to make fools of us because they said, "Go to the very east one", which we did do. The first rapid we came to, there was no portage! We had several canoes, and we were loaded right down with six weeks of grub and all our stuff—the back end of the canoes were about two inches above the water. So we had to unload these darn things and pack over the first portage. As it turned out there were many rapids. After a while you got sick of unloading and portaging, and you'd look at the rapid and say, "Well, do you think we'd make it?" So we would run the rapids with the canoe loaded. We made it alright, never got dumped once!

Murphy You didn't! That's good, it takes skill.

Loomis We finally got down to the other expansion of the river, i.e. another large lake. We were headed west, just at sunset, and we heard somebody singing, coming towards us. It turned out to be an Indian who had been hired by the Hudson's Bay people at Norway House, and a schoolteacher from Norway House. She was going further down the river to where the railroad crosses the Nelson River so she could take the train there. We asked them how they got down to the second lake. They said they took the channel that had the portages built. We were down there all summer—very, very beautiful, I thought.

We went up streams that we supposed no white man had ever been up before. When we took trips like that, we always planned on going light so we wouldn't have to make several trips over a portage. We just took enough so that each of us would only take one load. One would carry the canoe, the other would carry the one packsack. Of course the fellow carrying the canoe—I usually did that—he'd have a packsack too. So we'd go quickly over the portages that way.



Murphy You probably did a combination—of travelling very lean, and carrying heavy loads.

Loomis Yeah. We were in many places—on tributaries of the Nelson River. As you probably know, some of that water in the Nelson River there came from here—the Peace River no—but all the North and South Saskatchewan; all flow easterly into the Nelson and eventually go down to Hudson Bay. Anyway, we spent the summer there. And the next year I went back to university. Of course, by that time I had Mr. Ball (Stuart Ball) paid up. He said he'd see me through the other two years. I went back and finished up the year. Then I went with the federal government again and worked with them until the Depression when, you know, many people were let out.

3. Graduation 1930 and a Variety of Jobs through the Depression

Murphy Your graduating year was 1930?

Loomis 1930, yeah.

Murphy And then when you graduated in 1930, you went with the federal government?

Loomis With the federal government, yeah. This time I had charge of a party in Ontario. In fact I had charge of two parties in Ontario. They were doing research work --the federal Forestry here doing research work. We were supposed to pick out representative stands which were sampled, and these samples were supposed to be tied in with a rate of growth survey. The federal government was working in all the provinces this way. They had parties out working in all provinces, supposedly making a rate of growth survey. But it turned out not to be worthwhile when they compiled the material—it was like a person making a cake without any measure at all—dump this and dump that into a big pot and stir it up and expect to get results. Thus, the rate of growth survey was poorly compiled. Had they compiled it differently, it probably would have been worth something. But all that work was for nothing. I don't think the people in charge comprehended what the results should be.

Murphy I wonder why that happened. In 1930 was the Transfer of Resources, so the federal government lost its line management responsibilities. A lot of those people probably shifted from line operations to research, perhaps without a great deal of preparation.

Loomis I think so. Well, I've forgotten the chap's name who was in charge of research work, silviculture research, in Ottawa. He was pretty inept.

Murphy That's too bad.

Loomis Yeah, it was. I compiled all this stuff. Thus they gave me a job in the winter time in Ottawa, to help compile the field work data. I knew darn well at the time that the way they were doing it was



wrong, but you couldn't do anything about it—they wouldn't listen to any changes --but you knew darn well that by the time you got through the compilation that it wouldn't amount to a row of shucks. By spring the compilation was finished and the hell of it was they asked you to write a report of the results. I sat two weeks doing nothing beneficial because I couldn't do one thing with the data, i.e. the results of the compilations—well you'd look at the data and could find nothing in sequence of change of growth from one age to another—mostly because of the way it was compiled. One couldn't write one damn word that made sense.

Mind you, R.B. Bennett was in then, and he decided he was going to cure the troubles of Canada by letting out people. He was a lawyer representing the E.B. Eddy—no there was another pulp mill in Hull.

Murphy Eddy's the only one I recall.

Loomis E.B. Eddy and somebody else. Anyway the other outfit, he went over there—there was a bunch of people that looked after the machines, you know, they all worked in a long room—this is a neighbour of ours told us this—there were these fellows working on one side and a bunch on the other side of a large room—working on opposite sides of this large room. And he stood at the door and he said "Fire all those fellows". And some of them were excellent _men, and been there for years. And that's the way he was going to cure their troubles. Cutting back staff, in a very ruthless and unintelligent way.

Murphy Did he just fire one line, one side...

Loomis Just one side—this chap, a neighbour of ours, was one of them in it, that was let go.

Murphy That was before he became Prime Minister then?

Loomis No, he was Prime Minister at that time. And then he did the same thing with the federal government. At that time, as you say, the natural resources in western provinces were turned over to the provinces. There was a lot of land surveyors that were occupied out here up to that time. With the transfer, they were either useless or couldn't get a job—a lot of those fellows were just let go. I was working with Si Seeley in among the land surveyors down in the old building down in the lower town of Ottawa—the Bell building I think they called it. I was a permanent seasonal—that's what they called me. In other words, my job was such that they could let me go, but the job would stay viable.

Murphy The job was permanent but the employment wasn't?

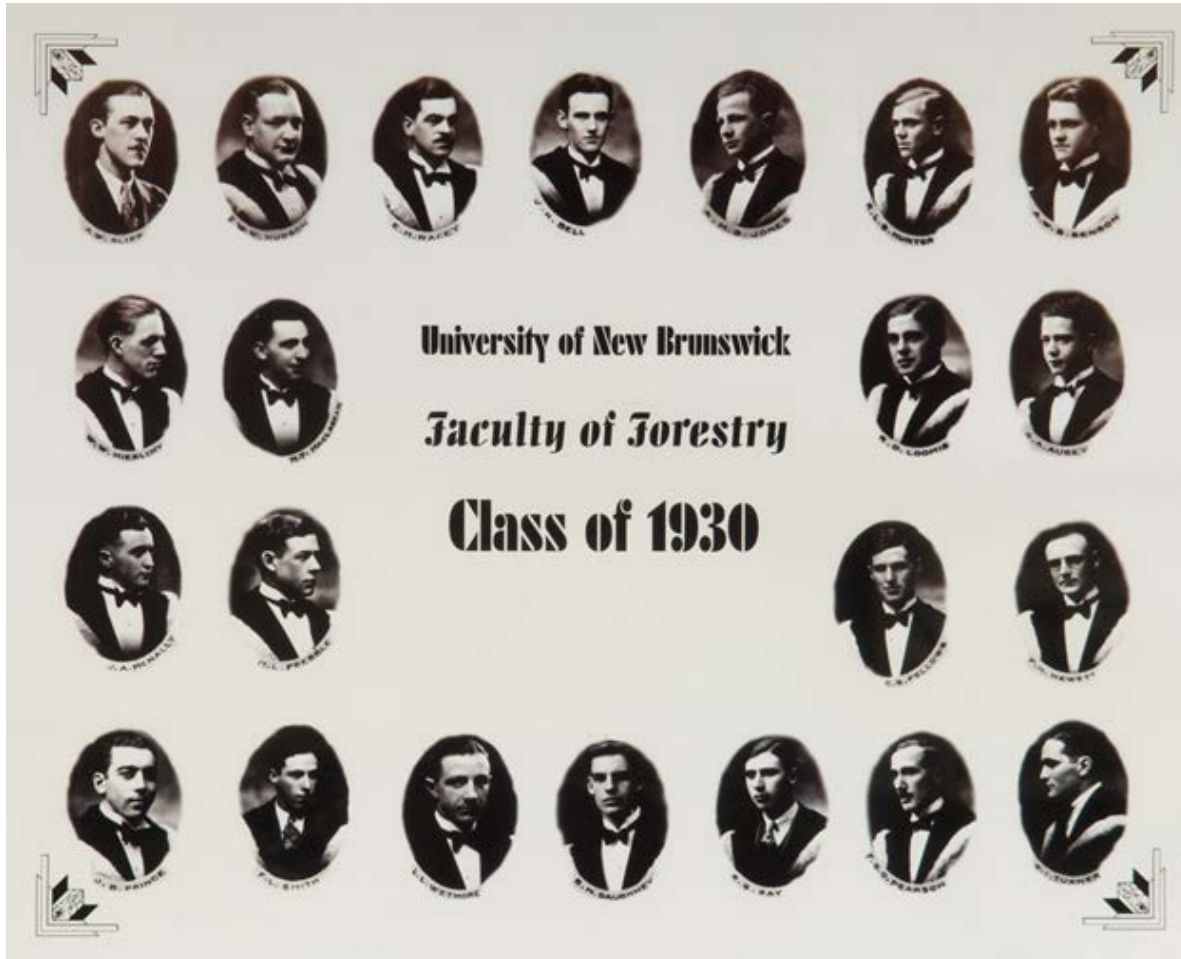
Loomis No my employment wasn't. But anyway, they didn't touch me for a long, long time. And we watched these fellows getting their notice. And he just let a pile of those go. Of course the land surveyors, I think probably it was justified. But he went through the whole darn civil service that way, just letting people go. And finally it came to me, and Elva and I had just got married then.



- Murphy** And what year was that?
- Loomis** That was in March. We were married in '31—that was Christmas Day. We were just three months married, and we were let out. So she and I rented a little 50-acre farm from my brother. I got some cows. We farmed there for a year, and we made it alright. Then I was offered a job with the International Paper Company for \$65 a month if I'd pay my way down to Campbelton.
- Murphy** Reg, where we left off after changing the tape, I think you'd said you'd just been offered a job in Campbelton, New Brunswick, if you could find your way down there.
- Loomis** Yes. Do you remember the Webbs? Horace Webb used to be head and teach Forestry. He was the only professor in Forestry for the first two years when I went to university there.
- Murphy** He was the only one?
- Loomis** He was the only professor of Forestry there when I went down to the University of New Brunswick. You didn't know that, eh?
- Murphy** No.
- Loomis** You see, when I went down there in 1925 or 26, Forestry was under one person, and that was Horace Webb. He taught all Forestry subjects to all students taking forestry.
- Murphy** Isn't that interesting. Was it a faculty at that time?
- Loomis** Well, I guess it would be a faculty, as far as I know. It was tied in with Engineering. Whether it was under the Faculty of Engineering, I'm not sure.
- Murphy** But Webb was the only one.
- Loomis** The only one teaching forestry subjects. Then they hired Barney Flieger as an assistant. But Barney wasn't worth a hoot in the estimation of the students
- Murphy** He wasn't?
- Loomis** No.
- Murphy** He wasn't that great shakes when I went down there either.
- Loomis** I don't know why they ever hired him—I do know why probably because I think he married Horace's sister, I think. Anyway there was a relationship there. The students would laugh at him behind his back, of course, when he taught them. I've never forgotten, too, he told some of us "If I hadn't cribbed, I wouldn't have got through."
- Murphy** Isn't that astounding. And he hung on. He taught—in fact he retired the year I was last there - that would have been about '52 or '53. But he was not much of a teacher.



- Loomis** No.
- Murphy** But how could he have stayed on so long?
- Loomis** I don't know. He was there for years and years, wasn't he?
- Murphy** Yeah.
- Loomis** In the summer times, after 1950, he was hired - he might have been hired other years - by the International Paper Company. The budworm situation was bad - and he was the first using a biocide—DDT which I think is awful. And I did think so then too, and I told Barney that, but it didn't ever do any good.
- Murphy** I understand Webb was the only teacher at UNB at the time you first went, and then Barney Flieger came on, and then you left_ again to work.
- Loomis** To work—and I was out a year. As I remember it, when I came back Horace Webb had left, and Gibson --
- Murphy** Miles Gibson --
- Loomis** Miles Gibson—he'd been out to B.C., he was a forester out there, prior to coming down there, and he was good. Both—actually, I found Horace Webb good too. And Gibson, I thought was a good replacement. If they had to get another person, they couldn't have gotten a better one. But they actually - all of them - when I say all of them, Horace Webb and Miles Gibson, were practically all of Forestry, as far as UNB was concerned.
- Murphy** That's interesting. They achieved a great deal.
- Loomis** They did. As far as getting good jobs and being able to handle good jobs, the graduates of their teaching did alright.
- Murphy** Yeah. Reg, we'll come back to your first job in a moment, but I brought something with me that I wanted to talk to you about, too. I've got a picture here of the student body of the University of New Brunswick in 1928. There's a picture here of Webb, and I didn't realize he was the only one. But I was impressed with some of the names of the people in the group. As you say, you must have been given a good education, because a number of these became leaders. For example here's a picture of Ted Fellows.
- Loomis** Yes. I entered that same year that he was in. I graduated in 1930. I should have graduated in '29.



*UNB Faculty of Forestry Graduating Class, 1930.
Reg Loomis and E.S. Fellows to the Right of the Text in Vertical Line, Mac McLaggan and Malcolm
Prebble on the Left in Vertical Line
Source: <http://media.unb.ca/forestry/h252894c5#h252894c5>*

Murphy Yes. And then Harold - is it Haney?

Loomis Harold Haney. Yes. Harold, he was a year before me.

Murphy Where did he go? Was he with the feds?

Loomis He went with the federal government, and he was in charge of the federal government's work in New Brunswick for a long time. But you know, Haney had only part of one lung to live by. He'd got TB. There was another guy that was associated with him who died of it.

Murphy That was a serious disease then.

Loomis Yes it was.



Murphy And there's Bernie Sisam who went on to become dean at University of Toronto.

Loomis Right.

Murphy I hadn't realized he was a UNB grad.

Loomis He graduated a year after I did.

Murphy And then Wilf Creighton, whom you mentioned.

Loomis Yes. He graduated at the same time that I intended to, in '29. I had to stay out a year, I graduated a year after he did.

Murphy Then he went on to Nova Scotia and later became Chief Forester then Deputy Minister.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy There's a fellow named Love here, H.J. Love—but I'm probably thinking of Dave Love. He wasn't a forestry fellow.

Loomis No. I don't seem to recall him.

Murphy But here's Mac MacLaggan. You crossed trails with him. He was a 1930 grad, too.

Loomis He was, yes. That year was the largest graduating class that UNB had had up to that time. I think it was twenty-odd graduates.

Murphy Some notable individuals.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy Max tells a story about when he graduated, he went with a pulp company in northern New Brunswick as a scaler.

Loomis Well, I was his assistant there for a while.

Murphy Oh, you were?

Loomis Yeah. He and I spent a whole winter together.

Murphy Max tells the story about when he first went, he went as a scaler - he had room and board in camp and he had a car. And then as the Depression hit, he had to start paying for room and board, and he lost his car and they made him assistant scaler, and then they put him assistant scaler on wages, and I think he wound up as a strip boss. So he took great pleasure in telling how he started his career on a high note and it went downhill from there.



- Loomis** I don't remember that at all. You see, when I was with him he was - you know they'd have a scaler working several camps—some of them were probably just a minor camp, and I was his assistant there—that was after I graduated. I have forgotten the sequence.
- Murphy** Well, we'll come back to it Reg. Let's talk about some of the other people here who I recognize, anyhow. There was McLenahan, who became the federal District Forester here.
- Loomis** Yes. He graduated prior to me, I think in '28.
- Murphy** And there was Malcolm Prebble. Was he there? There's a Prebble there.
- Loomis** Malcolm graduated the year I did.
- Murphy** He was with the feds in Ottawa.
- Loomis** Then he went into entomology.
- Murphy** Then there's Reg Loomis.
- Loomis** Oh. Well, I'll be damned!
- Murphy** Another notable. I'm sure there are others in here that I should know. I haven't read all the fine print.
- Loomis** There was a fellow by the name of Jones. He was a nephew of the chancellor. He graduated the same year as I did.
- Murphy** In Forestry?
- Loomis** Yeah.
- Murphy** What did he do then?
- Loomis** He and I worked together in Ottawa for a while. He finally became woods manager for the company that I had worked for in Ontario, in Nipigon.
- Murphy** Do you remember what company that was?
- Loomis** It was Domtar, but they called it Brompton Pulp and Paper at that time. They have a mill at Red Rock.
- Murphy** That was an interesting digression. I'm glad we were able to talk about it. Let's get back on the sequence of your career events. You went to New Brunswick then, after you'd farmed --
- Loomis** And worked for the International Paper Company. Leland Webb was in charge of forestry. He said he'd give me a job as a compassman, although a graduate forester, at \$65 a month. I was only a compassman for two or three weeks, then they made me a cruiser. And the next year they made me



a party chief—I was in charge of a party, a field party. He was alright, except I had trouble with him. The reason—our party was sent down to the Miramichi River, where the company had holdings. We were supposed to cruise there. I asked him before I left, what would I do about Elva, my wife, and he didn't seem worried about her at all. When I went down there to look the job over, I saw there was a little cabin that some hunters from Boston owned—right out almost in a muskeg—on a little piece of land that the company did not own. I found out about it from the caretaker there. He said I could take her there. So I took her in there, and after I did I wrote to Webb and told him, i.e. Leland Webb what I'd done. I said that she had nothing to do with the company at all, she was not on their property, entirely away from them, and she wasn't anywhere near the camp that I was _in charge of, and as far as I was concerned, it was quite a sensible thing to do. He wrote back and he said "You get your wife out of there, or quit." And I said to myself—and also talked it over with Elva—"we'll quit", so that's what we did. I left the party right there and walked out with her for twenty-three, twenty-four miles—she walked a pair of shoes out, getting back out—and we left the company.

Murphy Good for you for having the courage to do that.

Loomis Then—that winter, I went home and worked on the farm for a while—then went down with Elva, she comes St. Stephen as you know—New Brunswick. Later that same winter, the woods manager (of International Paper), gave me a job as scaler assistant, and that's the winter I spent with Max MacLaggan.

Murphy Do you remember what winter that was, then, was that '32, '33?

Loomis Yeah, it would be 1933.

Murphy So you got back with that same outfit that you'd quit on?

Loomis Well, for the winter, you see. Nothing to do with Leland Webb. I don't think he would have taken me on, but actually the woods manager didn't seem to worry about what Leland had to think.

Murphy It's amazing, the outlook at that time about family relations.

Loomis Well, at one time, and particularly Leland, he figured a forester shouldn't be married at all. And for a long long time he wasn't. He got married quite late in life. They talk about him around Campbelltown - he'd come in to Campbelltown to go to another area, and he wouldn't go home at all.

Murphy Even after he was married?

Loomis After he was married. I don't think he had any quarrel with his wife or anything, it was just his way. He just felt that a wife had nothing to do with a man's job.

Murphy A company man...



Loomis His opinion was a wife shouldn't interfere with his job. But I felt otherwise, and I felt it was none of his business what I did with Elva, so long as she wasn't on company property—it had nothing to do with the company. And that's why I quit. And I had no job to go to, you see. Not a thing. But it was a matter of principle.

Murphy Where did you go from there. That took you through the winter...

4. First Full time Job: 1934—Forest Products Laboratory

Loomis Then eventually I went back to Ottawa to work in the Forest Products Laboratory. There the government of Canada had received quite a number of complaints in connection with exporting of lumber from Canada to England, etc. There were complaints about the structure of the lumber. The Forest Products Lab was instructed to test the lumber sent from various locations in Canada, some of it from Quebec. Samples were sent up to the lab, and my job—and J.R. Coleman, do you remember him?

Murphy I don't remember him.

Loomis Well J.R. Coleman—he went to UNB.

Tape 2: 29 April 1987

Murphy This is tape 2 of the interview with Reg Loomis on the 29th of April. Reg, you were talking about your move to the Forest Products Lab, and describing Coleman. I was going to ask, too, what specifically was the concern about the lumber - was it a strength or a grade concern?

Loomis It was the strength of it—actually it had a lot to do with the size of knots and their location in timber sizes, like two by sixes, two by eights, and so on. We—J.R. Coleman's job and mine was to make sketches of each piece of lumber showing where the knots were and sizes. They had us out in a big out-building. They didn't give us much money—I think they gave us about \$70 a month. And Elva and I rented a little bachelor apartment in Ottawa. We paid \$45 a month for rent—it was furnished. It was just a one room abode.

Murphy That's a lot of rent, considering what you were getting.

Loomis Out of \$70 we had to pay \$45, and we managed. And I continued that until the government decided to transfer me—at that time I think the federal government created jobs on a temporary basis, to accommodate graduate foresters.

Murphy I see.



Loomis Allan Buell, do you remember him?

Murphy Yes.

Loomis He was one of those who benefitted. He was first given a job up at Petawawa, and then he was sent down and he worked under Si Seeley, with me. They decided to keep me on. This job at the Forest Products Lab wasn't supposed to last very long, but they decided to keep me on, and then finally moved me up to work with Si Seeley. I had worked with him, as you know, before. That's where my real introduction was to the use of aerial photographs in forestry. I worked ten years with Si.

Murphy Just trying to keep track of the dates again—when you were with Forest Products, that would have been 1934?

Loomis Yes._

Murphy 1934 then. And just what were you doing there—you were sketching the characteristics of the lumber and then what would happen?

Loomis I don't know what they did do with the sketches. Probably they had machines, and tests by putting weights on the pieces of lumber in various places. The purpose of those sketches was to record where the lumber broke and thus determine the relation of the crack or break to where the knots were located.

5. Forest Inventory Work with the Canadian Forest Service: 1935

Murphy Yes, that sounds reasonable. Was it later in 1935, or '36 that you went with Si Seeley?

Loomis No, I think it was '34 that I went back to Ottawa, for I started with Si Seeley in '35.

