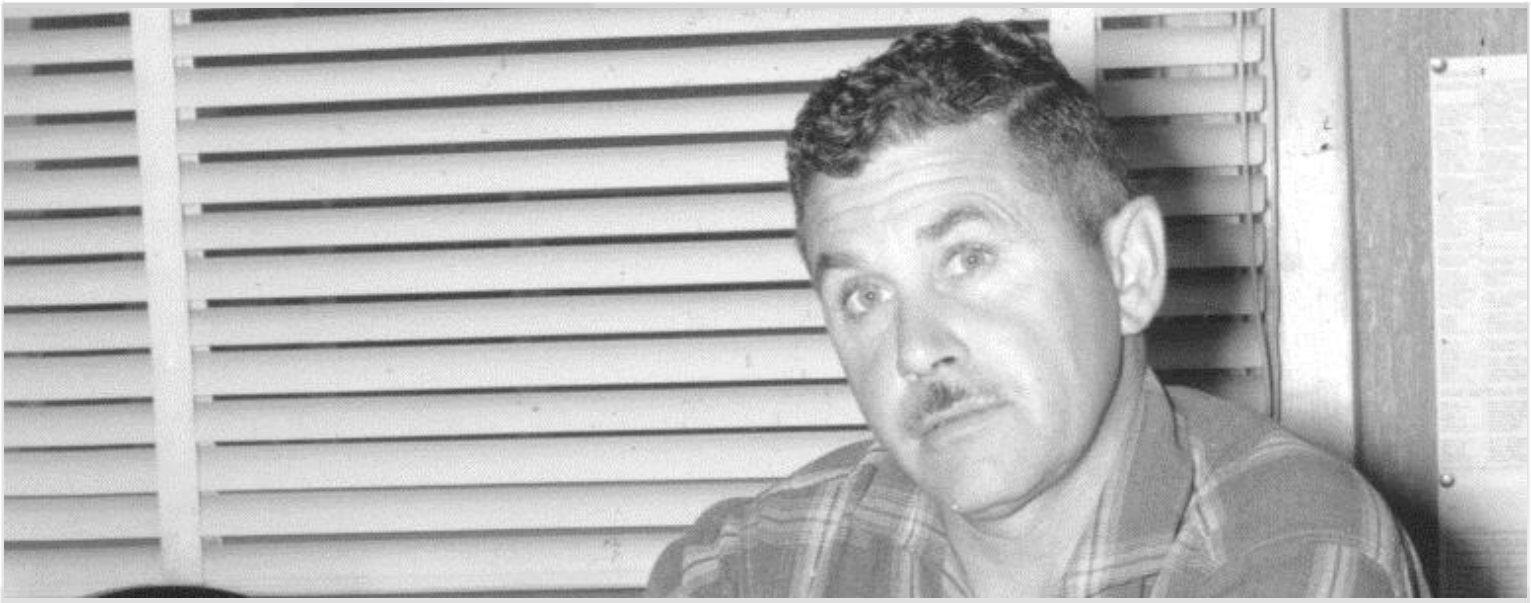

Memoir

Forester: A Memoir by James D Clark

Woodlands Manager

Edited By
Jack Wright | Bob Udell | Peter J Murphy

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Photo credit: Weldwood Collection

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

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Foreword

Jim Clark's career at Hinton started in 1955, as assistant chief forester. In 1966, he was assistant woodlands manager to Stan Hart, when he resigned to become woods manager for the new pulpmill being developed in Prince Albert Saskatchewan by Parsons and Whittemore. When Stan Hart left Hinton in 1968 to return to a St. Regis operation in Maine, Jim Clark was hired back to replace him as woodlands manager, where he remained until he retired in 1985.

Among his other accomplishments, he served terms as president of the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF), as well as the Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA). He is also credited with providing the inspiration as well as the organizational resources to design and implement a forestry/wildlife program at the Hinton forest, the first such industrial program in Alberta.

Jim Clark began to write this story in 1994 with the intention to produce a novel but it soon became a memoir, as he describes in the Epilogue. In 1997, Peter Murphy interviewed Jim at his home in Hinton, adding background to many of the events and clarifying details which we have used to enhance and clarify details in the memoir where appropriate. The interview reflects his first-hand observations of early days of the Hinton operation.

Former Chief Forester Jack Wright also reviewed the memoir to correct some of the historical details and the names of people involved. His view was that in the main, Mr. Clark's recollection of events was clear and in many ways enlightening. We also corrected a few names and dates as a result of our research in preparing the Weldwood Historical Timeline. Mr. Clark's discussion of his time in Prince Albert as well as other international consulting projects, are included as he reported them.

Weldwood of Canada purchased the manuscript from Mr. Clark, and the memoir, with rights to it, was turned over to the Adaptive Forest Management/History program of fRI Research, formerly the Foothills Model Forest. After careful review, the program decided to adapt the memoir into a report for the Forest History Series of fRI Research.

Jim Clark died on August 13, 2007. Unfortunately, he had not been able to review and comment on this edited version of his memoir, but we have tried to maintain its integrity, with only those revisions deemed essential. We do know that it was his hope to see this memoir published and it is our pleasure to do so. Jim Clark was also a talented artist and we have included some of his sketches from early days in Hinton to illustrate the memoir.

The views and statements, events and descriptions contained in this report are those of the author, and should not be construed as statements or conclusions of, or as expressing the opinions or views of fRI Research or its partners or sponsors. Nor can fRI Research express any opinion as to their accuracy.

Robert Udell and Peter Murphy, 2015.

Chapter 1: Frank Ruben's Dream

Alberta's Untapped Forest Potential in the 1950s

The subalpine and montane forests of Alberta are prominent as a biological mass occupying a wedge-shaped land area on a south to north orientation along the western foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The southern tip of the wedge is the Bow River valley west of the City of Calgary. The northern apex of the triangle is the Grande Prairie-Dawson Creek highway and the eastern

closure of the wedge is near Sturgeon Lake. To the north and east of this approximately-defined land area is the boreal forest of the province which occupies ten times the land mass as that contained in the subalpine-montane forests.

The foothills forest areas of Alberta are characterized by spectacular scenery back-dropped in the west by the Rocky Mountains. Numerous water courses originate from snow and ice melt of major and minor glaciers. The water runoff follows an eastward pattern of high elevation minor valleys exiting eventually into major valleys of glacier or water-erosion creation.

The forest species of the foothills areas predominate in lodgepole pine, white, Engelmann and black spruces, minor occurrences of balsam and alpine firs and occasionally pockets of interior, dry-belt Douglas-fir. Some wet-site tamarack or eastern larch occurs; western and alpine larch in limited distribution is found. These needle-bearing coniferous species compete for growing space with the leaf-foliaged deciduous tree cover in the foothills area; trembling aspen, balsam poplar and minor occurrences of cottonwood along water course sites, are the major deciduous species of the genus *Populus* that occur in the subalpine forests. Poplar species rarely grow in the foothills' forests above 4,500 feet elevation.

Lodgepole pine is the common name for *Pinus contorta*; it derived its name from its traditional use as poles for the aboriginal peoples' tents, called teepees. Today, the species is heavily used to manufacture railroad ties, lumber and pulp. The spruces of the foothills forest have historically been used for lumber and wood pulp manufacture although in current times spruce woods are used to make pianos, guitars, and veneer for aircraft like the Mosquito night bomber. The fir species' wood is used to make lumber and wood pulp, while seedlings of the firs become Christmas trees grown on tree farms. The wood of the larches is used to make lumber, wood pulp and tannin extract used in curing or tanning leather. Tannin extraction is not done in Alberta.

The forests of western Alberta have one remarkably delightful attribute that makes them attractive to the outdoor aficionado; the forest understory is free of low ground vegetation which makes walking a remembered experience likened to sauntering in a park. Even in winter with snow covering the forests, one can walk, snowshoe or cross-country ski through the trees with relative ease. In early June each year these forests provide a spectacular exhibit of biological wonder when the pollen of the pine species' flowers is wafted by the wind into huge yellow clouds that move upward from each valley and cascade over the ridge tops to spiral high into the sky like visible updrafts of wind. In the cold, depressing, bone-chilling days of deep winter the land of the forests can be brightened and blighted by the occurrence of a chinook wind. It will suddenly and dramatically caress every valley and rock face and push the atmospheric temperature upward so that a forty degree change can be experienced in a two-hour interval. For the fauna of the forest, including man, this sudden relief from the extreme cold is a temporary blessing that may last five to ten days. But it can be a biological blight to the forest trees. The high temperatures may cause them to begin the process of transpiration which results in water movement in the needles of the coniferous trees. A sudden, extreme cold spell can then cause the water in the needle cells to freeze and expand. This occurrence ruptures the cells and essentially kills the needles. With the warming temperatures in spring, the damaged needles will evidence their destruction by turning a brilliant rusty-red which shows itself as patches of red foliage throughout a normal green forest.