Murphy Okay, that's fine. It was in Ottawa too?

Loomis It was in Ottawa, yeah.

Murphy Well what was Si Seeley doing, was that research, or was it part of the inventory program?

Loomis Well, Si Seeley, at one time, was well known, as the developer of using aerial photographs in forestry. In fact people came from various parts of the world. Spurr was one—did you ever hear of him—Stephen Spurr?

Murphy You bet.



- Loomis** He got his introduction in the use of aerial photographs from Si. In fact a lot of the write-ups of Spurr in his book was of Si's origin. He also happened to have my name. In other words, much of his write-up was information from Si.
- Murphy** So you were really at the cutting edge of photo technology in forestry at that time.
- Loomis** Yes. The application of aerial photographs. I think I was the one of the first to quit Si. No, Al Buell was. Al Buell² was there for a year or so. And then he took a job not very far from Nipigon—there's a lake there, east of Nipigon, on the CNR railroad, I think. Can't think of the name.
- Murphy** There's a pulp company there. Was that the one he went with?
- Loomis** Yes. The pulp company was named after the lake.
- Murphy** We'll look it up.
- Loomis** Al was there and became woods manager there. Then he moved to E.B. Eddy's—Western took over, didn't they? The two pulp companies in Hull across from Ottawa. I don't know whether Al was with them before Western took over or afterwards. But he became quite a noted man in woods operations.
- Murphy** Yes, I remember his name very clearly. He was with you, and then you stayed on for about ten-----
- Loomis** He left, and then I left, and then there was George Sonley and Stan Losee.
- Murphy** Oh yes.
- Loomis** And they both left—and went with companies in wood operations.
- Murphy** So you were a research group and a training ground as well.
- Loomis** Jack Robinson took over Al Buell's position with Si. He stayed there until after Si retired, then took over as head from Si.
- Murphy** What was the nature of your work? Were you just trying to refine techniques on how to use photographs...
- Loomis** Well, first off, there was no way, on oblique photographs, no measurable way of measuring tree heights. With photos being oblique, the trees would stand up and you could identify the various stands, also the heights of stands, just by looking at them, Si developed a method, working with the federal land surveyors—a lot of them were great mathematicians. So I worked with them and

² Alan Buell became Woods Manager for Kimberly Clark at Longlac. His son Tom Buell became the President of Weldwood of Canada Ltd.



developed a method of measuring the height of trees, depending on the position in the oblique photograph.

Murphy Yes, it would vary with the distance.

Loomis The heights would vary. An oblique to be measureable had to have the horizon in it. All this work was done from the location of the horizon in the photograph.

Murphy So in the early work, most of the photographs you used were obliques, were they?

Loomis At the very first. Then we went to vertical photographs, and Si developed methods of measuring tree heights from them also. He also was developing various methods of transferring detail from a photograph to a map of different scale - that is, the photograph would be of a different scale than the map.

Murphy That's right.

Loomis He developed what he called a Seelyscope, which was a stereoscope with mirrors—a mirror stereoscope. That's where I think I developed trouble with my eyes, because he used to have me use the Seelyscope a great deal. I could hold the convergence of my eyes better than any of the others. For control one had to use various reference points recognizable on the photograph and the same ones on the maps—one would have those superimposed on one another. If your eyes converged_ they would move, one would lose control. One would have to hold convergence of the eyes to hold the images in the right position, and then sketch in between them. I used to be able to do this, and I think that's where I started to have trouble with my eyes in later life.

Murphy Did it put too much strain on one eye?

6. Forest Industry Work: 1945–1949

Loomis Yeah. I was there until 1945, I think. I left because it got so that there was little incentive in doing the work. We'd make maps of Nova Scotia for instance—I'd never had been in Nova Scotia at all. We'd interpret the photographs and prepare maps, but I wouldn't even know what species were there except as these were interpreted from the photo images.

Murphy You wouldn't know...

Loomis These maps would finally be sent down to Wilf Creighton. They'd no doubt be put on a shelf and forgotten.

Murphy Oh gosh.



Loomis The importance of the work was created by ourselves—it was not in response to a demand. I got very tired of doing that kind of work. So I got a job at Nipigon with Brompton Pulp and Paper.

Murphy You got a job with Julian Merrill.

6.1 Early Training in Forest Cover Maps

Loomis Julian Merrill. He was woods manager for the Brompton people. I first knew him some years before when he worked for International Paper Company at Campbelltown, in charge of fire control. He was an American. He graduated from the University of Maine, I think. He was a native of the State of Maine. When he went to Nipigon—he wanted to get a forester—I don't know whether he wrote me or I wrote him—but anyway I went there. It was there I received my education to build up forest cover maps from practically nothing.

Murphy That's quite a basic start.

Loomis They had quite old photographs and they gave me blank paper--that is there were no maps. The Ontario government had done nothing at all at that time in forest inventory work. So my job was to build a forest cover map out of these older photographs. I didn't know too much about using photographs to construct maps at that time. I had to learn that, too. Anyway, I was there, and then I decided to—I always wanted to go into business for myself—and there was a chance to buy a woodlot in New Brunswick from a relative of Elva's. I went down there and logged it. I hired a lot of fellas to peel the damn wood, you know, and I overestimated the amount of wood in the tract just by one little slip. I failed to make a go of the undertaking.

Murphy Oh, dear.

Loomis I lost all the money I put into it. Then I took a job in Nova Scotia.

Murphy What year was that, then? 1947?_

Loomis Let's see, I came out here....yeah, '47. Right.

Murphy And what outfit was it in Nova Scotia? Was it another pulp company.

Loomis Hollingsworth & Whitney. Their head office was in Boston. They had a pulp mill in Maine, at Waterville, Maine. Not Waterville, Quebec, but Waterville, Maine. I also had an opportunity with a company at Dryden in Ontario—east of Lake of the Woods. Anyway, they wanted me to go there, and these people wanted me. I thought it best to go to Nova Scotia. They asked me to go to Waterville, Maine, to be interviewed by the woods manager. While I was there, they said you should see the good quality of wood we get from our holdings in Nova Scotia. They had a thousand square miles of freehold land in Canada, mostly in Nova Scotia.

Murphy Oh, that's quite an asset.



Loomis Yeah. It was all freehold land. They had bought it back in 1923, and the lines had to be rerun—all the old lines—there had been a lot of burns over the years. They were all run by staff compass and the corner posts were all wood. So that was quite a job to relocate their boundary lines and then inventory the area. Anyway, they wanted me to see this wood that they got from Nova Scotia, and I did see it. It was actually sawlog size spruce. Beautiful wood going to make pulp.

Murphy They were going into pulp?

Loomis Being chopped up into pulp chips.

Murphy What a shame.

Loomis Once I took the job in Nova Scotia, I found out why it was good wood. It was because they were actually high-grading there! Although I don't think the woods manager—he'd have been astonished if I had said, "Well you're high-grading your stands", but evidently they asked for spruce, and the contractors were providing spruce, and left balsam fir trees standing, and they were numerous.

Murphy Oh, I see.

Loomis When I left Nova Scotia to come out here, in '49—before I left—we'd completed a lot of the inventory work by then. We did it by sample plots. One of the things I was going to have done, and I guess they did it after I left, was to find out what the rate of growth was. We measured everything from one inch up. In a percentage of the plots. Other plots provided measurements of only merchantable size trees only.

Murphy Yes.

6.2 Reforestation Problems in Nova Scotia and Ontario

Loomis Either way, when you calculated the whole thing, you found that 70% of the tree growth on their holdings was balsam fir. And one of the big faults in balsam fir then was the effect of the woolly aphid. The woolly aphid would attack the balsam fir and make umbrella-shaped trees out of them—they'd just grow a little bit over your head and then just spread out, you see. There was no --

Murphy No height growth.

Loomis No height growth, no terminal bud left. The diameters of some of the trees would be six, seven, eight inches DBH. You'd cut into them and they would be red rot.

Murphy And no height.

Loomis No height. Wilf Creighton, he was the Chief Forester then, I said, "Wilf, aren't you worried about regeneration in Nova Scotia?" I had a pretty good idea what the regeneration was from what we saw on our holdings. The company's holdings were all over Nova Scotia except down below Lunenburg, and on Cape Breton Island. We had holdings even on Chaleur Bay, you know, and the



Bay of Fundy. So their holdings, I thought, were a good representation of the forested area of Nova Scotia. And by the way, there's only about two per cent, I think and still a fact, two per cent of Nova Scotia's land which was arable for agriculture. The rest is all classed as forested.

Murphy It's predominantly forested. Yes, I can't remember the percentages.

Loomis Only two percent I think. I asked Wilf, "...aren't you worried about the future growth here?" And he said "No, it's all good growth—good natural regeneration." But the natural regeneration was all faulty balsam fir on our holdings.

Murphy So that was the seed of the problem that later emerged.

Loomis Yeah. None of the companies down there seemed to worry too darn much about reforestation. They had an idea that it would all come back naturally. And when I worked in Nipigon, the Ontario government didn't ask the company to regenerate anything at all. And they never seemed to be concerned about using only the mature timber either. At Nipigon, you could put a camp in areas of predominantly immature timber, and the government didn't disallow it. That's one of the reasons why I made up my mind, if I had anything to do about forest management, it would be on a sustained yield basis—I'd make damn sure it would regenerate—well you couldn't sustain growth with cuttings like that at all.

Murphy No. What other problems did you see besides growth. Did you see problems developing in the over-mature stands in Ontario and Nova Scotia? Were there problems with, say, blowdown, or...

Loomis The thing that I was concerned with—do you remember Murray Morrison?

Murphy I remember the name, but I can't say I remember him.

Loomis Murray Morrison was a graduate of UNB, and worked for the Ontario government in forest management. He came out when I was working at Nipigon. He and I were talking about regeneration. We had some air photographs, taken sixteen years prior to the time I was there. And on one of them, we saw a stand that had been recently cut, i.e. 16 years prior. It was a long ways away from where we were—we had to take a canoe and spend a weekend going out there to see what happened. They were clear cuts. We wanted to see what had happened to them as far as regeneration was concerned in the 16 years. The only place we saw any regeneration at all was under where the brush from the tree cut was piled. There was a little bit of regeneration there. But the rest of it was just as bare sixteen years later as it was the day it was cut.

Murphy And the Ontario government didn't assume any responsibility..?

Loomis They were supposed to, I suppose—the Ontario government had a good forest management division, and they seemed to know what they were talking about. And yet they didn't seem to be worried at that time. At that time they just had started their forest inventory.



- Murphy** That's right, yes.
- Loomis** They actually got their ideas of forest classification from us.
- Murphy** From the work you'd done with the company?
- Loomis** Yes. Stan Losee was doing similar work for Abitibi i.e. forest inventory. Stan was a very good worker—but his classifications to compile would be god-awful complicated. The breakdowns were, I figured, altogether too close. So I made up my mind that I'd simplify things as much as possible when I was at Nipigon. And I followed that same principle when I went down to Nova Scotia and then when I came out here.
- Murphy** Just before we leave Ontario, can you recall what the philosophy was, or the thinking was, on the part of the company people you were working with, about regeneration? Was there any concern about it?
- Loomis** Julian Merrill's an awful nice fellow. And he was interested in forestry. But I don't think he worried too much about regeneration.
- Murphy** When you took your weekend trip up to that sixteen year old clear cut...
- Loomis** Well, we told him, but I don't think it impressed him at all. It impressed us, but I don't know whether Murray Morrison impressed them very much in the provincial office in Toronto when he went back there.
- Murphy** So from what you observed there, you were concerned about two things. One was leaving old growth and cutting immature, and the other was regeneration.
- Loomis** The thing is—the basic thing that I was thinking of was sustaining the yield and it wasn't necessarily leaving old growth, but naturally if you're going to, I thought, do good forestry work, you should remove decadent stands, or decadent trees.
- Murphy** Yes.
- Loomis** And leave the immature if possible.
- Murphy** And when you went to Nova Scotia you were concerned also about the species selection, and the fact that they were creating balsam fir stands...
- Loomis** I was very much concerned with that, but I don't think that the company was too concerned.
- Murphy** But that certainly affected your thinking when you came to Alberta.
- Loomis** Yeah.



6.3 Inventory and Mapping—A New Home and Woodlot

Murphy Could we just finish up on Nova Scotia then. Your job was to do inventory and mapping on...

Loomis There were two jobs I had; relocate the boundaries of the company's holdings. Down there all the survey work was principally done with staff compass. It was not like out here, the lots and surveys went every which way. It didn't matter—they tell me that it was because of people wanting land, prior to us going there. They'd go in and ask for a piece that they thought was desirable, and the government people would go out and survey an area. How they tied it in to other surveys I don't know. They'd run these boundary lines every which way wherever the land wanted was, it wouldn't matter east or west, north or south. The lines didn't follow a grid set up at all. So it was a real job to resurvey all this freehold land that the company owned in Nova Scotia.

Murphy That would have been a major one.

Loomis At that time, Wilf Creighton told me that the government owned less than 25 per cent of the forested areas. Most of it was all under free enterprise, so-called.

Murphy Yeah. I think it's still...

Loomis Before I left there the province was buying back wherever they could. In fact the company I worked for sold land back to the government (end of tape two side one).

Loomis Elva was in St. Stephen when I went down there, and my job was to find a place suitable for us to live. So I bought a house down the LeHavre River, about five miles from Bridgewater. You see, the location of the Woods Office of the company I worked for, Hollingsworth and Whitney, was at Bridgewater. It's on the LeHavre River, as you probably know, so we went downriver to a place with a lovely big house. Prior to us having it, it was owned by some sea captain. He'd fixed it up very nicely. There was sixty-five acres of land tied in with it. Down there, prior to that time, the Le Havre River area of Nova Scotia, was owned by French settlers, and the survey was the French method. The individual properties were long and narrow. They faced onto the river, and then they'd run back. For instance, we had 65 acres and it went back a mile from where the house was. And we could almost spit across to our neighbour, their areas were the same way.

Murphy Yes. That was the old river lot survey system.

Loomis Yes. And each individual owner there had a wharf. We had a wharf, though it was not in very good repair—because the guy wasn't worried about it. But our neighbours were fishermen, and they kept up their wharves well. It was a very very nice location.

Murphy Did you farm the land while you were there?

Loomis Yes. As much as I could, although we weren't there too long. We got there in '47, and we left there in '49. I was just getting interested in it. Somebody, the prior owner, had cut off all the wood in the



back and that was that. They put hay land back there. The fields were behind us—the land ran up kind of sharply from the river—back, and there was a road right in front of our house—but far enough back it didn't interfere too much.

Murphy So you commuted out of there?

Loomis Went back and forth.

Murphy You mentioned the two jobs—one was surveying the line, and the other one...

Loomis The other one was making an inventory of the holdings—classifying all the forested areas that they had. Nova Scotia has a great many species of trees, both deciduous and coniferous, and some of their holdings were almost entirely deciduous. Some of that land they sold before I left there. They wanted coniferous areas and as soon as we made the inventory and found out what they had—they had no idea what they had—you see, they bought all this land in 1923, without any knowledge whatsoever of whether they had good forest land or nothing. Our job was to determine what was there and to tell them. Down there—I think this will be interesting—down there squatter's rights are lawful. In other words, a person could move on to a piece of land. If they're not interfered with for seven years they can own that land.

Murphy Even if it's in private ownership?

Loomis Yeah. For instance, this company I worked for had bought farms you see—in some of the freehold land there were actually farms, and buildings on it. When we went to it to inventory, we found it was occupied. And everything had to be referred to Boston. The local people didn't seem to be able to make decisions. The woods office was in Waterville, Maine. The questions had to be sent on to Head Office in Boston. That was one drawback. But anyway, we came across this piece of land, it was occupied, and asked them what we were going to do about it. The reply was, that if the man had lived on the land for seven years, it was his, although the company had paid for it, and probably paid taxes on it to the government—I don't know about the taxes. And our job then was to determine what was his and what wasn't. The only way we could tell was where he'd tacked up barbed wire along the boundaries and, if the tree growth had seven years of growth or more over the wire, then it was his.

Murphy Interesting. And in that particular case was the land his, then?

Loomis In that case there it was his. We inventoried and included in the company's holdings that land that he hadn't put wire around. Although some of it was darned nice, well-wooded coniferous stands, too. That's something that out here—squatter's rights have no lawful standing at all, as I understand it. I think there was one case at Whitecourt, south of Whitecourt, where somebody had moved in there without permission, and I guess they did give him his squatter's rights.

Murphy I have the impression that in earlier times they were probably honoured.



- Loomis** I think as far as Nova Scotia, that still holds. Squatter's rights. I don't know for sure.
- Murphy** You'd have to be quite alert. It would be interesting to find out. Well that kept you going then. When you were doing the inventory, did you have aerial photographs?
- Loomis** Oh yes. The same as at Nipigon, we had to start with what photographs were in existence. I finally got Spartan Air Services to re-photograph all their lands—and I did that just a little while before I left. We then had new photographs. But starting out, we had the old photographs and no maps.
- Murphy** No maps?
- Loomis** And there again we had to start. By that time, of course, I had learned how to make maps from aerial photographs by transferring the data.
- Murphy** So you made your maps from the aerial photographs and then interpreted the forest cover.
- Loomis** You had to make the planimetric maps, topographic maps, from the photographs, and then interpret the photographs and outline the various stands, types of stands, and transfer them onto the map. That was all well-established before I left there. The thing was, by the time I left, it was in shape that somebody else could carry on with it.
- Murphy** So you were applying the techniques you had developed in Ottawa.
- Loomis** Yeah. That and techniques that I had learned and developed.
- Murphy** You used your own imagination and innovation.
- Loomis** A lot of it. In Nova Scotia they sent me down to review what Spurr was doing. I spent a few days down there, but I found that we were a little bit ahead of him.
- Murphy** Yes, that's encouraging.
- Loomis** Actually I didn't learn anything from him. Planimetric mapping was not something I learned in Ottawa, but acquired because I had to.

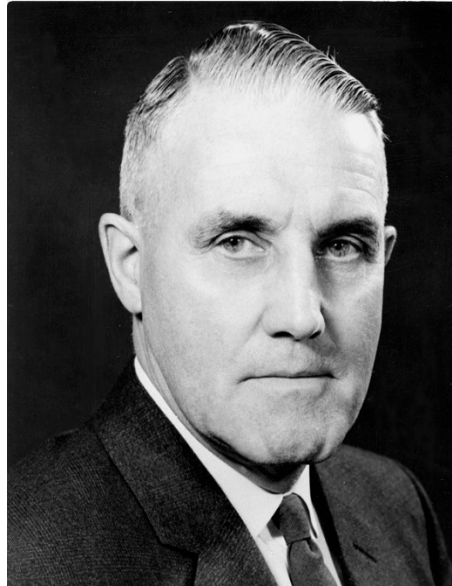
7. New Career in Alberta: 1949

- Murphy** How did you come to Alberta, then, Reg? Your next job was a major move to the west.
- Loomis** As far as coming to Alberta, Huestis wrote and asked if I'd be interested.
- Murphy** Now how did Huestis get hold of you?
- Loomis** Sometimes things are done before they should. Alberta had signed a contract with Photographic Survey Corporation to—Huestis was a darn forward-looking man.



Murphy

Yes he was. They signed a contract with Photographic Surveys to do photography, and then they...



*Eric Huestis, Date Unknown
Alberta Forest Protection Historical
Photo Collection*

Loomis

They signed the contract with Photographic Survey Corporation to planimetric map the whole province except where—the federal government had some darn good maps, you know, but only parts here and there of the province. The real reason for doing it was that the oil companies were very interested in developing oil here. They found the Leduc No. One oilfield, and just after that they wanted to go other places but they had no maps. Nothing. And then there were people interested in developing pulp mills here, and they, the Government, didn't know anything about the forest cover at all and where suitable stands were located.

Murphy

There was interest at that time even in pulp mills?

Loomis

Yes. That's what Huey told me when I came here. Or he may have put it in the letter. Anyway...

Murphy

But how did Huestis identify you specifically?

Loomis

I told you about the Toronto people. I can't think of Morrison's boss's name right now, but he was up with me quite a little bit. He was quite interested in what we were doing, quite pleased with what we were doing. I think when they got started on the job of their inventory, a lot of it came from what we were doing. Huey knew him, and he wrote to him and asked him if he knew of anyone who would be interested that was trained in that work—who would be interested in coming



out here. And he suggested that he write me. So Huey wrote me and asked me to come out. That was in the fall of...well, it was in '49.

Murphy It was '49 when you came here.

Loomis Yeah. I wasn't too pleased with the fellow the company had put in charge down in Nova Scotia. The company that I worked for had hired him before me and put him in charge—a graduate forester from UNB. He was a taker, you know—everything I did was his, and I wasn't going to put up with that, and I told them if they wanted to keep me on they'd have to separate me from him, which they didn't want to do.

Murphy No.

Loomis By that time Huey had written. I could also have gone with Wilf Creighton.

Murphy Oh, in Nova Scotia.

Loomis And stayed right in the house where we were—and get the same kind of money as I was getting. But I was always interested in the west. When Huey wrote and asked me to come out, I came out.

Murphy You mentioned earlier on in our talk that you had been interested in the west, and that got you as far as North Bay, which wasn't very far west.

Loomis It was nice to go home again, you know.

Murphy Yeah. But you always had an interest in the west, did you?

Loomis Oh yes. I always liked the expansion. Lots of room out here, and I guess I was interested. And probably if I'd gone out then when I'd first started, I'd probably been a farmer or a rancher or something like that, eventually.