In 1950, the foothills forest area triangle in the Bow River valley southern terminus, the Grande Prairie northern limit and the Sturgeon Lake eastern apex was only lightly populated and little used for resource extraction. Highways pierced the area from Calgary to Banff in the south, from Edmonton to Jasper in the midriff and from Slave Lake to Grande Prairie to Dawson Creek on the north. The Banff-Jasper highway was a narrow gravelled road. The current Forestry Trunk Road from the Calgary-Banff highway north to Nordegg and then to Hinton had not been built; Highway 40 from west of Hinton to Muskeg and to Grande Cache was a dirt resources road in 1955 built by an oil company. Its extension north to Goodwin on the Valleyview-Grande Prairie highway was only finished by the forest and petroleum industries in the 1960's.

The "Foothills Triangle" was beginning to interest the petroleum industry in the period 1954–1956, and seismic testing of the geologic formations began. Because of the area's remoteness, the programs of seismic line clearing with bulldozers and geology-formation testing by sonic recordings was a difficult and costly business.

An Alberta Entrepreneur Takes Notice

The "Triangle" area to the south and north of Highway 16, the highway connecting Edmonton with Jasper began to interest a Calgary entrepreneur, Frank Ruben, who had recently purchased the decommissioned coal mine at Robb. Ruben was a true entrepreneur, a financial gambler who had developed bat guano caves in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River in Arizona, USA, for the production of fertilizer. His mining operation of the bat droppings used a cableway across the Grand Canyon between the caves and the transport loadout point. It was a successful and profitable business until a U.S. military aircraft crashed into the cableway and terminated the mining operation.

Frank Ruben turned his interest to the forest area adjacent to Highway 16 between Jasper National Park and Edson, Alberta. Visiting his newly-purchased coal mine and holdings at Robb, he was struck by the potential of the forests in the area. He asked the staff of the Alberta Forest Service at Edson in 1950 to designate on a map an area of forest large enough to support a 400-ton per day pulpmill in Edson. He envisaged the pulpmill as a market for the coal from his Robb mine, firing the mill boilers. The Forest Service staff promptly produced an area estimate outlined on a map which indicated about 3000 square miles of forest would be required.

Mr. Ruben then sought a joint venture partner for the new pulpmill enterprise from among some 56 pulp and paper companies in Canada and the United States.

The Joint Venture

In 1954, after four years of dogged pursuit of a dream, he found a New York company – the St. Regis Paper Company - willing to investigate the forest area and the idea of a joint venture with a Canadian partner. The partners approached the Alberta government in early 1954 with a proposition to build a pulpmill in the Edson area. The forest allocation would radiate around Edson, the water supply for the pulpmill would come from the McLeod River, and the mill would be built at the western edge of the town.

The proposal was immediately assigned high priority by the Alberta Forest Service and the proponents. Industry staff from the United States were assigned to the project to confirm key elements of water supply, forest resource, community choice and labour location.

Local interest and speculation in Edson was high, however the McLeod River water supply was soon determined to be inadequate for a long-term, expanded-production pulpmill. An alternate pulpmill location was required. The Athabasca River was the only alternate water supply with adequate volume. No millsite could be found on the Athabasca in proximity to Edson; the final location choice was made at Drinnan-Hinton, fifty (50) miles west of Edson. There was a resident population of two hundred and fifty people in Drinnan-Hinton, with one hotel, one gas station, a one-room log-construction post office, a grocery store, a two-room school with one principal and one teacher - the principal's wife, and a 40-seat Catholic church. There was a Canadian National Railway station on the mainline track but passengers and freight were loaded-unloaded ten (10) miles west at the Entrance platform. The highway west from Edson to Hinton and then to Jasper was a gravelled road which paralleled the Athabasca River past a cattle ranch as the first habitation indicator of Drinnan-Hinton. The "highway" continued past a weary café, on the bank of Hardisty Creek, which was a major supply of drinking water. It then passed a ten-cottage, summer-use-only motel and climbed a steep hill to cross the CNR tracks. It angled west parallel to the railroad tracks past a gas station, repair

garage and a hotel, all on the left as one travelled west. The non-functional, CNR station was opposite the hotel across the highway. The view of the Rocky Mountains was the spectacular compensation, at this point on the highway, that uplifted one's mind and heart from the solitude and visual depression of the community of Drinnan-Hinton.

Eventually, one even learned the reason for the hyphenated community name. Drinnan was a coal mine site east of the hotel where the Scottish miners had worked. Hinton was the location of a coal mine, on the south edge of the community, where the Italian miners worked. The hotel in Drinnan-Hinton was the arena where the two ethnic groups of miners fought pitched battles each Saturday night, just for the hell of it.

The Hinton Hotel, 1950s. Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection

The decision to change the location of the pulpmill to Drinnan-Hinton was a major cost and logistics consideration; it required the creation of a new town in the short period of time of two years. Temporary accommodation for Company employees would be required immediately. A construction worker camp would also be needed in early 1956.

The forest area allocation by the Alberta government needed to be defined to both parties' satisfaction, including working rules related to forest management policy and objectives.

The principals involved maintained an excellent and dedicated working relation to surmount the problems and to achieve the objective of building and operating Alberta's first pulpmill while creating a model, modern town to accommodate the workers and service people associated with the industry.

Chapter 2: Early Days in Hinton Woodlands

The 1955'ers

The passenger train pulled into the Entrance unloading platform at eleven-fifteen in the morning and the three of us, my wife, Margaret, daughter Dorothy and I (Jim Clark) disembarked. A young man with blonde hair and a smiling face confronted us. "You're the people from Kamloops, aren't you? I'm here to take you to Hinton. Let's get your luggage from the baggage car before they toss it out and break something."

When we were finally on our trip to Hinton in a dirty, dusty Jeep station wagon, our driver introduced himself. "By the way, my name's Tom Lewko and I was the first employee hired by the Company in May. My boss at the Bryan Mountain Coal mine at Robb asked me to consider a transfer to this pulp company; said there would be more future opportunity as coal mines are finished. His name is Bob Ruben and he's the son of the owner of the mine. They also have a big oil company with an office in Calgary, and they're a partner in this pulpmill development. Fact is, apparently, his dad was the man who promoted this mill with the New York partners. Look to the left when we get to the top of the hill ahead there. You'll see the Athabasca River and some smoke coming up from burning the poplar they're clearing off the millsite." He slowed the Jeep at the top of the hill and stopped talking.

We hit the gravelled main highway in ten minutes and headed east. "That's Maskuta Creek we just crossed", Tom Lewko announced. My wife and three-year old daughter were more interested in the beautiful view of the Rocky Mountains behind us.

"The motel on the left is Johnson's and the log building across the road on the right is the Catholic church of Hinton", Tom Lewko continued his tour dialogue. "The two-story old building on the right is Skogg's grocery; the Bank is the little log cabin beside it; opens one day a week with the manager coming from Edson. That's Ray Fuller's Esso garage here on the right; he sells GM cars on order but has none here in stock. On the left is the unused CN railway station."

First Bank in Hinton, Bank of Nova Scotia 1956
Photo credit: Bank of Nova Scotia

Past the station we drove left across the railway and down the highway. The millsite clearing and burning operation was on our left, and then we turned right into a fenced clearing of another motel. "This is home," Tom Lewko announced, as he drove left and stopped in front of a small, white clapboard cabin. "Gordon McNab[1] told me this is your cabin, so I'll help you unload."

Woodlands Department Staff Residences 1955
Gimbarzevsky Collection

After Tom Lewko drove away, about one hundred feet to the car-truck hitch rail with electrical plug-in boxes, we three looked at our home. It was originally a one-room cabin. A second, new room had been added to the back complete with a small toilet-handbasin-shower room. A small, cast-iron cook stove sat to the right of the entrance door. A plain, white sink with two taps was set in a short counter on the left or north wall; a small, square window back-dropped the sink area. The only piece of furniture in the cabin was an old, neglected four-drawer desk. A quantity of split firewood lay in a cardboard box beside the stove. A brand new cardboard box stood in the right corner of the original room; 50,000 BTU Propane Heater was stamped on the box with additional information about make, model, serial number, and place of manufacture.