Murphy So Huestis wrote you earlier in '49 and you went in 1949?

Loomis We corresponded back and forth and he made concessions, trying to equal the pay that I was getting down there, and one of them was that I'd have a car. But actually, when it came right down to it, it was a government car and you weren't supposed to use it personally, but he let me use one for quite awhile in a personal way. Not too much, and I was careful. Anyway, he decided to hire me, and I came out here in November, the last part of November, and started to work for the Forest Service here—for Huestis the first of December, 1949. From then on, of course...

7.1 A View on Forest Practices

Murphy Yes. Well, we'll pick up that story next time around. That's a darn interesting review, Reg, and it gives me a lot of insights into what you've done and why you've done them. Before we leave your younger days back on the farm in the Eastern Townships in Quebec, one of the things I was going to



ask you was some of the philosophies you'd developed or insights you'd gained at that time that conditioned your way of thinking. Can you think of any of them that...

Loomis Well, I, offhand, Pete what I would have to say right from the time I was capable of thinking, and probably, living on the farm, and living close to natural things—I'm a conservationist by heart. And probably all the actions that are worth anything since then is on that basis. I believe, the same as...

Murphy Grant MacEwan? (note Loomis reference to the book Entrusted to my care by MacEwan)

Loomis Grant MacEwan. This is exactly what I believe—well I don't have to read this, I can say what I feel—in that brief that I wrote for the MacDonald Commission I wrote—in 1983 I guess he was here. Anyway the thing that I said in there was that I feel that there's no other place for the human being except on this planet—that if you believe in evolution, you have to believe that our body has accommodated itself to the environment that's on this planet. In other words when we breathe, we breathe in air to get oxygen which is in the air, and the oxygen comes from plants mostly, and the pressures that are here, the air pressures that are here, are such that our bodies have accommodated themselves, like all living things—if the pressure is greater we'd squash—if it was lighter we'd expand beyond our capability. In other words, all the natural environmental things on this planet—the human has developed to live in it. And it appears you can't find that kind of an atmosphere anywhere else, so far as we know.

Murphy So far as we know, yes.

Loomis So far as we know. There's no other planet that has the relation to the sun like ours. In other words, what I'm getting at, if we don't look after this planet properly, there's no other place for the human, and we'll perish. And probably all other living things. And the biggest job that we have as humans is to realize that we've got to look after this if we care at all about our children. And I think that that is probably the basis of my belief... And long ago I started to think that way and I haven't changed one damn bit.

Murphy You came to that point of view through observation and through experience.

Loomis Well, through reading and studying, and I spent a lot of time, as I told you, in reading the points of view of people that lived long before us, the Greeks and the Romans, the philosophers, and there's no one that I know of can contradict or change that outlook that I have.

Murphy Reg, I'd just like to read into the tape this one quotation that you showed this morning from Grant MacEwan's book Entrusted To My Care...

Loomis I'd like to say that I think the way he does, or he thinks the way I do. I'm a little younger than he is.

Murphy Yes—and this is the quote in the one paragraph: "Surely it could not have been part of the master plan that natural resources should be consumed or plundered by the first generation of human



creatures to discover or reach them. Recognizing responsibilities to generations yet unborn, thoughtful people will demand the renewing of renewables, like soils and forests, and the administering of non-renewables so they will serve mankind to the best possible advantage. What greater challenge than that of bringing wise and generous guardianship to the natural heritage."

Loomis Yeah. Well that's exactly how I feel—I wouldn't have said it in those words, and I didn't say in the same words, but that idea or philosophy or whatever you want to call it, was what I've tried to point out to MacDonald in that brief.

Murphy This was the one just a couple of years ago.

Loomis Yeah. I think he was holding his hearings in Edmonton—in the fall of 1983, wasn't it?

Murphy How do you see forestry practice in your experience from Ontario and Nova Scotia days through Alberta here. Does that fit at all with the philosophy that you've just outlined?

Loomis The way they've handled the forests?

Murphy Yes. How do you measure our forestry practice here by your standards?

Loomis Well, at this time of my life, I think it's awful. I think that we have no business doing what we're doing. If we consider the future of our forests. Not altogether, mind you. The way the technology that has developed in its application to woods operations is absolutely wrong. I think...I don't think that we should ever, ever clearcut to the extent that we're doing. We shouldn't use those damn big machines in the woods the way we're doing. We're disrupting the whole—again, if you believe in evolution—the whole results of evolution, insofar as the woods is concerned.

Murphy It can be argued that on some of the clearcuts in Alberta where the stands are essentially of fire origin, that we are doing not much more than replicating the effects of fire. How would you respond to that? __

Loomis Well, you're right there. The forest, after—insofar as pine is concerned—they'll come in pure stands of pine. Out around Lac La Biche it's probably jack pine. And if it's toward the mountains, it'd be lodgepole pine, and right here, at Fort Assiniboine, you'd get hybrids. There's no question, after a fire you get pure stands. But I think that there, probably, the human could do a better job by intermixing other species with the pure stands because, you know and I know, that these epidemics that we have are usually the result of monoculture. And that's what I'm against.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis And I think that probably if there was a way of partial cut, and have all-aged stands on an area, you'd have a healthier condition to leave after you're through with it. That's what I think.

Murphy So you think that by changing our cutting patterns we could improve on Nature in some respects?



- Loomis** Yes. In that way we'd improve. Well, we'd follow Nature, but we'd change the location—in other words, avoid pure stands.
- Murphy** Yes. Do I hear you saying, then, that you would advocate—in pine and perhaps in aspen, too—that we should varying both the age classes on a smaller geographic scale and probably species mixes as well?
- Loomis** Yes.
- Murphy** We'll come back to this at the end.
- Loomis** Yeah. There's probably many arguments against what I'm saying, and probably good-sounding arguments. I don't know. As far as I see now, if I had to live my life over again, one thing I wouldn't have done, I think, I wouldn't have accepted Des Crossley's clear-cutting methods.
- Murphy** Okay.
- Loomis** We tried to stop him. It wasn't Des's fault at all. He was working for a company, and their whole objective is economics. And he had to accommodate his thinking to a great extent. Mind you he did an awful lot to change their views. But there again, there's a place where you can't go any further, and he realized that.
- Murphy** We're getting a little bit ahead of the story here, but it's very good. I think probably what we've been doing so far is just talking generalities in a philosophical sort of way. I think what we'll come back to later is discussing specific types and specific places, because we know that conditions are quite different from one place to another.
- Loomis** Hm-m.
- Murphy** Well, Reg, we're just about out of tape. This would be a logical place to...to thank you very much for a great morning. I have enjoyed it.
- Loomis** Well, thank you for coming out, Pete. I don't know how you, with all the things you have to do—I want to get this for the record—with all the things you have to do, and make yourself do, I don't see how you can spend so much time with an old guy like me.
- Murphy** Well, it's a pleasure. And it's important to have it on the record. And all I'm trying to do is try to catch up to the standards that you set when you came through yourself.
- Loomis** Yeah. Well. It's a very remarkable thing that you could take the time, will take the time, to do what you're doing right now.
- Murphy** Well, it's most important and I enjoy it—it's a good combination.



Tape 1: 12 May 1988

7.2 The Alberta Inventory Assignment: 1949

Murphy Thursday, May 12, 1988—visiting with Reg Loomis at his home by Sandy Lake. Good morning, Reg.

Loomis Good morning, Pete.

Murphy Reg, where we left off on the last interview, which was astoundingly almost a year ago, you had talked about your life and experiences in Nova Scotia and told that you had received an offer from Eric Huestis to come to Alberta to assist him with the forest inventory program. And where we left off you said that you had arrived in the fall of 1949. I wonder at this point then if you could comment on how you found things when you arrived, what Huestis had asked you to do, and how you set about doing what you thought had to be done.

Loomis O.K. Pete. What we're talking about has happened a long time ago, and course a lot of the things that I realize now, I didn't then. And looking at it at this long way back in years—we arrived here in the fall, in November, the last of November and I went in to see Eric Huestis. I think the first thing he wanted me to do, above everything else, was to get acquainted with the situation here—the forest situation, here in Alberta. And there was a chap that he had hired in the spring along with 8 others from B.C., a chap by the name of Victor Heath. He and I were together a lot of time at the start. I think that was the first thing that Eric Huestis suggested to me—that Victor and I travel through the province and become as acquainted with the situation as we could be. So I started to work—being employed on the first day of December—and Victor and I started out, although I had to find a place for my family—my wife and two children—two boys who were very young—and we did locate a place in kind of a temporary settlement in the northeast part of Edmonton, near the airport—just east of the airport. I got her settled there best as we could—we had to borrow things from the Forest Service. They let me have some of the fire protection material—blankets, beds, dishes—and Elva put up with all this which is very remarkable actually. Then after we got her and the children parked as best as we could, Victor and I started out.

Murphy Did you start travelling in December, before Christmas time even?

Loomis Yes, we did. We were out probably a week at a time. We had to go to all the various forested areas of the province, or the locations of the headquarters sort of and become acquainted with the personnel there. I think one of the first places we went to was Whitecourt. Rein Krause was timber inspector there and then we went to Entwistle and Frank Platt was the timber inspector there—yes I think he was entirely on his own there. And Rocky Mountain House --

Murphy Was Herb Hall there then?

Loomis Herb Hall was there, yes. And Edson --

Murphy Donald Buck was there?



- Loomis** Donald Buck was the man, yes, and then we went to Slave Lake and Bill Woods was the timber inspector there. They were all, what we now call forest superintendents, they were called timber inspectors. And at Grande Prairie, Ted Hammer was the timber inspector. Can't remember who was Peace River off hand.
- Murphy** There was a fellow named Frank Mitchell there for a while. He wasn't in charge was he?
- Loomis** That doesn't ring
- Murphy** Larry Gauthier didn't get there till later on.
- Loomis** Right. Yeah, I think so.
- Murphy** Maybe we'll check on that one.
- Loomis** And Lac La Biche is another one - I can't remember who was there.
- Murphy** Bert Coast?
- Loomis** No, he was kind of an assistant to Frank Platt at that time. And Hank Ryhanen, by the way, was a ranger for Frank Platt. He started out a little while before I came here, he was a member of the RCMP. He wanted to get married, so he left the RCMP and became a ranger under Frank Platt.
- Murphy** Did you get to Calgary too, then?
- Loomis** Calgary, well that part of the forest area—most of that was the East Slopes, you know belonging to the staff of the East Slopes, and at that time we weren't too interested because they wanted to stay apart.
- Murphy** That was the Eastern Rockies Conservation Board. We'll come back to that.
- Loomis** Well sometime in January I think, or later maybe, Eric Huestis decided I should go to Toronto to see what they were doing there. Prior to going there they had sent an aerial photograph to us. Vic Heath and myself had asked them to send us a copy of what they were doing, and we found that they had marks on the photograph that were not really an indication of separate types. For instance the line was almost a straight line, as I remember, on the photograph and on each side was the same type of timber—it was poplar, pure poplar. So, through a little urging, I think I got Mr. Huestis to send me down there. And when I got down there...
- Murphy** If I could just clarify for a moment. Reg, this was the Photographic Survey Corporation of Toronto. That was the outfit that Huestis had contracted to do the forest inventory in the south part of the province.
- Loomis** Me coming here, and the reason that I came, is that someone, or Mr. Huestis, decided that he should have someone here that knew something about the use of aerial photographs as they apply



to forest inventory. And he got in contact with the head of the forest management branch, so called, of the Ontario government's setup. And I had contacts there when I was working in Nipigon for the Brompton Pulp and Power, and got to know him quite well. Actually, the Ontario government decided to make an inventory and they had more or less copied what we were doing with the Brompton Pulp and Power, using the classification somewhat similar to ours. And he was quite—the chap that was in charge of forest management—was quite taken with what we were doing at Brompton, and so when Mr. Huestis had contacted him, he suggested that I might be suitable and he wrote to me in Nova Scotia working for a company there—Hollingsworth and Whitney.

That's why I was here—to actually see that the forest inventory was suitable—suitably done. And this photograph that I mentioned a few minutes ago was an indication that it wasn't being done well. In the spring, about the time that Mr. Huestis was thinking of getting this work done, he had hired, I think he told me, nine graduating foresters from the University of B.C.: four I think we were to be sent down on loan to the Photographic Survey Corporation, and the understanding Mr. Huestis had was that they were going to be training them before they did any actual typing. When I arrived in Toronto, and looked into this, I found that they were actually doing the work—they had completed 5,000 square miles of the forest inventory. By the way, the contract said the Photographic Survey Corporation was to take photographs of a high level or a small scale photograph, vertical, for the purpose of making penimetric maps. A few maps somewhere down in certain places in Alberta that were done by the federal government were good. The rest of the province was quite unknown. After the oil was discovered, people had come to explore further and they didn't have proper maps to do any work. And there were also people asking about establishing a pulp mill here, and no one could tell them where there were good stands of pulpwood. Those are the reasons Mr. Huestis had of having their work done by the Photographic Survey Corporation.

Murphy It's interesting that there were pulp wood inquiries as early as the late 1940s.

Loomis Yes. This is a long story, I'm afraid.

Murphy It's an important one - go ahead.

Loomis When I got down there, I found that they had actually put these men, foresters that were on loan to them, one was Bob Steele and one was John Hogan.

Murphy Was Gordon de Grace among them?

Loomis No, Gordon came in later, and Bill Bloomberg, I think, I think I can name three of them. The other fellow I can't at all.

Murphy We'll check on that one.



Loomis

They were really going ahead and typing the photographs as they saw fit and no one—the astounding part about Photographic Survey—they had two fellows there that were foresters that were supposed to be experts at making forest inventories, and they knew nothing. One fellow's name was Robison and the other one was Tipperton, I think. Huestis had made arrangements to have me develop specifications. There were no specifications made at the time of the contract. I think probably Mr. Huestis, not knowing that these things were important, had slipped up in his contract with the company. Anyway, the specifications were to be worked out by myself and Si Seeley. When I went down it was a great task—a tremendous task—to get them to accept specifications that would make the forest inventory here worthwhile. And of course I, using the background that I had had with pulp companies—I knew quite a lot more about it—what would be proper, than even Si Seeley did. Si, of course, originated the whole thing i.e. using photos in forestry, and a very, very good man he was—but the thing that I had to watch was that we didn't do it in too great a detail—that the classification of density, height and species composition wasn't so complicated that the compiling of this work wouldn't be too difficult.



*Bob Steele (l), Head of Forest Management and Reg Loomis (r) Head of Forest Surveys, ca 1960
Photo credit: Pete Murphy*

Murphy

Si Seeley was with the Canadian Forestry Service at that time wasn't he?

Loomis

Si Seeley was in charge of photographic work as it applied to forestry in Ottawa, yes, with the federal government. And I had worked for Si prior to this job—I probably mentioned that.



Murphy Yes, you have mentioned that.

Loomis So I knew him very well. But, anyway, Si realized that probably if he let me go ahead and make up the specifications I could do a good job—which I did do—and got them to agree to these specifications. Then, when I mentioned this business of marking the photographs, they said, "Oh, that was just training,"—but it was all put on in ink, and when they found out that we weren't going to accept that at all, they had to get separate photographs to try to do it all over again. You see, the contract called for these high level photographs that I was mentioning. Also, they were to use whatever photographs were in existence at a quarter mile to the inch—1320 and where there wasn't, they were to photograph at 1320, south of the 56th parallel. See, the inventory—the contract called for them to inventory the province, the forested part of the province south of the 56th parallel. And I think probably these fellows there must have thought there wouldn't be anyone out in Alberta that could check on them. 'Cause they were absolute novices, the whole bunch of them. That's an actual fact.

Murphy The original area to the inventory, as I understand was south of latitude 56 as you mentioned and it included only the areas outside of ---

Loomis Oh, outside of the East Slopes, yes. The East Slope—the Conservation Board thought that they would do their area themselves. And even the photographs were going to be taken by themselves.

7.2.1 Inventory Specifications

Murphy We'll come back to that later. O.K. Reg, maybe we'll get the inventory specifications straightened out.

Loomis Yeah, one of the parts of the specifications that we got them to agree to was that they would send out four parties each summer while the forest inventory contract was in force, to take plots in order to determine the type of volumes—that were necessary or were suitable to the various forest types. There were these four foresters Mr. Huestis loaned them who were to head out with these parties. Well, there were difficulties there, too. 'Cause they didn't want to—didn't seem to want to go into the back country at all. They wanted to do it as adjacent as possible to what they called civilization, I guess. But, it was very, very difficult to get them to do it properly. And we had to set up a party by ourselves to check and to make sure that the types of the volumes they were going to use on the work they did were suitable for the various types that we had specified. And, it got to a point to where the ones over there wouldn't send out anyone at all. In other words, the contract with Photographic Survey Corporation stuck. They weren't going to do anything more, and Kendel, Douglas Kendel who was in charge of Photographic Survey Corporation came out here and went out with our party with me, and found out that what we were doing was satisfactory, and had a talk with the authorities here, including Mr. Huestis, and agreed that they would continue to do what



we wanted them to do, not what they thought was best—when in fact they didn't know—I don't think they actually knew how to do a forest inventory.

Murphy That's interesting. Inventories were relatively new at that time, weren't they?

Loomis Well, yes. Ontario was doing one. B.C. I guess had. And the Canada Forest Act hadn't been effective at the time. You see, the first part of our forest inventory here was not paid by the Canada Forest Act.

Murphy No, that was initiated by the province. I give full credit to Eric Huestis for having been able to get the province to do it unilaterally.

Loomis Yeah, they came in afterwards, and they paid part of the cost of this job that the Photographic Survey did. You know, the latter part fit. But we had a lot of difficulty in getting them to do a satisfactory job. I had an idea then of setting up forest management units, and the forest management units, I thought, should follow watersheds. You know, in other words, a management unit should be included in a watershed.

Murphy The boundary should follow the height of land ---

Loomis And they agreed to break up the inventory into these classifications, and they did do it. And we got the results from them by watersheds. You know, we laid them out on the map. We found that after we got the inventory that some of the watersheds were meaningless. For instance, along the Athabasca around Whitecourt and probably a little further on, the streams don't go too far back from the main river, so they were long and narrow—and the inventory we got from the Photographic Survey Corporation was like that. When we got it we had to make the management units more or less what they are now. And they were done by Forest Divisions, see, like Slave Lake, we called that I think an "S," and Whitecourt I think "W."

Murphy They still do, too.

Loomis Yes, in other words, the whole inventory could be totalled up by Forest Divisions, you know Slave Lake, Peace River, and so on, but they were all divided up into management units then. We started out doing them. The other part of our duties here, was to see if there could be more accurate cruising done than the way it was done previously in Alberta. It was the way they went out—I think the rangers went out and estimated what they thought a certain stand would yield in board feet, and it was sold as a Timber Berth or one of those Specials.

Murphy This related to cruising of applications for timber harvesting?

Loomis Yes. People at that time, the lumber operators or tie operators—they'd submit a request for timber to the Divisional Forest Service office.



The work wasn't too well done, and we tried to bring out the fact that you could do it using the aerial photographs. We could do a better job by classifying and then going out and cruising the forest types—you know, the areas of the forest types. That became a practice after a bit. That's why Gordon Smart and fellows like him were part of the Forest Surveys Branch that was set up.

Murphy You mentioned Gordon Smart. You hired him?

Loomis Yes, Gordon Smart was—I'd been working down at Nipigon, for the Brompton Pulp and Power and Gordon had been in the army and he'd been stationed in Halifax, and there they had taught him a little bit about using aerial photographs. He wrote and asked if he could get a job, and we took him on. He was going to be let out down at Nipigon, so his boss wanted to know if I wanted him here. Of course we were anxious to get the fellows with that kind of experience, so we hired him on here.

Murphy That was a fortuitous chain of events.

Loomis Yes. He was one of the first, I guess. John Schalkwyk, was another one we took on. And Gordon deGrace was another. Gordon deGrace was sent down to replace one of the chaps that quit Photographic Survey Corporation. I'd like to mention this, and make it very clear, that I got no backing whatsoever from the foresters that were hired by Photographic Surveys.

Tape 2: 12 May 1988

Murphy Before we changed the tape over, you said that the one forester who did back you...

Loomis In all this, the disappointing part of my work, or my connection with Photographic Surveys, was I didn't get very much backing from the foresters that were hired by us and loaned to Photographic Survey—except Bill Bloomberg. Bill came back here because he wouldn't work—he said he refused to work doing the work the way they wanted to do it. The other fellows were kept on—Bob Steele included.

Murphy That's interesting. Did they not agree with what you were trying to do?

Loomis I don't know why—'cause all of them were conscientious workers. But Bill was brought back here because he refused to work down there and we sent down Gordon deGrace or Trev Charles, I can't remember which one - I think Gordon DeGrace was sent down because one of the chaps finished, or didn't want to work there anymore—one of the four originals. And I think Gordon was down there for that. And then when Bill Bloomberg came back here because he wouldn't work under those conditions. We sent down a fellow by the name of Trev Charles, a forester.

Murphy So you finally prevailed. Anyhow, you got the system straightened out.



Loomis Well, we got a job that was somewhat suitable, and more or less according to the specifications that were laid out. In fact, we stuck to our guns, and had a great deal of difficulty in getting them to. And they lost money. There was no escalating clause in the contract. And when they had to do it the way we wanted them to do it, they claimed they lost a million dollars. So, I guess on either side—they weren't too familiar with it. But what they did—the planimetric maps, the aerial photographs that they took were good.

Murphy They were good, yes.

Loomis But the forest inventory would have been rotten if we hadn't stuck to our guns.

Murphy And how do you feel about the product that finally emerged?

Loomis Satisfactory. It could have been done better, but it was at least—by watching them and being tough with them—we managed to get to do a job that was passable.

Murphy My impression is that it gave us an excellent first start.

Loomis Yes, it did. Yes, and then the Canada Forest Act didn't come into effect until quite a bit after a lot of this work was done. Of course, the work we did in the north there was partly paid, I guess half paid.

Murphy Yes, it was a fifty-fifty agreement. You must have been influential then in extending the inventory to the northern part of the province. Was there some reluctance to go north of 59°?

Loomis You asked why the forest inventory was extended north of the 56th parallel—it seemed to me that it was the natural thing to do, particularly because half of the cost was covered under the Canada Forest Act. It seemed to be the way.

7.3 Observations on Alberta Forest Practices

Murphy Reg, while this was all going on, you came to Alberta not knowing a great deal about the state of forestry or forest management here. I wonder if you could comment on your recollections of the state of the art of forestry practice at that time.

Loomis Well, I think I mentioned to you, Pete, that I think Delahay, who I knew back east there, somewhat—he was, with a company near Ottawa—I used to see him occasionally when I lived in Ottawa. He came out here, I think, to look into the Forest Service administration. I think Mr. Huestis was the one that instigated him, but I'm not positive. But anyway, he was here about the same time as I was, at the start of my stay here. I travelled a lot with him. And everywhere we went, the timber inspectors like Frank Platt, Rien Krause, Bill Wood, spoke very, very strongly about the lack of money to carry on, to protect the forest—particularly protecting the forest. There were a lot of fires, and at that time, the government, the Social Credit Government, was not too interested in forestry, you see, or the forests. They were very, very interested in the oil business, though. And the oil people, the oil companies concerned, were let go where they wanted to do their exploring, and with very,



very little restrictions. Just for instance, in the Swan Hills, when they wanted to go in there, a company would ask a request from the Mines department, and the Lands Division of our department, for permission to explore. They were free to explore freely—to bulldoze lines to do the seismic work. They were allowed to put those lines wherever they wished. A company would, as an example—a company would ask for this permission and they'd go, and they'd probably run their lines east and west, north and south, probably every half mile apart—and they were allowed to bulldoze the forest completely out of these seismic lines. They were often wider than need be. Then when they were finished, of course being a company, they didn't allow any other company to know what they had found, so some other company would be interested in the same area. They'd also be given permission and they'd probably decide that east and west, north and south seismic lines were not in keeping with the way the geology of the area ran. So they would probably run their lines in a north-east, south-west alignment—and so on. And grid the country that way. Then when they did—in Swan Hills—find oil, the development of the oil lines would take place—they'd find this oil in a certain location. They were then allowed too to clear back from the oilwell, as far as they liked. There was nothing to stop them.

Murphy No restrictions on area.

Loomis No restrictions whatsoever at that time. Then if they wanted to make a road, they wouldn't necessarily follow the seismic lines—they'd go the shortest way to wherever they were going to take their oil—so the whole place was a real mess. Until we finally got Mr. Manning, the premier, to take a flight with us, over the Swan Hills. When we got back, Mr. Huestis told me to write a brief to him and that was the start of restrictions and cleaning up some of the messes that they had left. They would also leave the bulldozed timber on the lines. There was no clean-up there at all. So, all these things were going on when Delahay was around with me. It was very apparent to the timber inspectors and they let us know. It may have been passed on by Delahay—although, before we could get the government to agree to do these restrictions it was a long time after Delahay left here so probably he didn't have much influence on getting them to restrict the oil companies.

Murphy The Delahay report was quite critical in many aspects.

Loomis Yes, he was very, very much in sympathy with what the timber inspectors were telling him, and what he saw. So as a forester, he thought that there was an awful lot of work to be done here. And I don't know just what influence he had with the authorities, actually. But I travelled a lot with him and talked with him a lot, you know when I first came out.

Murphy Did you share those same impressions?

Loomis Yes, oh, absolutely, absolutely.



Murphy As I understand it Reg, when you came here in 1949, through then and into the early 50's you found that applications for timber berths were only being appraised by ocular estimates, and you gradually were able to change that process into one of using plots.

Loomis Yeah, using the aerial photographs, making forest cover maps, in detail, you see. They had to be done in greater detail than the forest inventory. The sub-divisions were greater and more precise than you had to do it for forest inventory because the scale of maps was different.

Murphy And at that time too, you shared the concerns of Wallace Delahay of the inadequate levels of forest protection, and the lack of control on seismic exploration of petroleum developments.

Loomis Very, very much so. And a lot of fires that occurred were due to the fact that that there was so much debris left on the seismic lines. It's a wonder that there's any timber—you wonder how the timber was left in the Swan Hills, and yet, we know that there is lots of it there now. But the way it was messed up by the oil companies was awful.

7.3.1 Recommendations for Change

Murphy With those problems in mind, and your own developing commitment to forestry in Alberta, what kind of a game plan did you begin to formulate in your own mind. For example, what did you see that needed to be done and how did you go about trying to bring about changes?

Loomis How? By writing memos to Mr. Huestis. I had to—I could express myself better on paper than I could by talking to him or anybody else, actually. And I've written many, many, many memos. And one way, just as an example, when the inventory was finished, that part the Photographic Survey Corporation had done, I asked Mr. Huestis if we could use it to—or I asked him what he had in mind—well he says it shows where the timber is. But he apparently didn't have any thought of using the inventory as a basis of forest management. And I suggested that where we had got the inventory and divided it into management units—although we didn't call them units, the inventory was compiled by units and by the various Forest Divisions at that time—could we work out as best we could a sustained yield for each of the subdivisions that we made—whether or not we could apply it and send it to the field. Bob Steele was working for me then, and I got him to work out an allowable cut for quite a few of them. And, we compiled it all, and had it all ready to send out and couldn't get it by Mr. Huestis. He didn't seem to think it was necessary at the time.

Murphy That's interesting. I remember that part of the program. I think you called them Temporary Cutting Control plans.

Loomis Yes, they were.

Murphy Did those eventually get out into the field?

Loomis Yes, they did.



Murphy And how did the field staff react?

Loomis Well, they seemed to be quite willing to use them. Yeah, no trouble once we got it into the field, to have the idea implemented.

Murphy Do you have any idea why Huestis seemed to react as he did?

Loomis Well, I kind of think he thought that it might not—I don't know why—he didn't seem to know that it was necessary to have a forest inventory to do what we should be doing in regards to forestry in Alberta.

Murphy That's an interesting comment because actually it was Huestis who was responsible for initiating the forest inventory in the first place.

7.4 Timber Development Proposals

Loomis Yes. You see, I think he thought—it seemed that way—that if we had the maps, that would be sufficient. It would show the locations of the areas where there was timber. See, another thing too, I'd like to mention—Ruebens, there was a Rueben father and a Rueben son, had a coal mine down the Coal Branch. In the early fifties, as you know, the coal business went flat because the Japanese, particularly, were not interested in our coal. And they had no sale for coal from their mines. Rueben, the father, got the idea if he could get a pulp mill established in the area, that he could convert the coal, to gas I suppose, and use it in the mill. And that's what really got him started in the pulp business. And prior to me, I think probably before I came here, he got somebody, I think it was Stan Losee from Ontario to lay out an area. What happened at that time, you see, the government made a bet with him, that for \$10,000 a year, he couldn't get someone interested in establishing a pulp mill here. If he couldn't do it in a year, he lost the \$10,000. I think that the thing was in effect before he came to me once, knowing that I knew quite a bit about aerial photographs, I guess and asked if I would look the area over and make a forest inventory without the maps. You see, at that time, there was no forest inventory done there. And there was nothing at all to indicate what could be provided in the way of wood for a pulp mill, at all. He asked me if I would do it—make an inventory for him—using the aerial photographs. I had a method of gridding the photograph, spotting it, and interpreting those spots—that is classify the forest type in those spots. Percentage wise, you could work out a reasonable estimate, using the photographs and obtain scale from a small scale map showing where the areas were—one could work out data that would be suitable. I said I'd do it if he would get the Minister to agree to have me do it on my own time. When I looked over the map he had, I found that the location, which this chap that Ruben he had got from somewhere else, had the area for a lease and for a reserve located too far east. In fact, it was very much in the poplar area, or predominantly poplar area of the province. So I moved it back west adjacent to the Jasper National Park. And more or less, that area was eventually to become the Northwestern Pulp and Power Lease. He took my book of data, with just the outline of the area—it was all on a small scale map of



course—to New York, and he got St. Regis interested in the allowable cuts which I had worked out. You know—worked out the area by ages, heights and so on. He took it down there and St. Regis got interested on account of the data I had, and of course, signed the lease. St. Regis signed the agreement with Rueben. Then after that was all over with, and they were going to be established—at first they thought that they'd establish the mill at Edson. Did you know this? And the ground there wasn't suitable. So somebody told them about Hinton and they went there and found out that the ground was suitable for a pulp mill where it is now.

Murphy Was there a concern too, about the water supply at Edson, since it was on the McLeod which had very low flows at times.

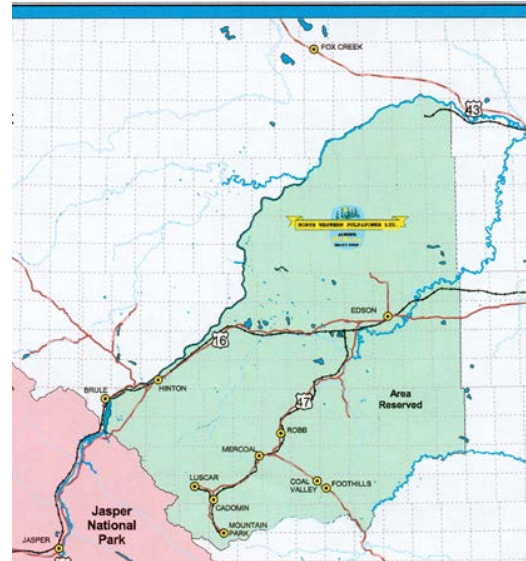
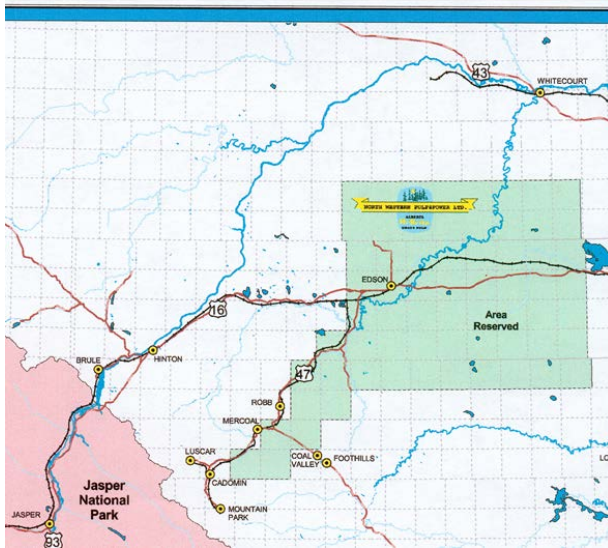
Loomis No—well as I remember it, it was on account the footing. The type of ground that's there at Edson - they couldn't find a place where the ground was stable enough to establish the mill.

Murphy I understand that you did that assignment for Reuben even though you were employed by the Forest Service.

Loomis Yes I did. And he gave me—he gave me the big sum of \$300. And then, about that time Harvie, the Deputy Minister was retiring. And they took him on as a consultant for them. Harvie came to me and he said "Oh, they didn't give you..." At that stage, I'd only done the watersheds of the McLeod River. Then they decided to have it on the Athabasca you see, to be taken in, and he asked me if I'd do that. So I said the same thing to him about getting the Minister to agree, and they did, and I got \$500! I got \$500, and then Des Crossley told me that one of the St. Regis people there, Stan Hart's father, Pete Hart, he said that the company decided that they'd better have had my inventory checked and they went to C.D. Schultz in B.C. and gave him \$25,000 to check the job I did for \$500! And they couldn't find anything wrong with it—not because I was that accurate, it's just because it would be almost impossible to check that thing without a tremendous amount of fieldwork. So they actually gave him \$25,000 for nothing.

Murphy It would have been better paid to you in the first place!

Loomis Well, anyway, you see, after that—I think you mentioned somewhere that after that I did the same damn thing in the same way for an area at Rocky Mountain House, and one in Whitecourt and that part of Slave Lake that was adjacent. Did one there for McNab. He was woods manager for Hinton, and then he left. He was going to get another mill set up. And I also did the same damn thing. I've got a copy here of the one at Grande Prairie before the soap people got there. And I knew of a good area in the Peace River you know in the Clear Hills.



Proposed Pulpwood lease in 1951 (l) and after relocation by Loomis (r-1952) to encompass more conifer.

- Murphy** Do you recall who you did the work for at Rocky Mountain House? What group was interested at that time?
- Loomis** I don't recall who it was, but McNab was..he was
- Murphy** Oh, McNab was involved in that one as well.
- Loomis** Yes, he was the go between, between me and whoever...at that time I don't think he had anybody...
- Murphy** I see.
- Loomis** No, he didn't have anybody...same as Ruebens...now he didn't have anybody...he took...
- Murphy** Now was the Grande Prairie for him as well?
- Loomis** No, it wasn't. It was for the local business people in Grande Prairie. I guess...I had to go up there and present this thing to them—but I have a copy of that damn thing here somewhere.
- Murphy** Those must have been very busy days for you...with running your own inventory and management program in Edmonton and doing the other surveys on the side.
- Loomis** Well, the reason that I think...of course I wanted to...the pay wasn't too great. I had to move out here and buy a house with a little bit of money but it was always tight—and that was one reason of course—but another reason was that I thought the establishing at that time (I don't think so now)—the establishment of pulp mills would be a good thing for Alberta.
- Murphy** In fact, as you had drawn up the inventory, I understand that you set up what became known as Timber Development Areas—areas in which you felt pulp mill developments would be a possibility.



- Loomis** Yes.
- Murphy** Reg, I have a record in another publication about an order-in-council. (change tape)
- Murphy** Reg, I was going to ask you about a reference that was published by Nigel Banks who did a survey of forestry legislation in the province. He showed on page 67 a list of agreements for pulp and paper leases that were made in various times and were later cancelled. For example, he has one for Edmonton Pulp and Paper mills—it was December 19, 1949, and was cancelled effective on November 19, 1951. This must have been one of those earlier inquiries about pulp mill possibilities.
- Loomis** Yes, I know—I came here in '49 and I know that the Ruebens had got somebody, as I had mentioned before—from Ontario, I think it was Stan Losee, I am not too sure—to lay out an area and at that time the government agreed to set aside an area for them to see if they could get a pulp mill established. As I said before, they bet him \$10,000, or he bet with them \$10,000, that he could get one established in a years time. And if he didn't, well the government got the \$10,000 or kept the \$10,000 but he had a deposit in there. If the government set aside an area at that time he provided them with \$10,000 or—so each one of those I think is what—that was probably Ruebens trying to get somebody interested on account of this business of the coal sale down on the Coal Branch. And as I said before, whoever did the lease had it too far from the coniferous timber—they had the area set too far east to be satisfactory.
- Murphy** Then the other interesting one is Northwestern Pulp and Power Ltd. dated June 8, 1951—and that also must have been an earlier proposal.
- Loomis** I think...I am not positive but I think very likely that was Ruebens again.
- Murphy** And then the third one is Beverly Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd. January 16, 1952.
- Loomis** I think that was McNab...
- Murphy** And then there was another one called International Resources Ltd. March 27, 1952.
- Loomis** I think that also was McNab, but I am not positive.
- Murphy** And the fifth one he lists is Northwestern Pulp and Power Ltd. Again, this was July 12, 1952 and it mentions that this is the one which is replaced by the agreement of September 14, 1954. So at that point he must have connected...
- Loomis** Yes, that must have been the day—each time—they had no figures, they had no maps—you know, those prior to 1952, and when I provided estimates of those reports—that really was what sold the idea to St. Regis.
- Murphy** So your inventory was very timely—there was interest then, and you had the means to provide the background necessary.



Loomis Well, it was all through my background that I was able to do this—you see I was doing this kind of work down east—there were pulp companies. I had a pretty damn good idea when I said a stand was class such and such—I had a pretty good idea of the volumes to apply to those types—they came out of my head—you know from my background.

Murphy You were actually ahead of the inventory in that respect.

Loomis Yes, I had to be.

Murphy The sixth one that he listed was Alberta West Forest Products Corporation, May 21, 1958, and I understand that is the one that McNab held for quite a while in the Whitecourt area.

Loomis Yes, I think so.

7.5 North Western Pulp and Power Development

Murphy Reg, just going back to the Northwestern Pulp and Power lease that was signed in 1954—you did the background inventory estimate for them and evidently had a pretty clear grasp of the capabilities. I understand at that point they offered you the position of Chief Forester for them.

Loomis Yes they did. They—Hart senior, I think authorized it, but Rueben actually offered me the job. He held over 50% of the shares of the company. By that time the St. Regis people were sold on putting the pulp mill at Hinton and they were looking for a Chief Forester. On account of this work that I had done—to get the mill established—they thought that my background was sufficient then to offer me the job as Chief Forester. They offered that to me in November of that year.

Murphy Of 1954?

Loomis Yeah, I think so. They gave me until February of the next year to make up my mind. On account of the scope of the work that I was doing here in Alberta, I would have liked to have stayed with the province on account of the fact that I wouldn't be confined to one area. I went to Mr. Huestis and told him I had this offer, and I wanted to find out from him whether he was satisfied with what I was doing for them, and whether he wanted me to stay. I couldn't get him to say one damn word! I tried right from the time I was offered the job until February, I guess it was, and I couldn't get him to say one word to encourage me to stay. So they said they had to get an answer from me whether I would take the job or not—because if I wasn't they were going to offer it to Des Crossley. Des, at that time, was working for the federal government down in the Kananaskis, living in Calgary, I guess. Crossley told them he was going to be moving to Winnipeg if he didn't get this job, and he wanted an answer. So I went to Hart and told him I would take it. Then after I had done that—that was Hart that I had told—I went into Huestis' office and I said, "Well, I am leaving." I said, "I have taken that job that I was offered as I told you about, well, at Hinton." "Well," he says, "Reg, I am sorry. You



have done a good job and I would like to have seen you stay." I said, "Why in Hell haven't you told me that before?" So I came back home and I spent the whole damn night trying to decide whether I should stay or not, but I finally decided that on account of the fact it was really very interesting to see what could be done in Alberta—I went back and told Hart exactly what happened and he left me off the hook—and offered it to Des, which worked out well.



*Des Crossley,
CFS Researcher 1952*

Murphy It turned out very well because between the two of you, you got things off to a pretty darn good start.

Loomis Well, we—you know we worked—it was an awful big job—I could mention that—it was quite a big job to get them to do what we thought. When I say "we" I meant Charlie Jackson and myself. Charlie was very, very good, and he and I spent a lot of time out there trying to get them to cut the way we thought should be proper silviculture—good forestry. And one of the things we thought would be better, and certainly I did, was to selective cut. You know, not clearcut at all. But it was almost impossible for Des who didn't agree anyway. He never thought that selective cutting was proper. But he said he would have great difficulty getting their Woods office to do it that way. So we wound up by agreeing for them to cut small patches, comparatively, and in areas, and with the idea that the adjacent stands would blow seed over the cut area.

Murphy That's in the spruce forest?

Loomis No.



- Murphy** Pine as well?
- Loomis** Pine as well. Yes, in all areas. One of the areas that Des always objected to very strongly, for these small patches, was that area adjacent to Jasper Park. The wind, you know would play havoc with these adjacent stands—and it worked out that quite a few of the small areas that started off there became large areas.
- Murphy** Yes, in the Camp Two area particularly because of blowdown.
- Loomis** Right.
- Murphy** ...south of the Highway 16.
- Loomis** That was one of the things that I didn't like but we couldn't see any other way of doing it at the time—you know you had to have them harvest the timber.
- Murphy** Many of those forests were quite old - the ages up to 350 years or so. Did you feel that selective cutting would have...
- Loomis** Well, there would be...Well, you know a great many stands—even the old aged were not even aged.
- Murphy** No, they were a mix of ages, that's right.
- Loomis** Yes, that's right. You see it is possible even in old areas to select cut—I think—because invariably you will have where it hasn't been disturbed, particularly, you will have spruce of all ages.
- Murphy** How did you feel about the pine stands, since they are of fire origin?
- Loomis** Well, at that time I didn't—it didn't bother me so much to clearcut pine stands because they were even-aged—quite even-aged because they came in after fire. Since then, I think differently now.
- Murphy** Actually, the pine management seems to have worked very well. The regeneration is adequate and vigorous.
- Loomis** Yes, I remember areas which we used to worry about, you know, when we were talking to Des—areas that he had clearcut and we thought that—myself and Charlie thought they wouldn't regenerate, but they did—and after I retired he sent me, out here, some photographs of some nice young pine in those very areas that we were worried about, you know.

7.6 Charlie Jackson

- Murphy** You mentioned Charlie Jackson a few times. Could you tell me a little more about him and his relationship?
- Loomis** Well, Charlie Jackson as you know was one of the nine foresters Huestis had hired early that year - '49. He was first out assisting Donald Buck at Edson. Then when the change came to Edmonton with



Herb Hall who came here to take the job that they then called Forest Management—Charlie came in and was his assistant, and actually Charlie probably should have had the job when Herb retired, being the assistant. But—I applied for it and Huestis decided that I should have it, and Charlie became my assistant. Charlie and I worked very well together and a lot of the things that we did could be credited to Charlie as much as anybody else. Particularly concerning the Hinton set-up after the area became important after the pulp company got established there because of years he spent in the Edson Division.