"Now all we have to do is wait for the arrival of our furniture. That fellow Glenn said it should be here in a day or two after we got here. In the meantime, I wonder where we sleep," my wife observed.

[1] Gordon McNab was the first Woodlands Manager

It turned out we were able to borrow three cots with mattresses and bedding from the Company. The Chief Forester, Des Crossley, who'd hired me by an interview about a month ago, had come to meet us about an hour after our arrival. He was the third employee hired in late May by the Company, after Tom Lewko and the Woodlands Manager Gordon McNab.

"Everything is happening so quickly around here that we all have to improvise in the interim. Our main involvement right now is to staff to our needs, arrange accommodation including eating, and also prepare our accommodations for winter, which is only two to three months away. We've arranged for the cabins to have propane heaters installed and two large one-thousand gallon propane tanks located in the compound with hookups to the cabins. The Company will pay for the propane, we understand. We have a pressure water system to all the accommodations and office from an on-site well. Our sewer system is hooked to a septic tank out the back. We have our own electrical generator, a big 320 model Caterpillar unit that we will run sixteen hours each day from six in the morning until ten at night. Before your furniture comes, you and your family can eat at the Company guest house for free. The house is the old Drinnan railway station which we bought, moved here and fixed it up to provide dining and accommodation for guests. You might have to eat in shifts depending on the number of guests and employees using it. There's a lighted trail out back to the guest house but take a flashlight with you in case the generator stops. Meal hours are seven to eight in the morning, anytime around the lunch hour, and five to seven at night. Old Steve will bring your cots and bedding this afternoon. We start work at eight each morning until five at night. See you in the morning; if you need anything just yell." He was gone but then he stopped and said, "And the building there to the right of your cabin is the office where we work."

We ate all our meals at the guest house for two weeks. Our furniture arrived on the fifteenth day in the middle of the night. We helped the driver unload and then we all sat in the cabin drinking coffee. The young driver mentioned that our load had gone to Vancouver from Kamloops by mistake, so that's why it took so long to come. I noted that our contract allowed us to make claim for extra costs incurred due to delay by the carrier. He agreed and encouraged us to claim. "It's the only way to smarten the company up," was the driver's comment.

Our cabin was soon organized with a place for everything: crowded but comfortable. I was assigned responsibility for starting and stopping the light plant each day at six in the morning and at ten at night. I learned to change oil every Saturday morning and have diesel fuel delivered by the Esso bulk dealer. After the first automatic shutoff of the plant due to overheating, I kept three boxes of six-inch white candles on hand for emergency lighting.

Nick Tomkiw occupied the cabin behind ours a month after our arrival. He advertised his presence one evening when I smelled liver frying from the open door of cabin number four. He saw me approach with a "Hallo, welcome" and he came out. "I'm Nick Tomkiw from Kapuskasing in Ontario. Just got in by train and Tom's taxi service. Stopped at Skogg's store for some groceries." He lit a cigarette and offered me one. "Sit down on the step. We'll talk." We sat for about half an hour until we both realized something was burning. "God damn a God dam, forgot them livers!" He jumped up and came out the door from his cabin with the fry pan in his right hand. He set it down on the entrance platform with the comment, "They'll be OK. Had to get them out here to stop the smoking in the cabin." I looked at the black, shrivelled slabs of leather in the pan. "I ate worse than that when I walked across Siberia. No worry with them," Nick Tomkiw said.

It turned out Nick Tomkiw was our first logging contractor to arrive on site; his family would come in a month or so. He'd been a big contractor in northern Ontario but things were poorer there now so Gordon McNab had asked him to come west. Gordon McNab, the Woodlands Manager had also come from Kapuskasing, Ontario with his wife and daughter. He drove a long, black Lincoln Continental car. We were to be impressed many times in coming months with the car parked in front of the MacDonald Hotel in Edmonton in the guest unloading zone.

Nick Tomkiw (right) with a "stacked cord" of wood
Gimbarzevsky Collection

"Have another cigarette, Jim, the liver can wait," Nick Tomkiw said. He obviously wanted company, and why not? He was here alone with a family left somewhere. So I enjoyed another of his Players. "Yep, came to Canada 1926; twenty nine years here. Started with farming in Biggar, you know, Saskatchewan. My wife, her mother and my son there now, visiting her sister on our farm, or what was our farm. They own it now. I'm from the Ukraine, you know; yep, they say I'm white Russian. Not a good Bolshevik, shit. They send me by Siberian railroad to a Baikal prison camp. I walked that trip with so many stops to cut wood for the locomotive engine. Get off train, walk a mile to the forest, cut trees and pull'em to the engine. Then cut them into short pieces and toss up into the engine coal bin, only it's wood bin then. Back to the forest for more all day until we have full wood. Then eat when we have some food. Sometime we buy it along the track in a village or we steal it at night. Have some sleep in our cold box car until we've gone hundred miles and time to cut more wood. When we got to Baikal camp they find out they got the wrong Russian. I'm Pole so they send me back. Walk into forest, cut wood, ride the train for over two years. Now in Canada and here in Alberta, they pay me to cut wood and thank you. You ask old Steve about me; he worked for me a long time in Ontario."

First Steps in Forestry

Des Crossley, our Chief Forester asked me to arrange for an aeroplane charter for a week to fly out of the Jasper National Park airstrip. The necessary approval to use the strip was given and a single-engine Beaver aircraft would be available from an Edmonton charter firm starting at 8:00 a.m. next Monday. Five of us employees would stay at the Astoria Hotel and use the Jeep station wagon to travel between Jasper and the airstrip.

The purpose of the flying was to give us an aerial picture of the terrain of the forest management area. We were particularly interested in topographical features that were too steep to log or too site-sensitive. We had Alberta Forest Service timber-type maps of our FMA available; they were based on 1949 aerial photographs and on the recent forest inventory conducted by the AFS. We wanted to verify the accuracy of the timber definition on the maps with that actually growing. It was a random survey at best, but glaring mistakes were what we wanted to identify.

We also knew we would contract to photograph the FMA from the air, as our agreement with the government required. We wished to get some perception as to the scale and type of film we would stipulate for this aerial photo job. The last factor we wished to identify during our week's flying was the presence of control points clearly visible from the air. They would be identifiable on the photos, and would be used to assure accuracy of scale of the finished forest type maps we would produce. Control points were visible survey lines cut out through the forest, prominent road intersections or unique land features which could be easily tied into the ground survey system. We would identify "blank" areas of our lease area where we might need to establish control points on the ground with large white canvas squares that would be visible on the photos after they were printed.

The weather in late September was glorious in the foothills of the Rockies. We flew long days and the pilot arranged each day's flight legs so we could use Edson and Jasper airstrips as refuelling depots. The size of the Forest Management Area, as tentatively outlined in 1955, was the factor which impacted us most. The second noteworthy factor was the quality of forest contained in the roughly three thousand square miles of F.M.A. The third positive factor was the general easy terrain of the designated area. The stream courses of the larger rivers indicated the presence of gravel, a resource that makes good quality access and hauling roads possible. There was an indication of limited historical use of the area for timber harvest; north of Brule Lake in the foothills was evidence of old logging roads which has been used to deliver logs to a sawmill near the mouth of Solomon Creek. This was probably Albert Garneau’s mill.

The evidence of sand inundation into the forest from Brule Lake caught our attention. Des Crossley, our Chief Forester directed the pilot to make a sweep over the lake and the east shore timber so we could see if the sand movement was active or stabilized. Later in the project we would paddle or push our 20-foot Company canoe across the damn lake many times to cruise the timber on its eastside and to define the edge of the benign sand movement. We soon learned this Brule Lake sand was in reality loess, a fine talc-like sand that occurs in only two deposits in the world: here in Alberta and in northern China.

Newly-Constructed GTP RR Line Already being Buried by sand. Brule Lake, 1915. Photo credit: M.P. Bridgland DLS

Sand Dunes along old GTP RR Line. Brule Lake Repeat Photography Project 1998. Photo credit: J.M. Rhemtulla

Each late afternoon landing of our Beaver plane on the Jasper grass airstrip was a fun competition with the elk occupying the strip for grazing and rutting—it was the mating season. Our pilot Jim would make swoops over the strip to move the elk back into the forest before he lined up the final approach from east to west to land. Each morning the elk again occupied the airstrip field and we moved them with the Jeep and the Beaver before we got airborne.