Murphy

I don't think he is fully recognized for the extent of his contribution.



*Charlie Jackson (Standing) and Reg Loomis
Date Unknown.*

Photo credit: Alberta Forest Protection Historic Photo Collection

Loomis

Charlie had something about his temperament, you know, it didn't appeal to people I guess. Anyway, we decided, Charlie and I to—once I became in charge of Forest Management—Superintendent of Forest Management—we would divide the division into sections. One would be woods operations and at that time Fred Sutherland—we put him in charge of the Woods Operations Section. One was silviculture - Larry Kennedy got the job. Then there was one that I consider a very important one—the establishment of forest management units, and Dennis Cauvin got that job. Gordon Smart—once we took Premier Manning over the Swan Hills and showed him what a mess



the oil companies were doing and he agreed—we set up a land use section, and we put Gordon Smart in charge of that. Gordon had been working with me probably as long as anyone—you know, besides what I told you about. He had a damn good brain, but Charlie for some reason or other opposed—got Charlie's back up. I don't know—what would have worked to make him feel more a part of the branch more at home—I thought that the section heads would go to him for any directions instead of coming to me. That didn't work a damn bit. You know, I don't know why. Once we were out for coffee—I remember this very well. Something came up and Dennis Cauvin—you know he spoke frankly. He always would speak frankly to me—Charlie had said something and Dennis said, "Oh, that's chickenshit." That seemed to kill Charlie entirely, and after that he lived within himself.

Murphy Oh, that is too bad.

Loomis I don't know. I did my best—there is no question one could go to him and get damn good sensible answers from him.

Murphy What position did he have in your branch at that time then?

Loomis As Assistant to me.

Murphy Oh, he was, yes. So he was superior.

Loomis It would be kind of logical for them to go to him for direction, but it didn't work. I don't know - from then on Charlie seemed to set himself apart.

7.7 Challenges Facing the Alberta Forest Service: mid-50s

Murphy Yes, that was very unfortunate. Reg, just going back again to the time that you were tormented about whether or not to take the job in Hinton or stay with the Forest Service—you indicated that you would have preferred to have stayed with the province because of the magnitude of the job.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy Could you tell me about when you envisaged at that point. You must have been developing a vision at that point.

Loomis Well, I suppose so. Frank Platt, you know, and Ted Hammer were trying to set up the Protection Branch at the same time as we were doing this other. It was Frank's idea to set up towers and mechanize every damn thing that had to do with fire control. In fact, the old log houses that used to be out at the fire tower—he wanted to change that and put stucco there. I am just mentioning this to give it a perspective. Huestis took me, and I think some others, over to Saskatchewan and at that time they were using smoke jumpers. I thought that was a hell of a good idea. They used the airplanes and dropped somebody down when a fire was small, and handled it that way—but I couldn't get Frank to agree at all. I was probably interfering a little too damn much there, because I



know that Ted Hammer came in, or I went into his office for something and by Jesus he told me off—he told me to mind my own damn business. Actually they were really anxious to protect the forest. If we were going to try to manage the damn thing in other ways, we wanted something to manage!

Murphy I could see your concern. When you were making that decision with Northwestern though, from the timber management standpoint, you must have had some kind of vision.

Loomis The whole idea was to set up the whole province on a sustainable basis, and I had this idea which eventually came out—of setting up the quota system for giving something to lumber operators as well as the pulp company something to look forward to. As you know, when they applied for a piece of timber there might be other stands adjacent to it and we'd cruise that piece they wanted. The other pieces were left in abeyance for the time. The fellow that applied for it would get that piece of timber. He would put a road in—he would put in a mill, and then probably run out of the timber there—he would then apply for an adjacent piece and we would cruise it properly and put it up for sale—and somebody else with a lot more money would buy the damn thing. So there was actually no incentive for the sawmill operators to put in good roads or set up a proper mill. I thought one of the important things was to give them something that would be of interest to them in a particular area, and that is why we set up the Quota system.

7.8 North Western Pulp and Power Corporate Philosophy

Murphy After that pleasant break for lunch—thank you very much! We left off talking about the Quota system, Reg, and that is a good point of entry, but before we talk about it I would like to finish up some of the points about Northwestern Pulp and Power. One of the questions that I wanted to ask was about how you perceived the—perhaps you could call it the "corporate philosophy" of Northwestern Pulp and Power—about how eager they were to embrace these concepts of forest management and forest renewal which were really quite different. Also to comment on differences you might see between their Woodlands group which had the responsibility for harvesting, road building, logging and hauling. Between that group and the Forestry group under Des Crossley which had the responsibility for forest management, planning and forest renewal.

Loomis Well, you see having worked to some extent with pulp companies down east I found the Harts of St. Regis quite more open to accepting sustained yield forest management than there was any indication of those in the east that I had anything to do with. That's one point that I think I'd like to stress. The Harts seemed to be of a different caliber altogether. When it came to the actual woods managers, they were pretty anxious to get the wood out as cheaply as possible, which is natural, and if they could avoid doing this and that, that would be of benefit forest management-wise and they could get away with it, they'd avoid it. That's where Des was very, very good. If there were things there that were going on that were, in his estimation, not good forest management, he'd come to us and we could go to the company and insist on having it done. That's an example of the



cooperation between Des and myself. We had annual meetings. They'd submit their annual operating plan to us, then we'd meet with them, meet with Des and his associates, in the forest management section, and also the woods operations people. And a lot of things were thrashed out and agreed to at those meetings, and I think those were very, very, beneficial in getting what progress was made at Hinton. I think that Des, being the type of man that he was, he managed to get a lot of things done there that you couldn't have got done in the east.

Murphy He was really a committed forester in that respect.

Loomis In that respect among others, yes. He did things that I didn't agree with—Des—for instance even at that time I didn't think that clear cutting was good forestry. But what was done was a compromise between what we'd like to see done and what they were willing to do—and we'll try to confine the clear cuts as small as would be feasible. Those were all thrashed out at these meetings that we had each year with Des and with the Woods operations people.

Murphy Would you generally reach agreement at those meetings or were there some issues you would have to refer to higher level for negotiation?

Loomis Well, of course, it's quite a little while ago now, but as I recall it, we pretty well settled it. And sometimes it took a little longer than we thought it would take but we always ended the meetings—the meetings were always on a good relation basis, you know, a feeling of friendliness was usually there and cooperation. Yes, it was very, very good.

Murphy The word cooperation I think is a key word.

Loomis Yeah, right.

7.9 Developing an Industrial Forest Management System

7.9.1 Management Planning and Forest Renewal

Murphy The agreement, which was unique at the time, called for the company to assume responsibility for forest management planning and for renewal. How did that come about? Were you involved in the negotiations?

Loomis Very much so. In fact, I think probably between Charlie and me, Charlie Jackson and me, we probably came up with the idea. I think it probably originated with us, more so than with the company.

Murphy When you did the inventory work for the company, at the time they offered you the job, did the company indicate at that point that it was willing to accept the renewal responsibility? (turn tape over)



Loomis You wanted to know how the management and the reforestation requirement got into the agreement. Well, that goes a little bit back further. I don't know whether I mentioned this or not, but I mentioned Harvie, the Deputy Minister, he was active then. And, I think the first agreement that was signed with the government—Reubens with the government—was drawn up by the Deputy Minister himself, Harvie. And then, evidently, they didn't make it—I mean Reuben didn't get a pulpwood mill so they lost the \$10,000, and they were up for a renewal. As I remember, Huestis then sent down the proposed agreement with the Reubens to me to look over. And the thing that I noticed—very pronounced in the agreement—there was nothing at all about reforestation, or sustained yield, or anything of that nature at all. And I managed to get in a paragraph or two that the agreement would state that they would have the cutting rights on a sustained yield basis or something similar—something to indicate that they would have to do this—to do a little more than just cut. And, from then on, I think the agreement was sent back to Harvie, I can't remember exactly, but the whole agreement was rewritten, and more emphasis placed on the agreement that this was based on the sustained yield basis.

Murphy That was very much a landmark, watershed decision.

Loomis Yes, I think so. You know, probably I was concerned because I had been working with pulp companies down east—and the Ontario government for instance didn't seem to worry about the plans we had to submit for the company. The company I worked for had to submit to the government an annual operating plan. The emphasis on that annual operating plan was that wherever the company cut, it was actually clear cut. At that time pulpwood was harvested by contract with the pulpcutters and some of it was quite thick stands, and a lot of it was suppressed on that account. And with the contractors there to cut and make money, they'd avoid going into those places because they did a lot of cutting for a lot less money. And if possible they'd leave it. And if the company didn't watch, they were left there. I managed to get the company at that time to photograph our cutover areas. In fact I did it myself, some of us would cut a hole in the bottom of a small plane and take the photographs through it. And the government was more anxious to see those plans of the cuts, to see if there was anything left. And a lot of those areas that we laid out for cutting were in immature timber. There was no thought of letting the stands stay there till they were mature and increase in growth per acre. A lot of the stands were 65 years old. When I was there, I thought to myself, if I ever had the opportunity of setting up a plan I'd make damn sure that sustained yield would be the basis of the operation. I think probably that is where the thing originated with me—because there didn't seem to be any signs of that here—when I came here.

Murphy You certainly applied that experience in a very positive way then.

Loomis Yeah, it was a good thing that I worked with companies down there because it gave me insights. Even then, you know, I mention the business of setting up cutting areas, or subdivisions of an inventory. I tried to make it by watersheds—way back then.



Murphy That experience would have conditioned you to have encouraged companies to harvest first in the oldest stands.

Loomis Yes. Of course. Des didn't need much of an incentive to do that. If sustained yield meant anything, that was essential, and Charlie had a lot to do with that too. Charlie Jackson.

Murphy To your knowledge at that time, were there any other agreements that had that renewal responsibility built into them?

Loomis Not that I know of.

Murphy My impression is that this was precedent setting.

Loomis I don't recall—of course I didn't have much chance to look at the agreements when I was down east. I was in the forestry end of it, but I don't remember actually seeing the agreements we had—we understood what we had to do. One of the main things was to make darn sure that we didn't leave areas uncut in places where there were supposed to be operations.

Murphy In the negotiations with the Reubens, then, did they express any concern about assuming that responsibility?

Loomis No, I don't recall so, no. No. It always seemed, as I recall, it seemed to be a natural acceptable fact.

Murphy That would have incurred an additional cost to them, and I've been wondering how they agreed to accept it. It must have been considered as part of a whole package of expenses to them, and expected returns.

Loomis In operations, yes. Well I think Des did do a very good job in selling that idea to the company. Although, as I said, the Harts seemed to be—that's part of their understanding, seemed to be, as I recall it.

7.9.2 Allowable Annual Cuts and Rotation

Murphy Just after the agreement was negotiated, you had to assist them with developing a forest management plan. As I recall at that time you were looking at an average rotation of a hundred years.

Loomis Yes, well they always—right from the very start, Charlie Jackson and myself agreed that a hundred years was when spruce became mature, usually, and lodgepole pine could become mature at 80 years. And I think, as I remember it, we agreed at the start that they could cut lodgepole pine at 80 years—where there was spruce—and they were renewing the cutover areas—it was a hundred years. Then I think from studies of work that Des had done there, and where their main product was going to be pulpwood, figured that the spruce could be cut back down to 80 years and not do any harm. Probably, they even thought then that where there was spruce before they'd plant pine. If



they had to artificially renew these areas. But the whole idea, was right from the very start, was to renew the cutover areas and if they did not in 5 or 7 years, I've forgotten just which was the waiting period after the cut, before they had to take some action to renew, regenerate artificially this area.

Murphy Yeah, I believe it was 7 years and then 3 years extra to remedy any deficiencies—which gave them up to 10 years.

Loomis Yes. And then there was an agreement that we had for our people go in and check these areas. They would check them themselves and we could spot check them if we wanted to.

Murphy I understand that part of the technical background in the decision that led to reducing the rotation age came from their Continuous Forest Inventory plots which suggested there was a greater rate of growth than you might have anticipated at first.

Loomis Yes. But I think, I still think that even with what work they did, they couldn't—you know the natural way, as I understand it, the way I've always thought—that you'd take increment samples of trees to determine when the annual growth had reduced sufficiently to show that the tree was mature and the growth and diameter would be not appreciably increase. And I still think that spruce will take a hundred years in this country.

Murphy For pulpwood too?

Loomis Well, it doesn't matter whether its pulpwood or not. What I'm getting at is the determination of the graph of the point where growth is not appreciable. Or to the point where—like what I was saying that down east there with Bropton Pulp and Power that I worked for—they were cutting stands that were 60, 65 years old. Well, to me that's when the size of the tree and the amount of wood that's put on to that diameter is at it's best. You see, where the annual growth on that surface of a tree is so appreciable, its too bad to cut it. And I still think that spruce probably will keep growing, in this country, to a point where probably it takes a hundred years before it drops off sufficiently to say that the tree is done increasing well, and you could cut it. I think on that basis what I say is true.

7.9.3 Progressive Clear Cut Test Area

Murphy I think toward the end of your term, the company began negotiating or trying to negotiate a progressive clearcut approach to logging. You must have been involved at least at the start.

Loomis Yes, I don't think we actually agreed to a progressive clearcut. You know—I mean in my mind I never thought it was right. We might have, through circumstances, agreed to have them do it, or try it. But I don't think we ever thought, that it was a—I'm pretty damn sure when I say—I don't think we ever agreed that it was a good idea. I don't think even Charlie Jackson would agree.

Murphy My impression is that approval was given for a trial progressive clearcut. That may well have been after you retired. I think the company argued that there were, in the area they proposed, there



were enough stands which would not be harvested that would break up the openness so that there would be wildlife habitat remaining, and I understand that the objective was to start at the far end of the area and then log back in a progressive way, taking out the roads as they go so that there would be no access into the far end of the block. And I honestly don't know how it turned out, but I wondered what your reaction would be.

Loomis I think that must have happened after I retired. I don't remember ever sitting at an annual meeting where this was agreed to.

Murphy Yeah, I'm sure it was after you had left.

Loomis It probably was.

7.9.4 Incentives for Silviculture

Murphy The term "silviculture by incentive" was often used by Des to describe what they were required to do and how they were doing it. Do you see that as a rational way of explaining it. In your negotiations did you, in fact, try to give them an incentive to practice silviculture?

Loomis Well I don't, at this late date, I don't recall that term being used...

Murphy I think its a term that he coined afterwards to describe what they'd done. I think his basic idea was that the incentive was the fact that in order to maintain their lease, they had to renew at their own expense—and so it provided an incentive to do it effectively and at a minimum cost.

Loomis I think—see, if you're going to grow trees anywhere, or if a private company or private individual was going to go to the cost of planting trees on a piece of land, that they should have some rights to that land. And there were arguments, I know, about the lease area—whether it included the trees alone and actually didn't give a company any rights to the land. And I argued otherwise. I thought that they should have some sort of an agreement which included the rights to the land. And I think probably, and its kind of hard to say, it was half agreed to.

Murphy At least the part of them having tenure or continued tenure was agreed to.

7.9.5 Renewable Tenure

Loomis Des asked me one time where this 21 years—you know we used to say the lease would be for 21 years and renewable—he wanted to know where that came from. He didn't think that it came from anywhere else, but here. That's not so. It was, I think that was something that came from Ontario, originally. And probably I brought it here, I don't know. I don't know just how it came here. But I know that an agreement was for 21 years.

Murphy But with the clear understanding it would be renewed if the conditions were met.



- Loomis** And if they lived up to their agreement, it would be renewed. You see, it would be sort of forever. But still, a lot of people in the government argued that that didn't give them land rights. It's pretty hard to divide one from the other.
- Murphy** And that came out very clearly when it was subsequently found that about a third of their area was underlain by coal leases.
- Loomis** Yes, yes, well that all happened after I retired. The incentive to get coal or to sell coal came more or less after I retired.
- Murphy** In fact it was the demise of the coal industry that led, in part, to establishing the pulp industry there in the first place—as a result of Reuben's changing of his economic base.
- Loomis** Yeah, you see at that time, his coal mine was down the Coal Branch—it was underground. It didn't have anything to do with the surface rights. The surface rights were altogether different and I don't think it ever came into anyone's mind at that time that that would interfere with forest regeneration.
- Murphy** That's an interesting observation.
- Loomis** And I'm pretty darn sure Des never thought of that. I certainly didn't. I never even dreamt it would be over across the Athabasca. He showed me places there after I retired, where they were going to surface mine coal where they had regenerated. One is an absolute contradiction of the other.
- Murphy** They are mutually exclusive.
- Loomis** Yeah. Mutually stupid is right.

7.10 Forest Protection

- Murphy** You mentioned earlier the problems in fire, as well as Delahay had mentioned, and your own observations and comments with timber inspectors—and then just after the Northwestern Pulp and Power operation got nicely started, we had that severe fire season of 1956. It affected many parts of the province but unfortunately there were three large fires that burned on the lease, and I know there was tremendous concern expressed by officials of the company about the inadequacies they perceived in fire control, and I think you probably shared a number of those points of view. I wonder if you could comment on the 1956 fire season and what happened.
- Loomis** All I can, you know it was quite a while ago, again I'll try to recall it. You see, when the agreement was set up, as I recall it, it was pretty well understood the protection would be a government affair—that the company wouldn't have to spend the money of setting up an organization. They could help out and do whatever they could do if a fire occurred, mind you—it wasn't necessary for them to set their own organization. And that fire happened, and I guess they just went ahead and



did some work, did some organizing where they had some sort of fire protection themselves. I'm not sure about that though. Are you?

Murphy I think their efforts were minimal, and designed to be a supplementary thing rather than initial attack.

Loomis Yeah, You see, by the time the pulp mill was built, there was quite a difference in attitude so far as the government was concerned in providing money for fire protection. A lot of the detection ideas were pretty well implemented then, as I recall.

Murphy The detection system was being improved at that time.

Loomis Very much so. I can't recall just when the change was, but I think one was more or less simultaneous to the other, probably. Because the pulp mill got started, the Social Credit government realized that they should spend more money on the forest.

Murphy Your CIF Fire Brief. That came in in 1954. There were things happening in response to that—but if we look at the annual reports and check the amount of money spent on fire control, after 1956 we see a remarkable increase. I'm quite certain that 1956 provided the catalyst for greatly accelerated intensification of fire control activity.

Loomis Yes, I think so. You mean as far as the government releasing money for that purpose—that's what you mean, yes. The CIF Fire Brief may have had quite a lot to do about it, but I think probably the fact that the government realized that the forest was quite valuable economically was a major reason.

Murphy That pulp mill was the first major indication of the value.

Loomis Yeah, yes

Murphy As a result of those fires, I know the company submitted a brief to the Minister, and I had an opportunity to read through it at the time. It was quite stinging critical of the level of preparedness of the Forest Service. It was very broadly critical. I know it created a great deal of antagonism within the Forest Protection branch toward the company. I understand you also wrote a memo expressing some of your concerns about the level of fire control at the time.

Loomis Yes many of them. However, there was one of course, that stung me badly that was. The fire, that started here on the east side of the Athabasca, and jumped the river, and it didn't stop till it got to Slave Lake. By that time we had our quotas all set up and it did a lot of harm. The Swanson Lumber Company had quotas in there, you know. It did a lot of harm there. That fire became large because settlers started many small ones which was outside the Green area and the protection branch paid no attention since the fires were not in the Green area and allowed them to grow into one big one.

Murphy Yeah, that was 1968.



Loomis Yeah. I was very critical of the way protection was handled at that time and the years previously. Much earlier, as was mentioned previously, I thought probably smoke jumpers would have been a solution. At the time I thought very strongly they would be the answer. But it did not impress the Protection Branch at all.

You know, Frank Platt probably was the instigator of a lot of the things that were done and he passed it on to Ted Hammer. He was very good.

Murphy Frank initiated a great deal of things.

Loomis Yes, and although I didn't always agree with him—you know we used to argue to beat the devil, Frank and I—and always remained good friends.

Murphy He was that sort of fellow, it was great.

Loomis Yeah, he was that kind, yeah.

7.11 Organizational Challenges

Murphy Just before we go back to the Quota system—I was going to ask you earlier when you became Head of Forest Surveys Branch, you got involved with management planning, and that activity overlapped—at least in perception—it overlapped a great deal with the work of the Forest Management Branch which was under the direction of Herb Hall at that time. So it was a dichotomous arrangement that must have led to some conflict.

Loomis Well, it never—Herb being the kind of man he was—as I remember him to be, it didn't jar him very much. But Charlie—I think I remember seeing a few memos that he,—oh I think when we sent the temporary cutting control plans—sent the memo to Huestis about them I guess he sent it around and got comments from various members of the other branches. Those were very strong—kind of a strong one from Charlie, feeling that we were into something we shouldn't be. But if we didn't do it nobody would have.

Murphy It is unfortunate that the organizational aberration was there, because once you reorganized into a Forest Management Branch, and the Surveys Branch was done away with—then you were able to integrate all those elements together a lot more harmoniously.

Murphy Tape 3 of the Reg Loomis interview, May 12, 1988.