Each absence from Hinton for a week made the return event a revelation. The Hill community site south of the highway would have last week's vacant land filled with some new business establishment or an accommodation shelter. There were four new, large family tents erected, with pickup trucks and kids parked outside and two laundries hanging on lines. The whiteness of the tents denoted their category as new arrivals. South one block from the highway a sign titled MONTY'S in black printing, was nailed to a post in front of a moderately-large, wooden building under construction; just the concrete footings were poured but large half-circle wood trusses lying in piles indicated it would be a Quonset-type building. Two workmen told us it would be a movie theatre being built by Monty Montemurro from Barrhead.

A few house trailers were new to the townsite. It was still a helter-skelter, disorganized layout of scattered buildings or their equivalent in tents or shacks. All of us agreed that it was going to require a lot of cleanup when all these people and businesses had to move to the Valley where the government had indicated they would allow the town to be built. Premier Ernest Manning had said in the legislature they did not think it was wise to allow the town to develop straddling the Edmonton - Jasper highway.

In late 1955, the William R. Adams, the President of our New York company visited the project site briefly with a number of his executive staff and some of the partner's staff from Calgary. The group filled our small office building and the meeting was brief.

"Our Company has visited the Minister of Forests in Edmonton and the Premier of this province yesterday. We delivered a signed letter of understanding to the government obligating us to minimize the number of American employees on site at this mill. We intend to meet this obligation. This will be a company run by Canadians. You will work with some of our United States employees at this site for a short period during construction and startup; these employees will return to their jobs in our U.S. plants and forests, some before and some just after mill startup. They are here now or in the near future to help you with their knowledge and expertise. Many of you will replace them. I signed that letter given to the Premier; my initials W-R-A are not given in writing frivolously. Thank you for attending here." It is noteworthy to report that Bill Adams' obligation was fulfilled in a most gentlemanly fashion.

Our 1955 community of Drinnan-Hinton was built around railroads and coal, but now the two mines were closed. Coal was no longer used to power railway locomotives, to provide steam for electric power generation or to heat homes and large buildings and complexes. Diesel oil was replacing coal. The coal mine at Pocahontas in Jasper National Park was also closed; so was the one mine at Brule, west of Drinnan-Hinton on the Canadian National Railway. The coal mines of the COAL BRANCH area south of Edson were also suffering the economic pangs of reduced demand, with pending or already-completed closures at Robb, Coalspur, Mercoal, Cadomin, Luscar, Coal Valley and Mountain Park. The pulpmill project at Drinnan-Hinton became an employment attraction for these coal-resource communities. But living in these small, coal-dusted and coal-coloured towns created mixed loyalties and decisions. The towns were beautifully back-dropped by nature with glorious scenery of snowcapped mountains, verdant valleys and clear water streams supporting wonderful fishing. One by one, the mines closed and employees moved out of their communities to another coal town down the road or distant in another province. Some long-term employees took retirement and stayed in the dying towns, or moved to another dead town closer "to the city"! Some employees moved to Drinnan-Hinton to "the best of all worlds," as they often described it because they were able to get jobs in the new pulpmill with a steady income that allowed them to buy and own their modern, clean, painted home with a garage, lawn and garden. They could still drive in their car with the family to visit some of the old towns of the Coal Branch at Robb, Mercoal, Mountain Park or Cadomin.

In late September and early October of 1955 our Woodlands community spent the weekends building entrance porches for our non-winterized cabins. In retrospect, it was like putting a screen door on a walk-in cooler to keep the cold in. Phil Gimbarzevsky[2], Des Crossley and I, and Stan Hart, Robin Huth and the Frank LaDuc were all busy with borrowed tools and company-supplied lumber and plywood. The professional and neophyte carpenters competed in designs and finishing to accommodate their perceived needs for the coming winter. Only Des Crossley, Robin Huth and I had experienced previous Alberta winters, but not in Drinnan-Hinton. In spite of much discussion among the porch builders, the results were by no means standard.

Philip Gimbarzevsky's porch had the most eye appeal because it resembled the leaning Tower of Pisa, attached as an after-thought to the west end of a perfectly vertical small cabin. The porch door always closed automatically from left to right because the hinges were hung left and the porch lean was right. Robin Huth's was the largest porch that almost had more floor space than his cabin. It was designed to house his Boxer dog which "couldn't sleep outside in a dog house because its coat of hair was too thin!" The dog and whole family ended up hating the slippery, cold linoleum that Huth put on the floor. Des Crossley's porch was the best since he had the largest cabin and he was our boss so we helped him; these were the realities of communal living on industrial projects in 1955.

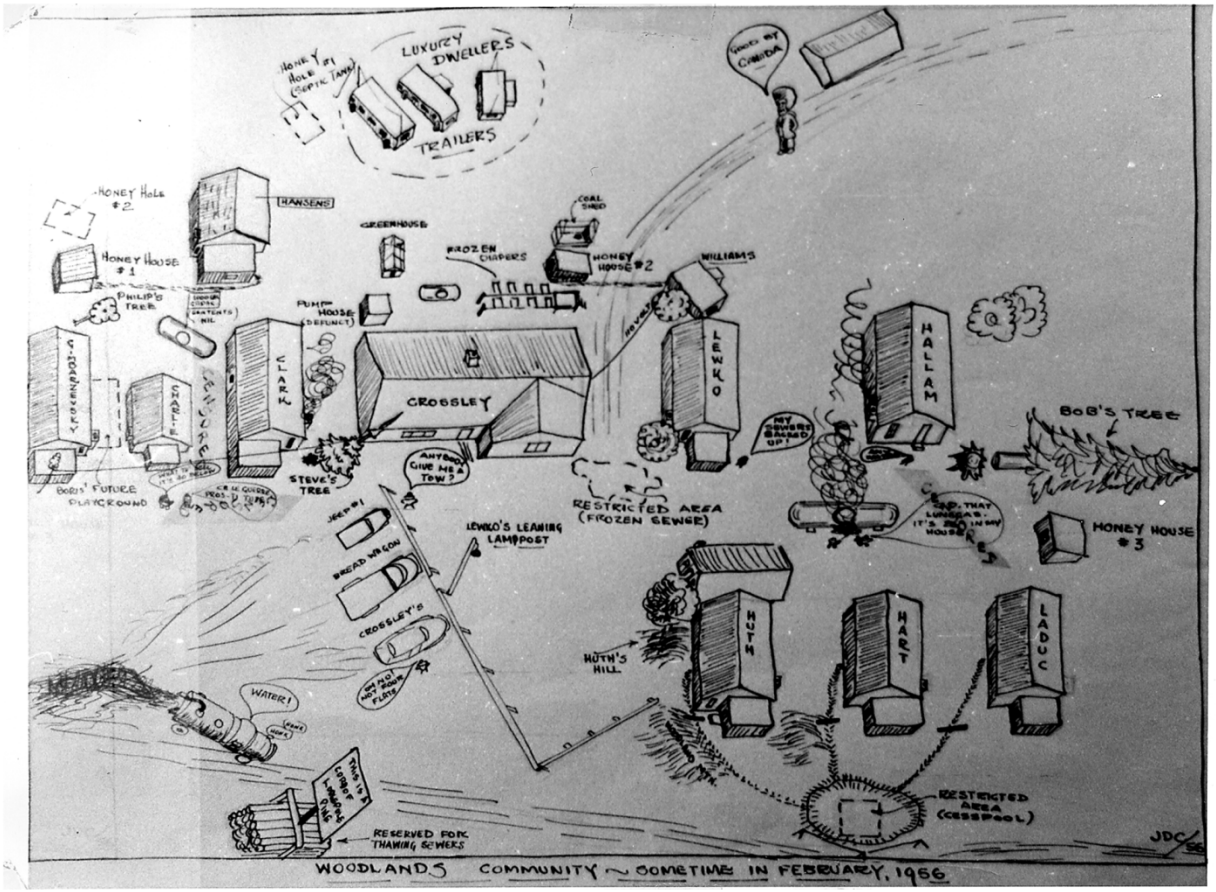
[2] Philip Gimbarzevsky was the Company's first Photogrammetrist and Mapper, responsible for all mapping and drafting. He left the Company in the mid-60s to work for the Canadian Forest Service

Philip Gimbarzevsky's Family—Wife Kathyrn, son Boris at his Residence, Winter 1955–56. Photocredit: Gimbarzevsky Collection.

A Hard Winter

The winter of 1955-1956 was the worst weather exposure any of our group had experienced. Three of the wives were pregnant. The cold weather started in late October and maintained temperatures of -30 F over the Christmas-New Year holiday. Des Crossley's father came to holiday with the family over the December–January months and one morning in January he awoke to find his false teeth frozen in a glass of water on his bed table. That afternoon he took the Greyhound bus home to Kelowna. As he said his good-bye's to us, he added with his handshake, "Please don't ask me to come again until you are all civilized in warm homes."

The weather was playing havoc with the construction of certain priority buildings like the pulpmill construction camp, the main office building that was being built of wood to a design produced in Florida by the Company engineers, and the framing of the water pumphouse on the Athabasca River. On the morning of February 17, 1956, we woke to a very cold, ground-fog morning. All the propane heating stoves in the cabins were functioning poorly, as if they were starving for fuel. Roy Morton, our accountant was out at the parking lot trying to get his small Jeep four-by-four to start. Miraculously, we heard it suddenly start and saw it exhaust white smoke. Then the group of us five men saw Charlie St. Denis, our boss of accounting from Godbout in Quebec, come out of his cabin in his slippers, pyjamas, overcoat and Homburg hat. It was still dark. He stood on the entrance platform, looking mad and hurt. The French mixed with English expletives rolled out of his mouth and finally translated into, "Somebody's



Jim Clarks Drawing of Woodlands Residences Compound 1955–56. Image credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection.

going to get that big, black, fucking, Cadillac monster of that Gordon McNab's and take me to Edmonton and put me on a plane to Quebec and I'm never coming back. I leave the water in my hand basin little running so pipes don't freeze and the goddamn drain freezes so da water runs over the basin onto my floor where it freezes my overboots into the ice. I get outa bed dis morning, my feet hits the ice and I slip hard on my ass and hurt the arms and head. I get my slippers off my bed, get my feet in them and try to pull my overboots out of the hice. They're still there and my suitcase, I check, is too stuck in the ice. Get me an hax and I'll chop the floor out."

This was no laughing matter to lose our accountant, was our general thought as we all looked at Charlie standing on the landing in the ground fog with the entrance light shining down on his hat, shoulders and shadow. None of us had ever experienced an accountant walking off the job and project before, especially a mad accountant. Guy Dempsey saved our morning by walking over to Charlie and talked to him in French about something.

In the meantime, we had been trying to get our Willy's Jeep station wagon going without success, even though its block heater was plugged into the electric line. Robin Huth had a propane heater torch playing flame into a length of stove pipe on the ground under the engine, to warm and thin the oil in the oilpan. We wanted to drive to the Athabasca River pumphouse construction site to check the temperature as the most accurate thermometer was there. "Jim, leave Huth to play with the jeep and you and Stan come with me", Roy yelled from his jeep.

The jeep's wheels sounded as if they were square as Roy drove us to the River; it was almost too cold to talk. The temperature registered -60F [-51 Celsius] on the thermometer affixed to the board set against the unfinished north wall of the pumphouse.

That night our water system in the Woodlands' camp froze solid and the next morning, with the temperature at -58F, the sewer system also froze, with some backup occurring into some cabins. Our community of thirty people was in big trouble. We finally got the station wagon jeep running that morning and found a local heavy equipment contractor to start digging for a central toilet system with a septic tank outfall. Luckily, three outhouses still existed on site.

With the extreme cold, the propane gas was solidifying into a liquid and our heating stoves became more starved for fuel. Several of us men gathered up great bunches of discarded lumber remnants and built it into fires around the propane tanks. It was ridiculous to see propane tanks being fired to create fuel for fires in our cabins. This tank heating continued for four days until the temperature rose to around -40F where the propane easily gasified.

Thawing Propane: Jim Clark Drawing 1956. Image credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection

The water supply for the camp was contracted for delivery daily by a local water hauler. Fifty-gallon, galvanized, open top tanks with lids were bought for each cabin. Water was delivered each evening and we all filled our tanks from the hauler's wooden-stave tank on his delivery truck. In a few days everyone in our community was suffering from diarrhea, cause unknown. Then the

sheen of oil on the water surfaces of our tanks made us suspect that oil was the cause of our bowel problem. The water hauler instantly admitted we could be right as he used the wooden tank during the day to deliver heating oil, then flushed the tank with warm water before delivering the nightly water. The next evening he arrived with a new steel tank holding our water supply. In two days our sickness was cured.

Water Delivery, winter 1955-56. Stan Hart Standing at Right. Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection.

Since the cabins only had showers for bathing, we had no way to bathe properly except with portable tubs and hot water heated on our stoves. The contractor constructing the central toilet facility volunteered he could just as easily expand the building for four baths with showers complete with an internal water supply and hot water tanks if we wanted; approval of the addition was instant.

The spate of emergency situations created by the winter weather was slowly wearing the Woodlands' group of employees to a standstill. Little work was being done on development of the Woodlands forest area and problems related to it. Then the water system at the employee trailer court adjacent to the millsite froze solid. The mill people already hired had been moving into the company-supplied trailers. Additions were being located onto the water and sewer system to meet immediate needs for incoming employees. Alternate accommodations had to be found and the result was employees were billeted into Jasper, at Company expense, with daily travel of the employees to the millsite work area.

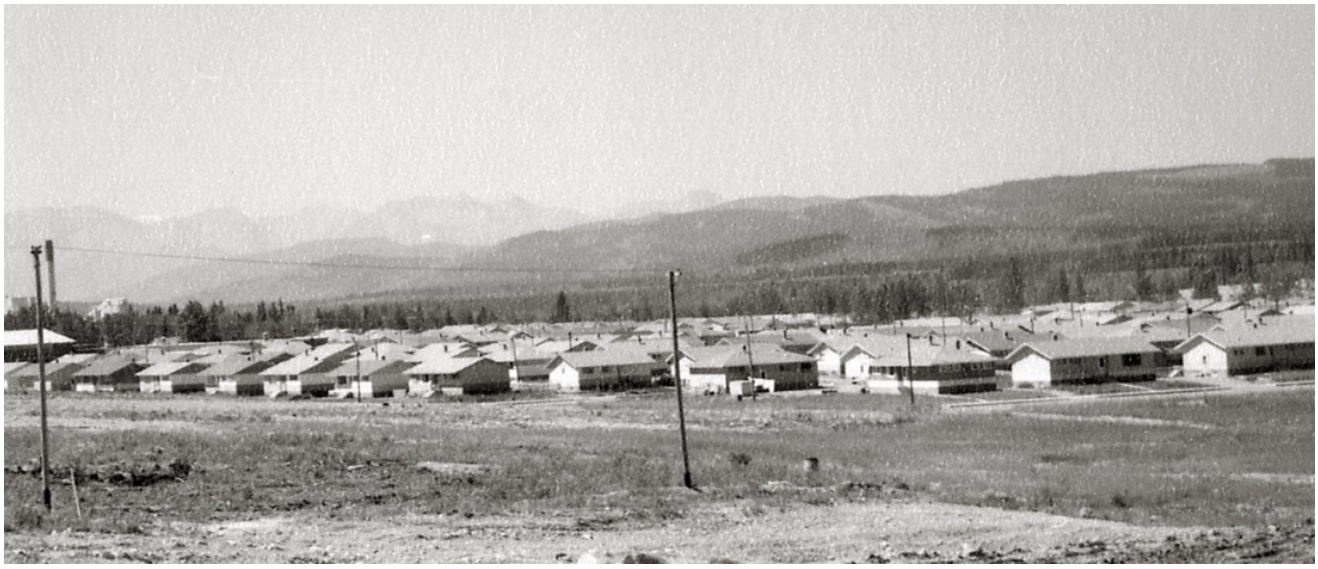
The only construction that was progressing favourably was the construction camp for the pulpmill. One dining room building was completed and heating, lighting and toilet facilities were functional. The Company suggested the building could be used for supervised functions by the community on an organized basis; the first Hinton Community Club was formed around this donated facility and a large, enthusiastic membership used the clubhouse for bingos, meetings, dances and religion during the fading period of the winter of 1955–56.