Loomis We were speaking about better feelings, more cooperation between branches. After I became Superintendent of the Forest Management Branch, that is true, and I think that I always thought it was kind of queer that after I retired, they decided to do away with the Forest Management Branch and make it Timber Management. And they washed out the Forest Surveys Branch. It started with me and it ended with me, more or less.



Murphy That's right, but what you started lingered on. In fact your Forest Surveys Branch became an effective Timber Management Branch—it became a Silviculture Branch—and which also became a Land Use Branch.

Loomis Well, yeah, there was quite a change there. You know, I think that Forest Management Branch is more of an appropriate name. Timber Management was altogether too confining than what was actually being done. Do you agree to that, Pete?

Murphy The name Timber Management is a narrower context, but so long as the whole job is being done, I don't see a problem with it. It depends now though on voluntary cooperation among those three leading branches - the Timber Management, Reforestation and the Land Use groups. And in large measure, I think that, in fact, is taking place.

Loomis It is eh? Well, once I retired, I decided I'd stay away, and I have. So I don't really know what's going on there now.

7.12 Developing the Alberta Quota System

Murphy Coming back to the Quota system that you mentioned before, Reg, that too was an innovative system that has set the stage for a lot more orderly approach to forest industry involvement in our forest management. I wonder if we could go back to that again now and talk about why you saw that as desirable, or how you developed that as a system to go for. And having reached that idea, how you went about getting it put into place.

Loomis By the time we were thinking about quotas, or thinking of implementing something of that nature—of what the quota system is—we had already got the pulp industry going in Hinton, and gave them an incentive to do work other than just harvest. I think I mentioned before that the lumber industry knew they were just cutting trees to make lumber, with no incentive to build good roads to where their mills were going to be located, and to the area that they were going to cut—or to cut the trees with no idea of the future. Just to go back a little bit, I think I'd like to mention that prior to that and to sometime in the '50s, there was a fellow at Smith up near Slave Lake that was cutting north of the Slave River or had operations up in there—and he was always asking for timber to cut—and we'd rush up there to give him a Special, or some way of keeping him going. And he was always—it seemed always—coming into Forest Surveys Branch, for this, or Mr. Huestis would send him down to us. And we were always sending men up there to cruise, or prepare a forest cover map, and cruising it. Most of the cuttable timber up there was spruce timber—he was cutting spruce only. Most of it was of an uneven age. It was mixed with poplar, and damn good timber some of it as far as size goes. But, we felt it was too young, a lot of it, too young to have cut all the trees of that size. So I got the idea, that we have mentioned to try to get across at Hinton—to cut on a selective basis. And we agreed with him unofficially to go up there and mark timber for him to cut. In fact we sent Bob Hunter and Roger Sund up there. Later Huestis come down and said "You have no business



doing that. They're working here, not marking timber." So finally I found a German chap that had been a forester in Germany, he said—he was located way over near Rocky Mountain House—I went over and saw him and hired him. He was paid by the operator to mark trees. And we marked a lot in there for him that way for the operator to cut on a selective basis. In other words, there were no clear cuts at all.

Murphy So you were marking, as I understand it, for approximately 40% volume removal.

Loomis Yeah, that's true, that's right. And I'd like to know right to this day what's happened there. I don't know whether, with all the other changes that have been made, and the quota system coming in, whether somebody was in there and did damage to what we tried to do. I don't know.

Murphy That would be worth following up. I know at least one of the stands... First of all there was concern about the cost of doing it, the manpower needs. The other one though, occurred in that same 1968 fire, that you mentioned—that although the response of the stands seemed to be great, at least one of those residual stands burned over in the 1968 fire and I think administratively the decision was made to not bother doing it any more. The other interesting aspect of that marking was that was you could scale at the same time you were cruising—and the dues were paid on the basis of the standing tree which was an incentive for greater utilization of the tree itself.

Loomis Yeah, well that probably had a lot to do with this setting up of the Quota system. In other words, we kept him going with that second way of cutting—you know—gave us something and he could probably get himself better established there—better road in—I know he did make a better road in. Anyway, since the pulp company had a good reason for looking to the future, the lumber industry didn't have it at that time. Like I say, the operators did go in and buy a piece of timber, and the next piece of timber might go higher or beyond what they felt they could pay, and they'd lose their chance. So we figured if we could get them established more permanently, therefore more interested, it would be good for us and good for them. Thus we set up the Quota system with that in mind and it meant that an awful lot of work had to be done. You were asking how we got established. We had no trouble selling the idea to the industry. They were absolutely—Bill Nigro was one of the fellows I talked to and there was another fellow—can't think of his name—but he was, he had operations way up as far as High Level.

Murphy Was that Swanson Lumber?

Loomis No, no, right off hand I can't think of his name. But he was a pretty outstanding man in the Association—the Alberta Forest Products Association. And Arden Rytz of course had told him that! I had managed to write a brief - took me nearly all winter to write the brief—going back and trying to follow through historically, and why, and on what basis for establishing a Quota system. We submitted it to Mr. Huestis. I can't remember whether he passed it on to the Deputy Minister, but the Deputy never passed it on up. Anyway it just stopped, not a peep from anybody. It was about



the time Wilmore was killed I think. Now this brief was submitted and that was it. I happened to mention it to Arden Rytz—I mentioned it to Arden and Arden says "Could I look at it?" And I said "Yes." I had a copy and I gave it to him to look at. I said, "I think, if you could write a brief and pass it on, maybe it would give ours a push." However I said, "Make damn sure that yours has no reference to what we said in ours." And he promised it wouldn't. So he and Bill Nigro and this other chap worked on it. I think Arden wrote it—I don't know. Anyway, they submitted one. And by God we got it going. Funny thing about it, you know, we submitted that. The legislation had to be drafted and passed through to the House you see. Bob Steele and I walked down and listened on the day it was going to be passed and Ruste was our Minister. And by the way, Ruste was a hell of a good minister, because at his own saying, he was an agriculturist and farmer. He didn't pretend to know anything about forestry. And anything he said, we said it for him, or we'd tell him and he'd pass it on. And this Quota system went through him just like that, you see. He went into the House and there wasn't a peep - there wasn't one peep. It went through just like that.

Murphy Well there certainly is a logic to it.

Loomis Well I think so, but either that or it just seemed to be a day that they didn't pay attention to what was going to be passed. Anyway, it went through the House.

Murphy I suspect Ruste, though, being an agriculturist and knowing about the cycles of harvest and renewal would have been able to see the logic of it.

Loomis Yes, in my estimation, he was one of the very best Ministers we could have because he realized he didn't know anything about forestry, and he depended on us who were supposed to know what was good and what wasn't. And what we thought was good, he thought was good. Dr. Ross after that as minister, he thought he knew a lot, I was out of it by then, but he caused a lot of trouble.

Murphy I've hear many stories about Dr. Ross. It's interesting that the idustry then was so receptive to the idea. Did they fully appreciate at that time, the responsibility they would be accepting in the renewal part of the agreement.

Loomis That part of it was quite easy I thought, for them—because they either agreed to do it themselves, or they'd pay us so much a thousand for us to do it.

Murphy That option, then, was your suggestion?

Loomis Yes.

Murphy Not theirs.

Loomis No, it wasn't. Well, knowing that a lot of the logging operators didn't know a thing about regeneration, or don't know how to go about it or anything—we figured to give them that alternative, it would sell the idea.



- Murphy** Was it your hope that most of the operators would choose to ensure the renewal themselves?
- Loomis** Well, we thought so, but yes, it is very likely that we thought if they did it themselves, it'd be a lot easier for us.
- Murphy** From what I understand, the majority accepted the responsibility at first.
- Loomis** Yes, that's right.
- Murphy** -- until they determined how difficult it was in some instances.
- Loomis** You see, Arden Rytz's outfit, Imperial Lumber, they thought it was a good idea for them to do it. But it didn't take them very long to say, well it's too much for us. One thing they seemed to have difficulty with working up an area for proper regeneration—one of the things that they were a little bit concerned about.
- Murphy** One of the difficulties must have surely been the seasonal nature of so many of their operations.
- Loomis** Yes.
- Murphy** How do you think the results of the Quota application worked, compared to what you had intended would turn out. Were you surprised or disappointed in any way?
- Loomis** I was pleased. I was pleased that it seemed to go the way we wanted it to go. You see, another thing I should mention is after we decided, and got the approval of the government to set up the Quota system—we felt that we didn't know enough about the forest management unit areas and the timber there to be able to set these Quota systems up properly. So the bunch of us in the Forest Management Branch decided that we'd rush it to beat hell, and put enough field work in to assure ourselves that we had the timber to set up the Quota system. We did most of it by helicopter. We picked out areas. There's where Dennis Cauvin was excellent. We picked out these areas, or looked over these areas, and picked out locations where we'd say we'd drop a man there or near as we could by helicopter—and go in and sample to find out what the ages are and so on. And everybody worked very, very closely together. It was Dennis Cauvin, Fred Sutherland, and Larry Kennedy—but mostly Dennis, as far as field work was concerned. And then it was turned over to Fred McDougall who took over Timber Operations and we did the whole damn thing—and I think Forest Surveys helped us there too. Anyway, we had to hire these fellows that we didn't have ourselves, and send them out to field, and we did all this in one summer practically, as I remember it. It might have been two summers, I don't know. Anyway, we got the damn thing set up so we could say, 'The allowable cut in a management unit is such and such,' and another thing we did do, we told the operators they would have a Quota given to them based on the average of their cut over a period—I think six years or four years, I don't recall which. Anyway, I think the end of it was '66, I'm not sure. And they would have, if the allowable cut made it so that they could cut on the basis of their average over the period—they'd have it, and that management unit would be more or less theirs. But if the allowable



cut was more than what their average was, we'd set up another Quota. They'd have the privilege of bidding for it, or somebody else would go into that management unit also and work there too. And some of the management units of course we found mature timber that there was no operations in at all—and eventually we advertised a Quota for that area or two or three Quotas, you know, depending how the timber lay, and the allowable cut whether it be more feasible for one quota holder or three or four quota holders—depending on the size of the management unit, the location of the timber, and how much mature timber there was there. We gave these quotas for 20 years. And if they did a satisfactory job, the same as the pulp lease, they'd have that renewed. So, it gave them the assurance of continuity—they could build good roads, they could put a proper mill in, it gave them an incentive for the future and take an interest in the forest—which, you know, you couldn't blame them before when they didn't have it.

Murphy In your impression, did that change the nature of their operations. Did they respond the way you intended?

Loomis They responded excellently—of course they would, you see, because it gave them something to depend on.

7.12.1 Opportunities for Intensive Management and Other Changes in the Quota System

Murphy What could you envisage as the next step when we talk about intensifying forest management. How can that be built into the Quota system approach do you think? How can we get them to do more stand spacing, to look at genetic improvement of growing stock?

Loomis Yeah, you were asking, I think Pete, at this stage where you're wondering what incentives we could provide to the operator or to the timber industry that would make it so that they would intensify forestry operations. Well, in answering that, I'd have to say if you're thinking of genetically improved individual trees and fertilizing, and to me an unnatural way, I think I would begin to think they're wrong, and it's not good forestry. I may be wrong, but that's the way I feel. I think that we could do a much better job in finding ways of—if there's waste in the woods to convert that back to where it came, into the soil. Instead of using unnatural methods of fertilizing, it would be more appropriate to not burn the debris but to find methods of transferring that back to the soil—that is the waste that now is being either burned or destroyed some other way that I don't know.

Murphy All right, fair enough. We'll come back to this subject at the end, Reg, where we'll encourage you to take a retrospective view of what's going on. If you had it to do over again, in the Quota system, are there any major changes that you would have made?

Loomis Right off hand I can't think of anything. I think the idea was excellent, it was implemented in a very, actually remarkable, way because we didn't have proper forest inventory, we didn't have the knowledge of just what the sustained yield would be for a species, and a very, very short time in



which the staff managed to organize and get that information. I think that part of the work here in the Forest Service was excellent.

Murphy Yes, that was a remarkable undertaking. I meant to ask you the same question in connection with the Forest Management Agreements. The one you negotiated with Northwestern Pulp and Power fundamentally was a sound agreement in my point of view. There were things that were learned from it that were later were incorporated into the Procter and Gamble and subsequent FMAs.

Loomis Yeah, it was a pattern worth repeating—and under the circumstances, I can't think of anything off hand that could be changed and improved on. Right now, I can't think of anything.

7.13 Improving the Practice of Silviculture

Murphy So far, Reg, we've talked mostly about the timber harvesting aspects, the inventory, the forest management planning, but along the way silviculture began to be talked of more and more frequently when we recognized that first of all we had to do something pro-actively to get the new crop established, and then more than that we had to make sure that the crop would grow and survive to maturity. In this connection the name of Larry Kennedy always comes to mind because I believe he was the first, if not among the first foresters, brought in with silviculture specifically in mind.

Loomis Yes. Well I mentioned the fact that we divided the responsibilities in the Forest Management Branch by sections. And one of them was, as I mentioned, was silviculture, or reforestation, whatever you want to call it. And Larry Kennedy was appointed or selected to do the job. And that's a fact—and he did it, I think an excellent job. A very excellent job. And I think it is through him that the Oliver tree nursery was realigned with the forest and the woods. Back when the federal government was in charge of natural resources here, prior to 1930, they, and I think Mr. - Huestis had something to do with it, under them, established the tree nursery at Oliver. And there, on account of the fact that they thought they could get help from the inmates of the Oliver hospital there. It was more of a forestry matter than an agricultural matter up to the time that the resources transferred to the province of Alberta. (turn tape).

Loomis Well, I stated there that the natural resources were taken over by the province and they were short of money, of course. They tried to cut back as much as they could and revamp things so that they could be more in keeping with the money that they thought they could allow for government affairs. And at that time, I think probably, the farmers were starting to get interested in getting growing stock from the tree nursery—and they felt, probably—well forestry kind of took a back seat, a very back seat. Its surprising what the federal government did do forestry-wise, prior to 1930. As you know, in the back country there there's an awful lot of horse trails they established, and built damn well and built places where the muskegs were corduroyed and so on. They did a lot of work, and they were actually planting trees in the forests up to then. Well, then, of course that



was all dropped after 1930 and the tree nursery was taken over by Agriculture providing trees to farmers. And then when we started doing some reforestation work in the forest and Larry Kennedy was put in charge, he—I may not be correct, but as I remember—he was the one that helped to get the tree nursery to provide the growing stock for us. That was one question you asked. And then the other was about the container planting. Well the first of it of course—Des had a lot to do with it as I remember, he had a lot to do, they had that idea. And the containers we started out with were no good at all actually, because they compacted the roots in the container, and they were supposed to release but they didn't. There was a lot of trouble, but the idea was excellent. I think the idea is still excellent. If we could get the proper container to allow the roots to expand.

Murphy There are containers now that will do that.

Loomis Yes, I know, I've seen moss—I've bought some for here—some peat moss containers. You know, they seem to have no troubles at all.

Murphy In fact, more recently, Hank Spencer of Spencer-Lemaire is selling containers on a global market because they work so well.

Loomis Is that right?

Murphy They're the ones that fold open.

Loomis Oh, yeah.

Murphy The roots are trained to go down. When the trees are planted the roots are free to go in their proper direction.

Loomis Yeah.

Murphy So you thought the concept was fine but the technique at that time was...

Loomis ...needed to improve on the containers to make it worthwhile. I thought the idea was excellent.

Murphy When you brought Larry on, what was your major concern? Was it the reforestation part of the job?

Loomis Yes. As I recall it, Larry had graduated and he had worked with Hinton for a while I have an idea, not positive but—that he joined the Forest Service prior to me taking over the Forest Management Branch and he was at loose ends, sort of, until we—and I don't know whether he was, in the head office in Edmonton or in the field. Larry would know of course. He turned out to be a very, very good man for that job.

Murphy And his one man operation has grown to become a full Branch!



7.14 The Problem with Management by Committee

Loomis You know what I'd like to, just wanted to say this. I think that one time an individual was free and unhampered to implement ideas. They didn't have to go to a—what do you call it?

Murphy A committee?

Loomis A committee. It was only after I was with the Forest Service for a great many years before this committee idea got going. And what I found about the committees—that you would go in the door with knowledge and hopes, and you went out that door with those hopes still unsatisfied. There was an awful lot of talk and very little done. And I was very, very sorry to see the change, because I think that more can be done by allowing people that have ideas and are willing to make an effort, than you can do with committees.

Murphy Committees, I think, were brought in with the idea of trying to coordinate activities. But too often they turned out to be stultifying groups that seemed to squash initiative.

Loomis Yes. You take the Forest Management Branch. We had those fellows there with their jobs. And they were—it was understood by them that that was their job. And all we were interested in as a Branch, was the results. How they did it, it didn't matter a damn. And I think that was an excellent point of view. Its something that suited me, and I thought if it suited me, it would suit other people too maybe.

Murphy I've always appreciated that in the Forest Service. At the time I was working, we were looked at more for results than for the process we were using. It gave us tremendous latitude for innovation and freedom to develop.

Loomis See, if you want to kill a person's incentive, have him have to tell you just what he's going to do and say well, no, you don't want to do that, you do it this way. It isn't his job anymore.

7.15 Watershed Management and Zonation

Murphy I agree. Just going on—the question of watershed management is one that you addressed as well.

Loomis Probably you gathered by now, Pete, that watershed has been a concern of mine for a long, long time. Long before I came to the province here—even when I was working with these private organizations like Hollingsworth & Witney and Brompton Pulp—I was trying to fit our work into water conservation, and coming here it was a natural because it is important - damn important—it always seemed important to me that the headwaters here were very important to other places like Saskatchewan and Manitoba—Saskatchewan particularly.

Murphy Its interesting you came here from outside and that you immediately caught the spirit of that concern. In fact, I suspect that you brought that concern with you, and found a fertile area in which to apply it.



- Loomis** Well, you know, there again, we had a chance to do something here—where probably somewhere else it would be too restricted to implement ideas.
- Murphy** In your encouragement of the Forest Land Use Branch, watershed was one of the sections that you advocated.
- Loomis** That and trying to control destruction in the woods. And when I say destruction, I mean the land also—to me its damn important to prevent erosion and conserve land right here. This little place here I'm trying to do it right now.
- Murphy** I remember you being very active in that area with your talks on land use and watershed both. The first one I remember being active in that field was Chuck Geale who was actually directed to prepare some erosion control guidelines. Was that under your direction?
- Loomis** Yeah, you see, here again I did something I probably hadn't to. You know, I was working with Odinski quite a lot with the Soils set-up there at the university. And he was always talking about good agricultural land here and there, you see. And all those management units, along up the Mackenzie highway, along Peace River, up around the Clear Hills area there—it was open. There was no assurance—you couldn't say, well if I planted a tree here, it's going to be here till it grows old to maturity. To me, it was a contradiction of what we're trying to do. And so I undertook to have some of our fellows—with the photographs and the topography—mostly the unit of importance was the topography—to go around all the areas where forested area was butting on to the what was known then as the Yellow area. The Green area against the Yellow one—to see if we could say "well if we'll put the boundary of the management unit here it's going to stay here—it's not going to be moved because its good agricultural land." I was having people do that and there again Huestis says well, that belongs to Odinsky. So I guess I had to let some of our fellows go over there and work under him at the end of it. At least we got started anyway, trying to make a permanent boundary, and as far as I know that damn boundary is still open to fluctuation. You can't plant a tree anywhere near, actually, and be sure the damn thing is going to grow until it's mature—and it's a contradiction. There should be some way of saying well this boundary is going to stay. There should be something. I was never successful enough to get anyone to agree that's the way it should be.
- Murphy** The year 1948 was one in which there were two major events that took place, one of which was setting up that Green zone by Order-in-Council.
- Loomis** And Huestis did that I think.
- Murphy** You came the year following. Can you recall how that came to be. Did you hear talk of who initiated it and brought it about?
- Loomis** No, actually I can't although I've always felt that Eric Huestis had a lot to do with making those two different colors represent on the map the use of one and the use of the other. Another thing that I



tried to do—I felt the headwaters of any stream whether its in the Green area or not or whether it's in the Yellow area or not should be left under forest cover. You know, the headwaters of any stream, particularly the major ones, should be left to forestry. Because I've always felt that forest cover was a damn good way of having water seep down and flow out much much more slowly.

Murphy But you weren't able to carry that one out.

Loomis Well, I had, I think, John Schalkwyk work on that a little bit before I left. The idea was there, but nobody seemed to be too anxious to follow it through, although we tried our best to get it started. I know I talked to Bob Steele when he was Director there that that should be done. And he didn't disagree, that's for sure.

Murphy You don't know where the resistance for the idea would have come.

Loomis No, not for sure. It didn't wash out anyway. But I thought that that should be done anywhere in the province where there were at least major streams you know.

Murphy Yes. Especially wherever there's potential for erosion.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy And in the erosion standpoint I mentioned earlier that Chuck Geale developed some guidelines for erosion control on the petroleum exploration and developments. I don't recall if that was done under your direction.

Loomis No, I don't recall it was. If he did do it he was working for Gordon Smart, you see. And whether he had started that under Gordon, I can't remember, I mean before I retired.

Murphy I think that was before you retired. I know it stemmed from your initial concerns.

Loomis See, once we got the Premier to agree that we should do something, it shot ahead quite a little bit and that's where Chuck had a lot to do with it under Gordon, with that aspect.

Murphy It sounds like that fling with the Premier was a major event.

Loomis It sure was. You know, its surprising that he agreed to go, and the day wasn't a very pleasant day either. Because, you'd come down, you know, to circle certain areas and it was hot as hell, and you'd go up again. It wasn't too smooth—some of the fellows didn't feel too well.

7.16 Integrated Resource Management—Wildlife, Forestry, Recreation

Murphy I can identify with them. Another land use was wildlife. It was a while, I think, before we began to realize that we were—as well as timber harvesting—we were manipulating wildlife habitat as well. Did you work to any extent with the wildlife people?



Loomis No, no. You know it's since I have retired that the ecology of an area has become more understanding and more important in my view, than it was at the time I was working. You know—the lack of understanding—the whole of life is tied in, one with the other including of course wildlife—even the human. Therefore the natural ecology of forested areas, large ones particularly is extremely important and should be left intact. I realize that now, but I didn't realize it at the time though.

Murphy I remember some initial efforts that you and Bob Steele made to try to get the wildlife biologists involved in identifying critical wildlife areas and habitat problems. That was during the mid-to-late 1950's. My impression was that the biologists were too few in number, too busy, and unable to respond.

Loomis In 1950's?

Murphy Yeah, the late '50's.

Loomis Oh, Bob Steele?

Murphy With you and Bob Steele. Bob was with you in Forest Surveys then. And it seemed to me that you approached the wildlife biologists but they were unable to respond because they were too busy on other things. There were so few of them there at the time, I think there were only three or four of them at the most. Bob Webb and George Mitchell, and Bill Wishart, I think.

Loomis You know, at that time I can honestly say that those things didn't seem as important to me as they do now.

Murphy Yes, I think we've all learned a great deal as we've come along. The other land use was recreation, which I think you were involved with too during your time at the Forest Management Branch. Did you have much involvement with it?

Loomis Not too much. No, we realized it was a necessary factor and it was being considered, and that's about all I can say about it.

7.17 Protected Areas and Fire—Willmore Wilderness

Murphy One of the major withdrawals for recreational use was the Willmore Wilderness—originally the Wilderness Provincial Park. Were you consulted on that one?

Loomis Well, you see, Pete, you know the Willmore Wilderness area, so-called, was one of our management units.

Murphy Oh, it was?

Loomis Yes. We had no thought of setting it up ourselves as a wilderness area. We had no thought of it being Willmore Wilderness Area. I didn't. That was all done outside of me. We were planning on



that as a management unit—part of the Grande Prairie Division. We just got it more or less finished, units all set up when they decided to make that—I guess Willmore was killed and I thought the main thing was to honor him.

Murphy Well it was originally set up by him as the Wilderness Provincial Park so it must have been his initiative that set it up. And then after he was killed, the legislature renamed it the Willmore Wilderness.

Loomis Well, I'm glad to know that. Actually it was a bit of a surprise to me at the first. I don't know, he was a great fisherman wasn't he?

Murphy Yes he was. He spent a lot of time at Moberly Creek with John Currat.

Loomis You know, there should be something more in wilderness areas than just fish. I think they should have a different name for an area like that than "wilderness." I don't think that—"wilderness" to me doesn't mean what they represent. You know that association they have down in Calgary headed by some woman?

Murphy Is it the Alberta Wilderness Association?

Loomis Yeah. I've often thought of writing and asking her if she thought the name was appropriate. I don't know. It doesn't say—"wilderness" to me sort of means a non-productive area is all. Just wasteland.

Murphy Yes, I was going to say that the word "wilderness" means so many different things to different people.

Loomis I looked it up once in the dictionary, you know, it doesn't really mean what they set it up as.

Murphy One of the ecological consequences we're experiencing in both the wilderness areas and the national parks, is the fact that since we have reduced the incidence of fire and we're not harvesting, that we've accumulated some older age classes than we might normally have done. We've also reduced some of the meadows and brushlands that were used for wildlife. In essence we've allowed succession to proceed beyond where it would probably have gone given the natural incidence of fires in those areas. So it leaves us with two major choices. One is that we either develop some so-called let-burn or wilderness fire management plans or we could apply some mechanical means to remove those trees and initiate the recycling process.

7.18 Selective Harvesting—A Personal Perspective

Loomis Do you think if man, leaving out fire, of course—suppose these areas that you say are overmature were not allowed to be overmature and not clearcut—you know, just select-cut. You know, Pete, as I said, I was born in the Eastern Townships and the old farm that I was born on was a Loomis farm, I don't know whether I've said this before or not. Did we?



Murphy Go ahead and say it again.

Loomis In 1842 my great-grandfather bought that farm. It was 200 acres, and one corner of a low place was what we used to call swamp, you know, we said it was swamp but it actually wasn't swamp, it was an area where there were high places and there were some swamps. My great-grandfather must have been a forester by nature. I mean he must have realized the forests, down there particularly, were important. Because, my great-grandfather had left them intact, my grandfather had done so, my father also and it was still a Loomis farm with that area left intact until just recently. Back in 1923, we had a whole string of barns that led right up to the house, and my father was out here to Lacombe. My brother and I were there looking after the farm and by God a fire started, and it burnt the whole damn works except the house. Being a farm, and a dairy farm at that—we had a dual purpose farm. You see there were shorthorns that are called dual purpose—they were milked. Anyway, we had to have a barn. So we went to that area and we cut trees selectively and hauled them by horse across the field over to Huntingville. By the way the daughter of that Hunting lives out here, and her husband worked under Bob Steele in communication. But anyway, we got enough lumber out of that old place there, out of the swamp so called, to build a barn a hundred feet long, thirty six feet wide, two storey, you know the lower part for the stock and the upper to store hay, etc. For some reason or other, my great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father were foresters and didn't know it. That old swamp or piece of wood was still as intact and good as it was in my great-grandfather's time. Still at times when it was necessary we could go there and cut out our firewood etc. So probably seeing that is some of the thought I've had in forestry. And I'm beginning to think more and more that way. I think selective cutting is a damn site more of a safe forestry harvesting method than anything we are doing now.

Murphy It could be applied in parks and wilderness areas.

Loomis And it could be applied in parks and areas that they're talking about that are overmature and decadent. I don't think that the stand need necessarily be even-aged in other words.

Murphy How would you regenerate pine in a partial cutting situation?

Loomis Well, going back to that old swamp, there was white pine that grew well mixed with other species.

Murphy Up to two feet in diameter?

Loomis You'll see the same damn thing, I can show you some pine growing under this pine that I've got here. I don't think it's absolutely necessary. You could have a small opening for pine, but you don't have to clear cut, you know, large clearcuts.

Murphy Small clear cuts? Room size clear cuts?

Loomis I don't think that that is an impractical approach to forestry.



7.19 The Rocky Mountain Section, CIF—Influence on Policy

Murphy The Rocky Mountain Section of the CIF has developed an excellent reputation for being an active, innovative group. Des Crossley referred to as a "maverick" Section and you were here, if not at the beginning, near the beginning of the Section. I wonder if you would comment on how you saw it developing. (tape end).

Murphy This is tape 4 of the Reg Loomis interview on May 12, 1988. I haven't finished asking the question about the Canadian Institute of Forestry but I wanted to mention those four briefs as well, the Fire Brief, Land Use Brief, Research, and Regeneration. So what I started to ask you was your impressions of the Section as you became involved in it. Were you one of the founding members of the Rocky Mountain Section?

Loomis They were established by the time I got here in the province. Not positive about that, I think so.

Murphy It started in the late forties so it wouldn't have been far along before you came.

Loomis No.

Murphy And then did you get involved immediately on your arrival?

Loomis Well, because I had been a member of the CIF, you know, way back when I was a student at U.N.B.. But I was quite active in helping to prepare that Fire Brief. And, I had quite a lot to do, in fact probably the bigger, important part may have proposed the Land Use Brief. I don't remember just how that started, but I had a lot to do about that of course, because it was my great interest. The Research one I had, I wrote one paper about it. That's about all I took part in. And what was the other one?

Murphy The final was the Regeneration brief.

Loomis And that about the same way too. Yeah, although of those two, or when those two I didn't do too great a part in them.

Murphy Can you talk any more about the Fire Brief? That was interesting in that it brought together important people from the Alberta Forest Service, the Federal Forest Service and some of the industry people.

Loomis Yes. Well, you see at the time of the Fire Brief—a great effort was made by concerned people to improve the protection of the forest here. On that account, that brief was prepared. And a lot of people that felt very strongly about it had a lot of say about it too.

Murphy Were you able to involve any of the forest protection people from the Alberta Forest Service in putting it together?



Loomis Well, I'd have to say we tried, I think probably it was the time that Jack Janssen was head of the Protection Branch. It was pretty hard to get him to take an active part in anything like that. One thing, they didn't think the CIF was worth a damn, you know, a lot of people like Jack and even Eric Huestis didn't think too highly of the CIF.

Murphy It was a new organization.

Loomis Yeah, Eric just didn't seem to, he was a little bit reluctant to have people participate.

Murphy Yes, I think the fire problem was critical, and I think the CIF was trying to be critical in a positive way.

Loomis Yes, and I think it helped an awful lot, and the fact that the mill had been established at Hinton helped greatly in giving the authorities—the government—the idea that they should spend more money on the forest, particularly on fire protection.

Murphy As a participant in the briefs, and you were Section chairman one year as well, did you receive support from the provincial government for your activities there?

Loomis Well, we were allowed to attend the meetings. That's about all I can say, actually. I don't think that—Eric Huestis feeling that way he did and being where he was, you know, there wasn't too much—as I remember it there wasn't too much push from the government to participate or anything like that.

7.20 Relations with the Canadian Forest Service

Murphy We haven't talked about the role of the Canadian Forestry Service or the Federal Forestry Service and your interactions with them. In some respects, it's a sad history for them since they were in fact the managing agency in this province until 1930, and then with the Transfer of Resources became more of a research organization. As I understand it, their mandate was to conduct the research necessary for providing answers to your management problems. Would you comment on how you found them—how you were able to work with them.

Loomis Well, during the time, particularly the first part of the period that I was with the Alberta Forest Service, it seems that their work—to be applied was insignificant. The research work they were doing, didn't seem to be of a nature that a person could apply in the work that we were trying to do. Although, they were carrying on—I know that Des Crossley had a lot to do about the thinning of stands near Rocky Mountain House there—he showed me a stand that he helped thin. We didn't even know it was there. Most of us didn't.

Murphy That's surprising. He had a quarter section at Strachan in which he tried a number of cutting treatments in lodgepole pine—which was a remarkable experiment because it demonstrated how you could regenerate lodgepole pine through small clear cuts. And you were not involved?



- Loomis** And we were not involved in it, and didn't know about it until later years on a trip there—maybe we had a meeting somewhere near, maybe at Sundre, I don't know. And Des Crawsley took us in there and showed us what they were doing. They were probably doing damn good work, and we didn't know about it. It was lack of communication.
- Murphy** That's surprising to hear. Did you not have annual meetings to review research work and provincial problems?
- Loomis** No, no. You mean between the Federal Service and the Provincial Government?
- Murphy** Yes.
- Loomis** No. As I recall it, there were no meetings whatsoever, or no method that I know of to enlighten us or give us an insight of what they were doing. We had an idea, I think—I know that Mr. Huestis did—that they were working for nobody's benefit, you know, as far as the provincial government was concerned. We didn't know that they were doing work that could be applied.
- Murphy** And there was no mechanism then for you people to let them know what your management concerns were, and the problems you wanted to address?
- Loomis** No, we were so busy trying to get things started there we didn't have very much time for meetings. I know I mentioned certain things about regeneration that I thought we should see done on a research basis. And were informed later that it was already done by the Federal Forest Service. I never knew it was done. Now that may be a fault of mine. I don't know.
- Murphy** Yes, that could be judgemental, but it's an unfortunate situation that it evolved.
- Loomis** Yes.
- Murphy** I guess the other question that seems strange when that that since the CIF Rocky Mountain Section meetings were held with monthly or every two months where the Calgary contingent or the Edmonton contingent met in Red Deer, did those not provide opportunities?
- Loomis** It would have been a very good opportunity but somehow it wasn't brought up by them—I don't know why now.
- Murphy** And then you had meetings, surely, to discuss the federal-provincial agreement of the forest inventory program. But those discussions must have focussed pretty well on the inventory and not on anything else.
- Loomis** As I recall it—there wasn't any meetings that I can recall to do with the Canada Forestry Act. Is that what you're thinking about?
- Murphy** Yes.



Loomis No. Dick Candy was out here once. He came, and you know I knew him very well down east. He came to see me. We knew that there were certain things happening, but it didn't seem to be something we should be concerned about insofar as getting the forest inventory done. We were going to do it, and went ahead and did it. It seemed to be something voluntary on their part to help us pay for it.

Murphy I had thought that the CFS—Dominion people—monitored the progression of the inventory.

Loomis Oh! After we agreed to accept money from them, we had to submit reports to them—I had to prepare the darn reports—a lot of them—to satisfy them that we were doing the job right. Yes. That was after the thing was a cost-shared program—but what I was thinking of when I spoke prior, to say the leading up to the signing of the Forestry Agreement. But after it was signed, we knew that we were required to submit reports to them just how the money was spent.

Murphy And when you dealt with the CFS then during the monitoring stage of the inventory, were they pretty easy to get along with—were they easy to convince that what you were doing was right?

Loomis They seemed to be. Yes, they did. That's where I mentioned Dick Candy. Well that's what he was here for—to see, to look over what we were doing. Although it seemed to me that he was here when the paperwork was finished, you know he was here and was at the office there.

Murphy Finally Reg, on the subject of research, did you ever consider an Alberta Forest Service Research Branch or research capability?

Loomis No. No, never—it didn't occur. Well, we were too busy, I guess doing these other things but that didn't come into it at all. I don't think it was ever discussed at any meeting.

Murphy Well, that's interesting. So your initial focus was really on getting the job underway.

Loomis Yes, the idea was --we knew what we wanted and went ahead and did it. You know, those things about regeneration, I know, I thought were lacking and I think of some other things there. And then sometimes they said, 'Well, that's already done.'

7.21 Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board

Murphy The other major event in 1948 was the signing of a Federal-Provincial agreement concerning management of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, and it in fact set up the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board, which took over management of the old Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve—the three southern forests—the Crowsnest, Bow River and Clearwater. That agreement is still perplexing to me because the province at that time had to admit in essence, that it was a have-not province and unable to provide the level of protection and management to that east slope area that it was judged appropriate to give. It's particularly interesting in light of the present sensitivity of the province about federal and provincial jurisdictions—that in 1948 the province actually turned



administrative control of that area back to the federal government in return for their initial capital grant and the shared costs of operating. I wonder if you could shed any insights on how that came to be and then talk about how your dealings were with them as time went on and as eventually the Alberta Forest Service took over management in that area once again.

Loomis Well, some of the points that you brought up, Pete, I can answer and some I cannot. You see, the agreement as you pointed out was in 1948 or prior to, and that was all done before I came to the province, and I can't say just how it took place, or who participated in it or anything like that at all. It was after I got here that it seemed as though they wanted to stay apart, pretty much apart from us. Ted Fellows and some of the others there seemed to feel that they were quite capable of looking after the thing without us participating. When we were proposing the inventory, they wanted to be left out. They said that they would do their own. As it turned out, they didn't and we finally had to do it after they left. The whole thing was more or less like that all the time that they were active there. You know, we would meet them at CIF meetings—and Ted Fellows and the others—but that's about all I can say. And I know that Huestis felt strongly about the way they put the road in. You know, the Forestry Trunk Road—north and south road. He thought that there should be roads leading out to settlements, that they would be far more suitable, and maybe he was right. The road going north and south—I notice that they said something about that at the meeting in Whitecourt. And somebody kind of praised Huestis for it, but I was kind of surprised to hear that because I know that he was totally against the idea, about putting it the way they did. Sometimes, these things are not recorded as they actually are.

Murphy Well that agreement deserves more study. As the 60's came on I think the Alberta Forest Service gradually assumed more management control of the area, and they eventually took it all over.

Loomis Yeah, I think that's right too.

Murphy At that point then, did you apply the Alberta Forest Inventory to their areas?

Loomis Yes, we had the photographs taken for the area and then we, John Schalkwyk for instance, was working at Rocky, then we got him here to head up the inventory that we did do in the east slopes. We did that after—quite a long time after the rest. Same way with the park up north there, you know, Wood Buffalo. They never wanted to have us do anything about that when we were doing ours. They were going to do it. There's where Si Seely seemed to be at fault. He was going to do this, and he was going to do that, you know, and they would make a few maps and that would be the end of it. That was after I left Ottawa. You know, if it hadn't been for Si, I don't think the development and the application of aerial photographs to forestry would have been as good as it was. He did a lot. He's a darn good research fellow, but when it came to getting things done, it was a little bit different.



Murphy I just want to comment that I worked for Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board for about 5 months in the fall of 1955. That's where I went after leaving Forest Surveys Branch. And it was from there that I got back, and took over the Training Branch of the Forest Service. But I was astounded when I got there to find that there was not only no forest inventory and they weren't working on one, but they had no vertical aerial photographs of the area either. I was continually perplexed as to what their management mandate was. I know they did focus on the roads and they did put up some buildings and supply some fire equipment. They did improve the capability in forest protection and range management, but they certainly didn't address the forest management aspects.

Loomis I didn't realize that you had gone there. I should have remembered it.

Murphy Yes, I had the cruise party in the Clear Hills in the Peace River Forest, and then south of Grande Prairie with pack horses. I came out in August and went down to Calgary. At that time I was interested in range management, and I had some good sessions out there with Wally Hanson. He did an excellent job on range management, setting up their system.

Loomis Yeah, he was quite active.

7.22 Observations on Ministerial Support

Murphy On to another subject - in my review of the history of forestry in the province—it seems to be that the Ministers have had quite an influence on the direction in which forestry went, and as well an influence on how well various programs were supported. In your time with the Alberta Forest I think you were serving under four different Ministers. I wonder if you would care to comment how you found them and their perceptions of forestry and their levels of support of what you were doing. I think the first one was, Nathan Tanner who at that time was Minister both of Lands and Forests, and Mines and Minerals.

Loomis When I came here, he was, the Minister of—first they had them combined. He was the Minister. That was before me. And then after I came here he was Minister of both Mines and Minerals, and Lands and Forests. And, I didn't have very much to do with him, naturally, with the position I held. But he didn't seem to be objectionable, you know—he didn't seem to object to what we were trying to do. He was very, very slow of course, in getting money for fire protection, but he was not bad, I thought.

Murphy And then when he left...the next one was Ivan Casey, then.

Loomis Ivan Casey, I found him different than Huey did, you know, he didn't think he was—he was easy going and he'd come around and see you, you know, and come in and talk.

Murphy He would actually come down to your office?



- Loomis** Yes, and I had a trip with him once. Somewhere I had to go, and he was going the same way. He was attending a meeting at the coast and I rode with him from that meeting into Victoria. I had a chance to talk to him. I thought he was alright. But, as a Minister of Lands and Forests, I'm kind of vague in remembering—Mr. Huestis felt he wasn't active enough, or wasn't pushy enough to get things done. Probably, he might have been right.
- Murphy** Yes. The budgets, the budget levels suggest he wasn't the most aggressive Minister.
- Loomis** And Willmore, Huestis thought quite a lot of him. And I didn't have very much to do with him. And I was sort of indifferent to him.
- Murphy** That's interesting, because I think under his leadership, or during that time anyhow, that the Forest Service made tremendous strides.
- Loomis** Yes. As I say, I think Huestis thought quite a lot of him. But some of these things which I said were held up were on account of him.
- Murphy** That's interesting—what—the Quota for example?
- Loomis** It was the quota. At first it was in his hands and then—but it went through when Ruste was there because he felt quite unsure of himself as far as his knowledge of forestry was concerned, and he depended on us, rightly so, to tell him what was right and what was wrong.
- Murphy** Huestis found that as well. He commented about Henry Ruste that through a combination of his understanding of growing and harvesting things—that was good—but he was largely ignorant to the forestry scene itself and relied heavily on you to advise him.
- Loomis** -- and admitted so—I thought he was alright. It was always Huestis, or the Deputy Minister that had more to do with the Ministers than I did. I didn't have much to do with them except trying to get things through, and I knew I had to go through them. But as far as contact, there was very, very little of it.
- Murphy** Then you mentioned that you had gone by the time Donovan Ross became Minister but you had some meetings with him when he was Minister of Health. And do I understand correctly that he had been raised in a logging family?
- Loomis** Yes, he was associated or related to the Rosses that had the Grande Prairie Lumber Company.
- Murphy** I understand that he was difficult in some respects because he was too quick to form his own judgements.
- Loomis** Yes. You see, at the time I was going to retire - I was supposed to retire January 6, 1969, but prior to that our head of personnel there suggested that I should have them participate in the money that I'd earned when I'd worked in Ottawa. I had 13 years years there, then I had four years with private



industry. And because I had the four years with private industry, that was cut off because of the way regulations were. Anyway, he suggested that they acknowledge that I had those 13 years and it was through Ross and some others that they managed to get that through and they kept me on until May in order to get the regulations changed and effective so that I could use those years. I had to pay a large sum of money to have those 13 years included in my pension but it was worth it. Ross was very, very good there. That's why I wanted to mention it.

Tape 4: 4 November 1989

8. Recap and Further Thoughts

Murphy This is the fourth of November 1989, and I'm with Reg Loomis again, at his home near Onoway on Sandy Lake. How are you doing today, Reg?

Loomis I am doing fine, thank you.