The 55'ers Stayed in Touch over the Years, with Periodic Reunions. This one (Date Unknown) includes:
Back (Standing) Dorothy Huth, Bob MacKellar (eye patch), Donna Hallam, Ruth Hart, Stan Hart (sunglasses), Mary Williams, Doris MacKellar, Robin Huth, Ossie Hansen (eyepatch), Tom Lewko (clown), Bob Hallam (warpaint)
Front (Seated) Stella Lewko (clown), Isobel Crossley, Kathryn Gimbarzevsky, Virginia Truxler, Clara Hansen, Ken Williams (Straw Hat), Jim Clark (helmet), Vern Truxler (Beret) Margaret Clark, Des Crossley
Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection

The New Town

In April of 1956, the Company started construction of the Panabode cottages as replacements for the summer cabins occupied by the Woodlands community. Our family moved into one of these brand new, modern cottages on a rental basis in late May. My mother-in-law came from Vancouver to visit with us in June.

The Valley townsite was under construction in the spring of 1956 also by the Athabasca Development Corporation. The houses being offered for purchase were those that had been promoted verbally during a visit by Pete Hart, our Vice President of corporate Woodlands from New York. He expounded the corporate policy related to housing as, "The Company has agreed to develop a townsite here in the valley, on the former Dorin Ranch which the Company has bought, with houses available to the employees at reasonable rentals so that they can work and live here with enjoyment". The policy had changed slightly since the houses were built by another developer, the second Company partner from Calgary, and were also available for purchase. The houses were marketed in mid-1957 and employees could purchase a $16,500 house for a down payment of $500, and a 25-year mortgage with monthly mortgage payments including taxes of $87. The Company would lend employees a second mortgage for the down payment. The Valley development including the streets, houses and landscaping was a quality community.



Valley Townsite, 1960s. Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection

In the meantime, the Hill townsite was also starting to progress into an actual community, in spite of government's former vision and policy that no townsite would develop along the Edmonton-Jasper highway! The provincial Department of Municipal Affairs arranged a land transfer for the Hill community site with a man named Eaton. He owned land within the desired Hill townsite plan of some 140 acres. The provincial government offered to give him approximately 280 acres of Crown land southeast from his current ownership with a cash consideration additional. The arrangement was quickly finalized, creating dual and duplicate townsites in a three-mile long town. For several years the Valley townsite was named Drinnan with its separate post office, while the Hill townsite was named Hinton with its own post office. Today, Highway Number 16 is a four-lane divided highway running through the town of Hinton with the only set of highway traffic lights within fifty miles. Town roads are used to haul sixty-tonne loads of tree-length timber to the pulpmill woodyard. This is the result of the government's planning expertise of 1956.

The Hill community of Hinton at this time relied heavily for drinking water on a well in a motel site. The population was hit severely with an outbreak of dysentery and the single, resident doctor could not adequately control the situation. Dr. Watson was literally worn out with office calls in his residence and with testing to determine the source of the contamination. The outbreak was referred to locally as THE HINTON TROTS! The doctor was remembered for his love of music. He sacrificed his residence comfort to have a baby grand piano in his house, and often conducted patient examinations on the piano bench or occasionally on the hinged lid of the piano.

A Bad Fire Season

In the month of May in 1956, the outbreak of forest fires on the Forest Management Area of Northwestern Pulp & Power Ltd. started. It began with a fire, reported by the Alberta Forest Service from their Yellowhead Lookout tower, in the Gregg River valley south of Hinton. It was inaccessible by road. It was known that an oil company was doing seismic exploration work in the Gregg valley at the time. The Forest Service asked for manpower to help suppress the fire.

The Company had recently hired Dexter Champion as Forest Protection Supervisor; he was formerly with the Forest Service at Rocky Mountain House[3]. He was immediately assigned as Company fire suppression coordinator to the Forest Service with authority to recruit those Company employees required. We had also recently ordered and received a large quantity of fire suppression equipment including shovels, pulaskis, canvas fire hose lengths, water pumps, Wajax back pumps, tents, cookery kits of dishes and utensils, pots and pans. A warehouse man was designated to dispense equipment as required and to record inventory movement out and in and to where.

Dexter Champion, Woodlands Fire Marshall, ca 1958. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

The first fire was officially named the Gregg Fire by the Forest Service. Headquarters for the fire action was established at the original Federal Forestry cabin in the Gregg valley. This cabin had been built prior to 1930 by the federal government who administered the Alberta forest resource up to that year.

Men, food and equipment were ferried to the base camp by helicopter from Hinton. Communication was established, using Forest Service radios, between the fire camp, the Forest Service headquarters in Edson and the Company in Hinton. We needed diesel and gasoline fuels, and lubricants were ferried overland on sloops behind fireline-construction bulldozers drawn off the millsite clearing project for fire work. This fire burned from May until late September; it covered thirty-two square miles of forest area. The flames of burning cast a reddish glow in the night sky that could be seen from Hinton, thirty map-distance miles away.

[3] Dexter Champion became Hinton's first Fire Chief and the Town Fire Hall was later named in his honour

My older son was born in July in Edson while this fire burned; I visited him and his mother in the Edson hospital on my way by helicopter to the fire to deliver bulldozer parts. I also had a birthday cake for Dexter Champion from his mother who was visiting my wife.

In the meantime, forest fires started by lightning had occurred north of Edson on a tributary of Windfall Creek within the Tom Hill Lookout area, and north of Hinton along the Berland River. I was assigned to Edson as Company coordinator to the Forest Service, with an accountant named Leo Leivo as equipment inventory record keeper and labour time recorder. Forest fire suppression was the cost responsibility of the Alberta Forest Service; our Company was therefore paid for our men and equipment used by the Forest Service, on a published rate basis. My job was to coordinate the requisitioning of our employees and equipment, to oversee their use and times of use, and to evaluate the efficacy of conduct of suppression activities and planning.

The intensity and coverage of the 1956 summer forest fires in the Hinton and Edson areas was so encompassing that the Canadian army was partly dedicated to suppression work on these fires. During a night planning session in Edson I personally remember hearing a Major dedicate his men to access a difficult part of the McLeod River fire when he said to some Forest Service staff and me, "I guarantee you some of my men will get to that hot spot south of the River by swimming the River and dousing that fire." The River was in flood and we tried to dissuade the major, without success. Two of his men drowned.

One night in September our Company fire crew lay in the forest on the north side of the McLeod River smoking and eating sandwiches which I had brought out from Edson. They had just finished extinguishing a stubborn spot of fire and were too tired to bother driving back to their base camp. They just radioed they'd sleep the night here. One of our Woodlands staff, Bob MacKellar[4] from Plaster Rock in New Brunswick, lay and sucked on his cigarette, and said in the dark, “Damned if I ever thought a year ago I'd be sleeping on the banks of a river in Alberta, and be so damned tired from firefighting that I couldn't go to sleep and be so damned tired I had to let my cigarette burn itself out cause I'd run out of suck."