Murphy Reg, just to recap a bit—in the interviews over the last few years...and it is astounding how long it has gone on! We talked about how you came to Alberta in 1949 to take responsibility for doing the forest inventory, and once you got the Photographic Surveys Corporation straightened out you went on and arranged to do the northern half of the province on your own, and combined both inventories. Then as the inventory data began coming in you were able to do some temporary cutting control plans until you could get forest management plans developed. You set up forest management units, and on the way the first pulp mill development at Hinton—the one for Northwestern Pulp and Power—was one in which you became involved. In fact, as you commented, you laid out their original area, did the initial inventory for them and got them started from the forest management planning standpoint. Then, with that under your belt, you saw that there was a need to rationalize the allocation of timber harvesting rights in the province to make sure that harvesting was in balance with growth, which led to the Quota system. That, in turn, led to your interest and concerns about silviculture and forest renewal, and about integrated land uses. This caused you to set up a Land Use unit in your shop to look after other concerns such as watershed, which I know was one of your prime ones, and reclamation and grazing, and some of the wildlife interactions. Then as the volumes and locations of timber became clear, as I understand, that you developed the concept of the Timber Development Area, all of which pretty well laid the groundwork for the forestry developments which we are seeing today.

Reg, with that very broad brush overview this afternoon, what I'd like is if you could comment first on some of the thinking that you had very early in the game, and then perhaps you could talk about how you see things now—to reflect on what you might have done differently had you to do it over again. We will wind up by talking about how you feel about the present developments. Perhaps we



could start with your comments on the inventory itself as you arrived. When you began, Reg, I think you commented that the idea was to try to locate timber for industry as part of the exercise.

Loomis Well, the idea of the Director of Forestry in getting the forest inventory started was that he had received a lot of requests for possible locations of putting mills in. Well, there weren't even planimetric maps in the province except a few areas that the federal government had done here and there which were really good. There were no maps at all, and the oil companies were also pretty anxious to get the province mapped in order for them to properly lay out their own plans.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis And for those two purposes—that was the reason for the forest inventory at the start. As far as I know, the Director's idea was that would be the main objective of having the inventory finished. My thought was—and my background probably gave me that—working down east—that showed the inventory was the most important part to future- manage the forest in a proper manner. And in order to do so, you had to divide the area into units which we called Management units. The management units were in accordance to the Forest Divisions like Peace River, Grande Prairie, Slave Lake, Lac La Biche, Whitecourt, and so on. All the management units were identified by a prefix that indicated that they were located in certain Divisions.

Murphy They are called Forests now.

Loomis Yes. My thought was that one of the important roles of the forest in an area was to safeguard the watersheds. I always felt that the forest delayed the runoffs by precipitation seeping in, and so on. So what I asked the people doing the forest inventory—Photographic Survey Corporation—I asked them to make up the management units by watersheds. And they did do that, and they made the volume calculations - by those units. But we found that after we had received them, some of the management units—because they were tied in with the watersheds—were not feasible because some of the rivers were too short. They didn't go back inland far enough, so we had to revamp a lot of the management units and recalculate the volumes. Now that part of the inventory that was done by Photographic Survey and that was I think the area south of the 57th parallel except the area that was administered by the Eastern Rockies.

Murphy Yes. The Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board.

Loomis They took quite a while to get that done on their own.

Murphy Yes, that's another story.

Loomis Well, anyway that was a thought that I thought seemed to work out very well.

Murphy Yes, I think that system has pretty well been maintained.



Loomis Yes. That same idea, although I don't know what has happened since these large organizations have got grants.

Murphy The original allocations to them are based essentially on those same management units that you had laid out...

Loomis They are?

Murphy Yes. Once they developed their own forest management plans they may change the boundaries within the FMA as they do their own inventories.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy But they certainly achieved the purpose that you had in mind.

Loomis Well, that's good.

8.1 Clearcutting versus Partial Cutting

Murphy You had explained earlier, Reg, about your interesting involvement in setting up the first Forest Management Lease area for the then Northwestern Pulp and Power Ltd. at Hinton—how at their request and with the agreement of the Forest Service you developed the area and the inventory, and the prototype management plan, and then they hired Des Crossley as Chief Forester, and you two worked in your respective positions. But you had some interesting comments on the method of harvesting there, Reg. Could you elaborate on that?

Loomis Back when we started—that would be back in 1954-55, the St. Regis people decided to join with Ruben to establish the mill at Hinton. And it was our job then to try to set up a satisfactory cutting method—working plans—that would be acceptable to us and to the company. At that time our idea of methods of cutting were quite different than actually what was put into practice. Actually, the company was strongly against what we were trying to get them to do. When I say "we" I meant Charlie Jackson who was assistant to me. What we tried to do is—we thought the proper way to handle the forest is to cut selectively, and of course economically the company thought that was not feasible at all. We finally compromised with them, and agreed to have them cut in small areas and still tied to safeguard the watershed.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis And it started out that way with - - I just forget the size of the blocks to be cut—but the whole idea was to cut a block of sufficient size to allow, if possible, the adjacent trees that were not cut of the same age to seed these cut areas. Then if the seed didn't get established that way they were to regenerate it by seeding or planting.

Murphy Yes.



- Loomis** The seeding worked pretty well, but in certain areas there the wind—you know like certain areas just outside of the park on that flat area.
- Murphy** Yes. The Camp 2 area.
- Loomis** The wind would channel through the cuts on the hill there and it would blow some of these stands down.
- Murphy** Yes.
- Loomis** As time went on these cut areas got a little larger, on account of the company thinking it wasn't feasible to do it the way we wanted.
- Murphy** Yes. When I came on the scene I think you were looking at strips of 10-15 chains in width and probably intervening strips about the same size.
- Loomis** Yes. I think, if I remember rightly, the uncut area would be more or less the same size, so after the standing trees seeded down the cut areas, it would be feasible to cut the residuals.
- Murphy** Yes.
- Loomis** The residual stands.
- Murphy** Yes. I think you were looking at about a 50% volume removal on the first pass.
- Loomis** Right. I think that's right.
- Murphy** Yes. But your first preference was a partial harvesting system—but you were prevailed on to go to smaller clear cuts.
- Loomis** Yes. Well, my idea then, and I think as time goes on it has become more accentuated in my own mind, that whatever we do with natural things—we should do just as close as natural as possible.
- I have said previously that my ideas never have seemed to come out right when expressing verbally my points of view. Hence the following is expressed on paper because I feel the ideas are worth recording. The forested areas or lands are, as everybody knows, publicly owned in this province. Therefore the protective, recreational and productive aspects of our forested lands should be based to the larger extent on the principle of endurance, security, and of course, beauty. Good management, in its true sense then, should be obligated not only to the economics of a situation but also to the biological and psychological aspects in so far as humans are concerned. This then boils down to what I have been speaking about previously—naturalistic forestry or silviculture. This is based on the principle that in the long run a forested area can only satisfy the economic aspects and other human requirements when the interrelationship between stand, site, the entire plant and animal aspects are in harmony. This interrelationship can be in that state, i.e. harmonious, if it can be maintained for a long time without human interference or help, call it what you wish, and of



course if the site qualities can be continuously preserved. This, I am sure you will agree, cannot be with clear cutting and the use of giant machinery in the woods. Defining good forestry or silviculture as above, means emphasizing the ecology with a full knowledge of the ecology of a particular forest. Approaching a forest in this manner, i.e. applying it, I am sure there would be a constant and probably an increase in yield. The practice of such forestry or silviculture could be and I hope still can be found in certain locations of Europe.

This is actually the basis of my desire to partial or selectively cut stands. It can be done economically with the use of trained people and not large machines if the wish was actually there.³

Murphy So in the spruce particularly then, you would see maintaining an uneven aged configuration.

Loomis You see in the pine, of course,—much of the pine stands were established from burns.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis They were pretty even aged.

Murphy Yes. So you would have to treat those differently?

Loomis Yes. But I think that even those stands should be changed as soon as possible to an uneven age. Now how that would be fitted in economically, I don't know.

Murphy Yes. There would be concern about getting pine to regenerate under shade, too.

Loomis Well, I don't—I don't think that's possible. I think that probably they'd have to be more patchy.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis Much more patchy, for pine. If you wanted pine.

8.2 Concerns Over Industry Expansion, Environmental Impacts, and AAC

Murphy Yes. I realize you have many concerns about the present Reg. Some concerns and reservations so I would invite you at this point to let us know what they are.

Loomis Yes. I am really very much concerned with the type of developments being planned for the forested areas in this province right now. I don't think that—I absolutely think that it is not right to establish as many pulp mills as are being established.

Murphy Why would you say that Reg?

Loomis There are two reasons as I see it. One is, of course, the pollution. The water pollution. As far as the air goes I don't know if the air is polluted to the extent that it would do too much harm. But

³This section was added in written form after the interview.



certainly I can realize that the dioxins and so on that are dumped into the rivers is absolutely wrong. Second, and the main reason, probably, against the establishment of pulp mills is that no matter what method of cutting that is being done now is wrong. That's using mammoth machines in the bush—where in order to make it feasible economically the clear cuts have to be very large. I don't think that the regenerating of these areas to an even-age stand is too sound either. I think that the—I want to get the words right here. The ecology has got to be well known—should be well known—before we drastically understand or try to change the way the trees are grown naturally. There has got to be a tie-in there very, very closely. I worked in Ontario before I came here, and I worked in the Maritimes before I came here, and in Manitoba. But particularly in Ontario they have overcut—it is such that the forests are not there now—not the way they should be to make the industry a continuous operation.

Murphy What was the main thing done wrong, Reg,—in Ontario—do you think.

Loomis Of course, down there they didn't pay attention to regeneration when I was there. But even so they were overcutting—evidently—too much so to sustain the forests in a healthy proper manner. We are doing the same damn thing here with establishing these large mills. Because they are going to produce a heck of a lot of materials from those mills, and that material has to come out and leave the woods forever. And that means a tremendous volume, each year, of wood leaving the wooded areas and not returned in order to do so they have got to clearcut with these large machines, and ecologically I think it is absolutely wrong.

Murphy Do you think that the volumes to be removed are greater than sustainable volumes? The allowable cut figures seem to suggest that those volumes could be maintained.

Loomis Well they say not. But frankly, I think they have overestimated the sustainable yield of the forested areas in this province.

Murphy That would be very unfortunate if it was the case.

Loomis Yes. With the background that I have—you know I haven't looked into the inventory they've finished—but I think that the yields they have worked out, i.e. the sustainable yield, is way too high.

Murphy So your concerns then on the forestry supply side is that there is a concern that the volumes being cut are not sustainable - that they're too high.

Loomis Yes.

Murphy Then you are concerned about...

Loomis I am particularly concerned with the coniferous. The poplar - well nobody knows very much about it and that little write-up there (Globe and Mail) seemed to—whatever wrote that seems to know quite a lot about the ability to use the poplars, *balsamifera* and particularly the aspen are the—I



can't say very much about the sustainability of the poplar stands except that I don't think that clearcutting, even there, is proper.

8.3 Clearcutting, Fire and Selective Harvest

Murphy It has been argued Reg, that clearcutting is essentially what nature has done through forest fires which were very common in those northern boreal forests for many years. How would you see that different than the large scale harvesting that is proposed?

Loomis Well I think that the large burns of the past were not—were unnatural. I don't think that that is the way that our forests were established in the first place.

Murphy Why would you say they were unnatural? I am not arguing with you—but I'm trying you out here.

Loomis You know I have got a very very good example, which I brought out many times before in this interview, of the type of cutting that I would like to see done. It's small, comparatively. I was born and brought up on a farm down in the Eastern Townships of Quebec as I explained. The old farm that I was born on was owned by my great-grandfather. It became a Loomis farm in 1842. There was one chunk of it—it was 200 acres of land area that the farm was. I don't know for sure, but I think there was an area of about 25 acres that was left in a natural forest. It was low-lying land. It wasn't all flat—it was kind of rolling country. When my great-grandfather took it over, he must have known a little bit about what should be done with a forested area. Because, according to my father, the area was very much like it was when he first saw it. In my time—way back the barns on the old farm burned. It was a big fire, and every damn thing burned except the house. The house I was residing in—and it would have gone too if it hadn't been for the neighbors getting up there with lots of water and blankets and things. It was only about 14 feet from the last building that burned. Anyway we had to rebuild that. I left my job and went home and helped. We got logs out of the 25 acres that was standing. We picked the mature, mostly coniferous trees—selectively—and they were cut and hauled to a mill and sawed, and my father built a barn that was 100 feet by 40 feet.

Murphy It was a good sized barn.

Loomis Yes. It was 2-storeys. The lower storey was for the cattle and the upper storey—down there they always stored all their grain and hay and everything else in the upper storey. It was built in such a way that there were no beams in it. But anyway that was one thing. Then after that, of course it cost quite a little bit in addition to the board and things, to build this damn thing. My father had to take a mortgage on the farm. After Elva and I were married—that must have been the mid-30's—I went home at Christmas and father said, "I am going to lose the old place. I haven't been able to pay the interest." So I saw this fellow that had the mortgage and he agreed if I provided the interest by spring, he wouldn't foreclose. So we went into this little area again, and we cut trees—all mature, coniferous too—hauled them—sold them to the nearby sawmill.



Murphy Yes.

Loomis And I managed to straighten that thing out there before I left. So that was twice that I know of that there was a heavy cut. And the last I knew that 25 acres was just as much—like it was when my great-grandfather had it. So you could sustain an area with various ages, and various species in the same area. Yes as explained previously, naturalistic forestry.

8.4 Implementing Selective Harvest in Alberta: 1960s

Murphy Yes. That story Reg, reminded me of the work that you did in the 1960's which led to tree marking and tree scaling—which was a neat concept designed for partial removal of volumes in spruce, as well as scaling at the same time to try to encourage as full utilization as possible of the standing trees. Do you want to talk about that a little bit—your idea of it, then to comment on why the practice was phased out over time?

Loomis Well, probably there has been enough said to indicate that I think that we should try to follow a naturalistic way as much as possible in handling of the forest—forestry. When I came here, there was very little thought of regenerating the areas that were cut. The only restriction at that time, as I remember, was the size that...

Murphy ...stump diameter limit.

Loomis The timber auctioned off or by tender—public auction—had a restriction on the size of the stump diameter of the trees. There were no other restrictions, and it is very possible when people went in to cut there might be areas that were all above the diameter of the limit and those would be all clearcut.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis Then there would be other areas where the diameter wasn't up to that, there was nothing at all. So with that thought of trying to even things out, we got the idea of getting some of the operators to mark the tree to be cut—and it didn't matter whether the diameter was small or large if the location of the trees being cut were such that they didn't leave a clear cut. That was mainly the objective or the object.

Murphy You were looking for an even distribution of trees.

Loomis Yes—not necessarily cut one place or no cut at all in other places. We did a lot of that up around Slave Lake there, as you know, most east of Slave Lake, north of the Slave River.

Murphy And I believe some along the Athabasca.

Loomis And along the Athabasca. Yes. I spent a lot of time, and in fact, I got fellows who were working in Forest Surveys to go up there and mark.



Murphy Yes, and you made good tree markers out of them.

Loomis Eric Huestis didn't like the idea.

Murphy My recollection is that those stands responded quite well. I don't believe there was a great deal of blowdown as a result of those operations.

Loomis No. I could almost guarantee that there wasn't any blowdown. That was another purpose of cutting that way so there would not be large openings that it wouldn't let the wind in. I don't think...I don't remember any place there where Stelter worked that there was blowdown. Now I have often wondered how it looks now. I have never been back there.

Murphy You haven't been back. It would be interesting to see how they responded. Why do you think that system wasn't maintained?

Loomis It is kind of difficult to give a reason for it not being continued. Certainly, after I became in charge of the Forest Management Branch we didn't do any of that. I don't know. I can't remember now. There was a reason why.

Murphy It was more manpower intensive to do things that way. I don't know if that was a limitation or not.

Loomis See, we even got Stelter to hire fellows to mark there.

Murphy I was at Hinton at that time, and I remember we put on several courses for tree markers. It was impressive to see how quickly they could adapt to marking for a 40% volume removal.

Loomis Yes. 40%. I kind of forgot that was the guideline.

8.5 Use of Herbicides

Murphy Well, Reg let's move on to another topic about which I know you feel very strongly. One of the problems of regenerating spruce is to try to get it to survive that first 5-10 years through competition from grass and forbs, and sometimes aspen suckering. One of the approaches suggested would be to use herbicides to give it an initial start, but I understand you have some concerns about that.

Loomis Yes. I think a lot of people are unnecessarily concerned about the coniferous undergrowth in stands that are predominantly deciduous. I've travelled a lot through the areas that have been established naturally, and I've seen an awful lot of coniferous trees that are understory—just established—and I actually can't recall where the undergrowth or the grass, and I've been around enough here to know—that I don't think you need to worry. I really don't think you need to worry about competition. If release had to be done then I think it should be done manually. If it had to be done.

Murphy Yes.



- Loomis** But I really don't think it is necessary to. I am just thinking of white spruce. I don't think that there is too much worry. It will survive. It probably will be a little slower maybe. I know that is one of the factors that people use who want to use herbicides. They think that the growth would not be delayed as much. But I don't think that matters very much.
- Murphy** What is your major concern about herbicides? Why not use herbicides?
- Loomis** Because I do not think that the herbicides are selective. Just because people apply it to kill broad-leaf trees—deciduous I am thinking of—I don't think that the effects from the herbicides will stop there.
- Murphy** You don't think they would.
- Loomis** I don't think it does. I think it has—I spent a lot of time thinking about this and reading about it and a herbicide affects cells—whether the cells are human or in a tree growth. The cells in your body and in my body and a tree body act much the same. I think that the effect of a herbicide is a killing—the whole idea is to kill or retard in some way the growth or the cell's natural functions. I have written quite a little bit about it, and I don't know if I can remember it all. But, you see a cell has to perform a certain way, as far as I can gather, that cell or a cell performs much the same way in any body. And a herbicide's purpose is to kill or distort the growth of cells. I don't think it stops at the species that it is aimed for.
- Murphy** The term "selective herbicides" is used, but you don't...
- Loomis** I think that is meaningless actually.
- Murphy** So in your view, of if we were managing for spruce, and we wanted to encourage spruce regeneration, we should handle harvesting in a different way?
- Loomis** I think that spruce—and I have grown a lot of them here too—and I don't think you have to worry about them at all. We've got quite a little bush land here. You can see spruce coming in on deciduous stands in a very natural way. You know, travelling all through the country you see the same thing - in all through the bush. The wooded areas in the province, they act as much the same.
- Murphy** Reg, I understood from Elva that several months ago you got a quantity of spruce seedlings from the nursery, and you planted them all. How many were there?
- Loomis** 500.
- Murphy** 500. They were all spruce? How did you prepare the site for them and where did you plant them?
- Loomis** Actually all I did you see is...that area back here where I planted Scots pine. I got the Scots pine all the way from Pennsylvania. I know that a lot of people say that they wouldn't grow here but they do.



Murphy They do.

Loomis All you've got to do is look outside there and you can see them. The gol-darned deer, rabbits and some mice girdled a tremendous amount of them. As you go by you will see where I planted—on the left-hand side when you go out just down here.

Murphy Yes.

Loomis But all I did was cut a hole where I thought the tree should go in, and I planted them. They are all alive - well, there are three or four of them that didn't make it.

Murphy Are they bare root seedlings?

Loomis They were bare root seedlings.

Murphy And you planted them in the grass.

Loomis In grass. Yes.

Murphy How big a hole did you make for them.

Loomis Well, it would be kind of hard to judge, but I made the hole large enough so that the roots would sit down. I didn't spread them out at all. I just set them in there so that they weren't too cramped.

Murphy So your hands indicate the hole was probably about one foot in diameter?

Loomis Yes, that would be about a foot.

Murphy And no herbicides?

Loomis And no herbicides. Absolutely no herbicides. The power company has a line that goes in here, and when they came here they decided to send it on down to this development over here at Sunrise beach. And they were worried about the brush that was growing in underneath. I told them quite a while ago that if they wanted that brush removed out of there I would do it by hand myself. I didn't have to because they sent somebody in to do it.

Murphy Oh, they did. But they did do it by hand and not with herbicides?

Loomis They did do it by hand. Not long ago - just this summer - they came here you know. They wanted to get the brush out all around the County here. I said, "Well, you're not going to use any herbicides around here." I said, "If you want stuff removed, I'll remove it." And I have done. You can plough the damn stuff in actually. It is not too high, about six feet maybe. A lot of it willow, and I've got a big breaking plow there and an old tractor. It turns the stuff over quite naturally.



8.6 Final Thoughts

- Murphy** Reg, I think that's about the extent of the questions that I had. Is there anything else that you would like to say?
- Loomis** Except that I repeat that I am really worried about the province allowing so many pulp mills to become established in the province here. I think that's absolutely wrong. You know, it's not only us in this province that has to be considered. I think that our forested area here is just as important as a lot of the areas on this planet. I think that those that are emphasizing that part of it are correct.
- Murphy** Well Reg, in conclusion let me say thank you. Thank you for your patience in doing these interviews. I think that what you have to say is important and we need to have it on the record. But personally I want to thank you for getting forestry off in initial days, off to such a darn good start. You are widely recognized here as essentially the father of forestry. We appreciate you doing that for us.
- Loomis** Well, Pete I thank you very much of course, but it was not only me.
- Murphy** Somebody had to lead, and you did.
- Loomis** There were a lot of people that were really as concerned and interested in establishing good forestry here as I was.
- Murphy** I agree.
- Loomis** The thing that I feel, at times, the way things are going right now, that maybe our work was in vain.
- Murphy** We'll hope not. We will have to work hard to make it right. Thanks Reg.