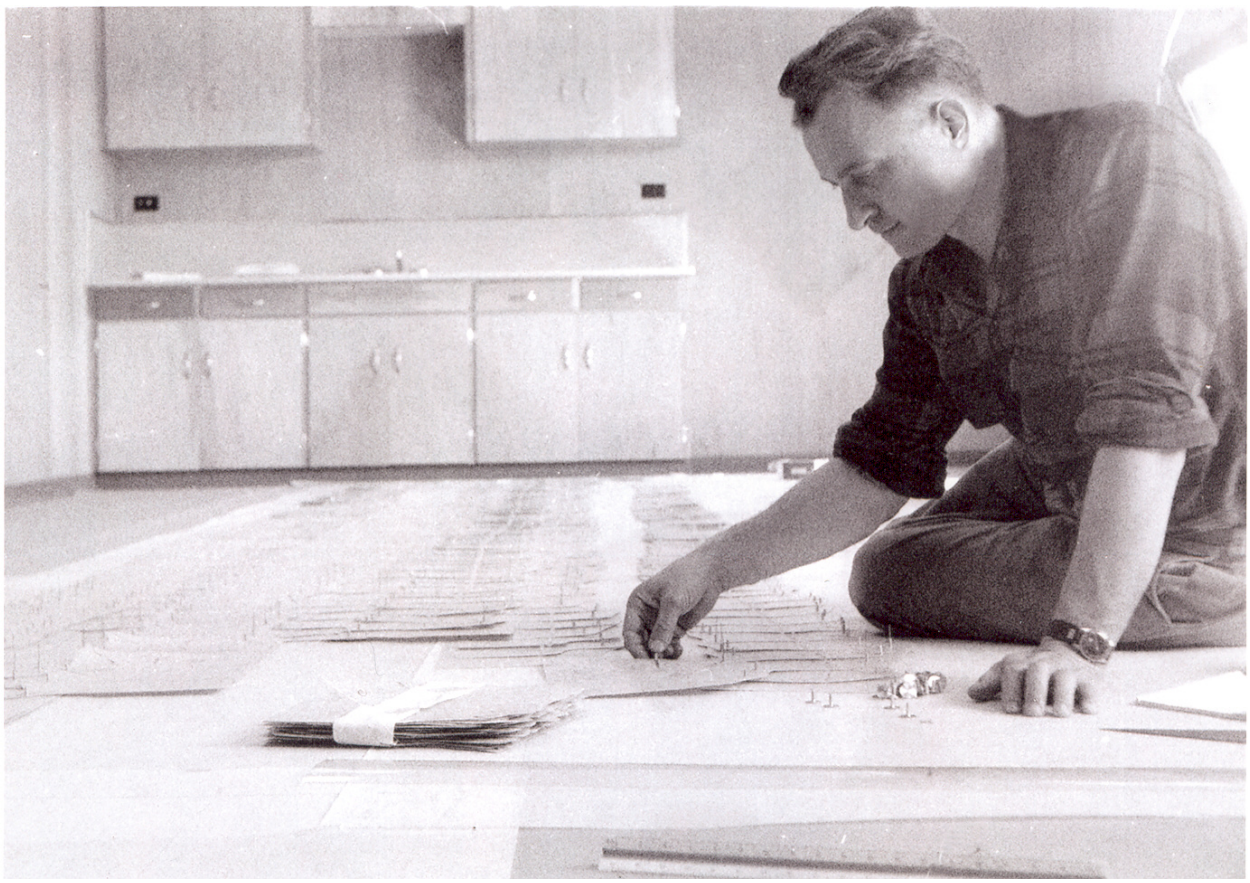
Bob MacKellar, 1958. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection.

[4] Bob MacKellar was a Maritime Forest Ranger School graduate who started working in the Forestry Department, and later rose through the ranks to become a logging superintendent and acting Woodlands Manager, before retiring in 1987.

By early October the forest fires were out, doused by heavy rains. We had collected all our equipment, serviced it and put it back in inventory. Some of us were compiling a report on the fires as a history of mistakes and lost opportunities. A meeting with the Alberta Forest Service was planned for November to review the 1956 efficacy of forest fire planning, organization and suppression. Our Company was rightly disturbed after our summer's experience. It had a large financial investment in the forest industry of the province.

Early Steps in Forestry and the First Christmas Party

Our Forestry Department started two major programs in 1956. This added to the workload already in progress with the aerial photography work project of forest interpretation, control laydown of photos and detail transfer of all geographic, infrastructure and forest data information to accurate-scale maps. The first new program was a three-year Age Class sampling of the forest types on our Management Area. Two employees were assigned to acquire data by ground sample that showed accurately the various age classes of the three thousand square miles of forest resource.



Philip Gimbarzevsky Doing Photo Laydowns Prior to Preparing Basemaps, 1957. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection.

The two-man crew worked on an eleven-days-work and four-days-off schedule. They travelled by four-wheel drive Land Rover vehicle and by walking, including snowshoes in winter. They lived in a tent, or in a community hotel or motel, or in trappers' cabins with permission; their accommodation was their choice as was their food and drink. They worked twelve months each year on their assigned work schedule in extremes of cold and heat. The field work program was completed in December of 1961 by two two-man crews of Len Smith and Roland Mousseau and then by Charlie Miles and Ed Latchuk. The data transfer to an

F.M.A. map required two months' work. This data base provided a historical record of our "forests' family tree," that could be updated each year. We recorded changes due to logging removals by our Company and other permitted harvesters, due to forest fire losses and infrastructure losses of highways' and roads' construction, powerline and pipeline clearings and seismic line timber removals, and developments of communities, ski areas, lakeside cottage areas and other situations. Our Company aerial-photographed its annual harvest areas yearly to document our activities.

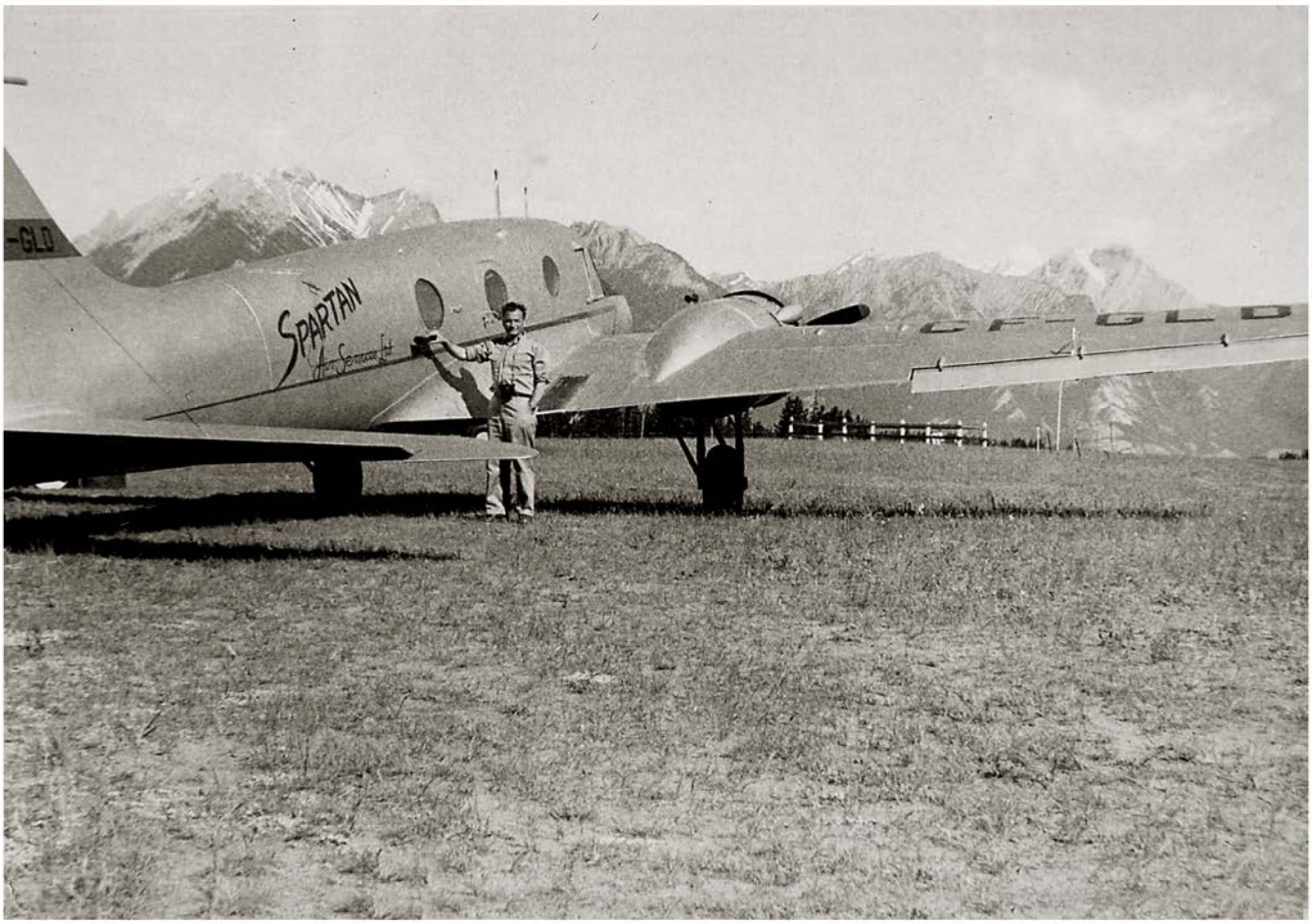
The second program started in 1956 was the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) establishment. John Miller was seconded by St. Regis from Pensacola, Florida to our Company's operation to establish a CFI system in Alberta. It was similar to that existing on their private forests in the southeast USA. The CFI was laid out in our F.M.A. on a grid basis of one-fifth acre plots established in clusters of four plots each, two miles north and south and each two miles east and west, oriented and grid-controlled to the existing survey system of land subdivision in Alberta. Each one-fifth acre sample plot was permanently located on the ground with an aluminum centre pin indicating its radius pivot point and the plot number.

John Miller Bush Cooking. Late 1950s. Photo credit: Jim Clark Collection

Every tree on the plot was numbered consecutively and identified with its number on an aluminum tag affixed to the tree with a small nail. The characteristics of each tree were recorded. The data related to diameter outside bark at breast height (DBH) with BH being four and one-half feet above ground level. It related to species, vigour, dominance in the stand denoted as suppressed, dominant or co-dominant. It recorded if the tree was green or dead. The program involved the establishment of three thousand permanent CFI plots. The program's name was changed over the years, as its purpose changed from inventory to data collection for growth and yield and volume table purposes. Plots were remeasured every ten years. Improvements in data collection were implemented to include identity of ground cover of grasses, forbs, mosses and lichens, and shrubs. Comments on cavitied trees were added since integrated resource management of the future would benefit from more detailed data respecting fauna aspects of the forest resources. The initial program of CFI establishment took three years to complete.

Phil Gimbarzevsky had been unable to aerial photograph the F.M.A. during the summer of 1956 due to poor visibility caused by the forest fires' smoke. Now the weather was sunny and bright, the deciduous trees still retained most of their leaves and the photography contractor was available. Phil needed a decision. With good weather they could do the job in four days. Des Crossley, Phil, Bill Hanington and me mulled it one morning. Des Crossley said, "Phil, phone them to go, if they can start by Monday morning."

Phil came back to the office in ten minutes, smiling and smoking a cigarette with his European flair of elevated right arm that was very debonair. Something was good, we knew. "They will start out of Edson on Monday morning. And, and, and they will finish the job in three days because they've got a faster plane, a King Air. It will save us several thousand dollars. And we can get the processed photos say, by late November. That'll allow us to do laydown this winter because it looks like the big room will be available with the office building completed. Hope they get the heating finished. They'd like me to fly with them in case they run into problems needing my decision."



Spartan Air Services Aircraft at Jasper Strip. Philip Gimbarzevsky standing at wing. Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection.

Des Crossley and I had a meeting with Gordon McNab a few days later to confirm activities and some approvals. "The Camp one access road is approved and Eisen can lay it out from the highway into the lake at the campsite," Des Crossley informed Gordon McNab and put a small roll of maps on his desk. "These're the maps he'll need". Des Crossley took another roll from me and

started to spread it onto Gordon McNab's desk. "This is the preliminary layout we've looked at for the back road through Entrance to connect with the old Grand Trunk Pacific Railway grade up across Maskuta Creek and into our millsite. Jim has walked it with some of his staff but you should have Eisen check it. If he wants, Jim'll go with him. It looks good." Then Gordon McNab took over.

"The new office building is supposed to be finished before Christmas. I've got Pete's approval for a Christmas party this year. We need it; next year's startup and no time for fun then. I need your help to organize it. Get the whole community into it. Use the upper floor which'll be your offices. They tell me water won't be into the office by then; no cans working. Give it some thought. The sky's the limit. Let's meet again next Thursday." So we agreed we would.

The party became the talk of the town in no time flat. There was enthusiasm galore. Buses were arranged to leave every half hour to Canada Catering washrooms. C.C. would order the food and cater it. The Company ran the bar. A local orchestra provided music. December 13 was the day of the year for Hinton.

The afternoon of the Party four of us Company men were having a coffee in the Hinton Hotel coffee shop. Across the half circle bar Big Emma[5] was having a bowl of mushroom soup, stoned drunk. A week ago in the same condition she had cleaned out the beer parlour; every man and woman she knocked out or threw them out. The RCMP came, two of them, and she threw them out the window.

"She's one guest who won't be at the party tonight, and that's too bad cause she'd be a real match for Gordon McNab," Bob said. He turned out to be wrong. Big Emma was there at the party with the starting bell at six o'clock. None of us recognized her, dressed in a fur coat over a two piece gingham red and white dress, and high heels. She was also sober, all six feet of her. Her contribution to the humour of the evening was an episode of her returning from a bus ride to Canada Catering to visit their washrooms; she checked her fur coat into the checkroom and stomped into the dancing area—with her gingham skirt tucked into her white panties, a throwback habit of tucking her shirt into her working blue jeans when she was driving her dump truck.

The party started on the second level of the new office building with a buffet dinner served in the middle big room and eaten in the west big room at group tables. Jim Walker's band group played in the southwest corner, backed by a decorated Christmas tree. The open bar was located in my not-yet-occupied office manned by two busy bartenders; it was the most popular bar in town that evening.

The food was a gourmet's delight: fresh Malpec oysters on open shell imported in ice-encased wooden barrels from Lake Bras d'Or in Nova Scotia, fresh lobster also from the same Atlantic province, turkey with walnut and mushroom stuffing and cranberry jelly, sturgeon caviar, roast potatoes, mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, potato salad, glazed duck thinly sliced, roast beef and roast pork hot and cold competed with smoked ham to delight the guests. Various vegetables were offered to complete the main courses. English trifle soaked with liqueur, layered cakes, hot crepe suzettes flambéed, cherries jubilee, rich egg-creams provided the dessert course of the dinner; coffee, liqueurs and cigars allowed a relaxed ending to eating before the dancing began.

The dancing was popular and was made more enjoyable with powdered wax sprinkled on the linoleum tile floor. Some guests doubted the efficacy of the sprinkled wax when they slipped onto their rears on the floor. The spot prize dances were a popular innovation for the evening, especially because many prizes were fifty and one hundred dollar bills in envelopes.

[5] Emma Nickerson was a legendary character in Hinton, living life to the fullest with a big heart. A rodeo rider, outfitter and, later, a trucking contractor

The shuttle buses moved the guests back and forth from the dance to the Canada Catering washrooms every half hour. Most of the men found their relief at the north side of the office building; it was a darkened area with many excavations resulting from water and sewer pipes installations. Bob found his relief in the shadow of the office but he unfortunately fell into a tangle of the pipes and broke his nose. Another guest found him, helped him out of the pipe hole and got the shuttle bus to take them to Canada Catering where a bed was found for Bob. Our community doctor was pried away from a spot prize waltz to repair Bob's damaged face and sedate him. The party ended shortly after 4:00 a.m. when news of Bob's accident circulated among the guests. Today, Bob still has two memories of that Party; a remodelled, ski-jump shaped nose and the early-morning visit of the boss Des Crossley bending over his bed asking, "Bob, can you hear me?", and Bob replying, "Sure I can hear you. I'm not dead or deaf, you know; it's just my nose that's hurt."

We spent all day Sunday cleaning up after the party, as we had agreed to do at Gordon McNab's request. The surplus food, liquor and mixes were to be distributed among the employees with priority of amount to go to the married ones. Every employee received a great gift of unexpected, exotic food and some spirits of scotch, or rye, or gin, or vodka, or slivovitz, or rum. The eleven of us were busy until midnight; we finished with a last toast to the 1956 Christmas party. The next weekend we had an outdoor bonfire party for the employees' children.

Logging Operations, Union Startups, and Fire Reviews: 1957

1957 started with a high of expectation evident among the employees and the visitors from New York, Calgary and Tacoma. Camp Number 1 logging camp west of Hinton was operative with over one hundred loggers resident; it was a horse-logging show producing piled eight-foot length roundwood. Nick Tomkiw ran the horse-logging contract and operated the board-and-room camp and cookhouse. The charge per day for each employee for board and room was $1.75.

Four yarder machines had been leased by the Company to yard piled wood to roadside, and they were being tested at Camp 7 north of town. Two Timberline and two Skagit yarders with 50-foot yarding towers were being used to train operating crews. The yarding system was copied from the Ontario operation formerly managed by Gordon McNab at Marathon.

Camp Number 2 was being staffed south of Highway 16 on Maskuta Creek, opposite to Camp 1's location. It was a horse-logging operation contracted by a man named Webb Frizzell from Lacombe, Alberta. Both the camps' operations west of Hinton were on the extreme west edge of the F.M.A. abutting onto Jasper National Park. It was interesting to find some of the hired loggers working for Nick Tomkiw in Camp 1 were former German prisoners of war who had been assigned in 1943 to go to the logging operation of Albert's at Brule. One of them named Hans told me why they were back here in Alberta. "We so loved the mountains and the forests here that when we returned to Germany we were shocked with conditions. We all met to talk after leaving our ship. Forty of us agreed to plan right away for our return. Thirty of us are here or on our way back."

Cruisers in the Snow: L–R Bob MacKellar, Ken Casey, John Miller, Ossie Hansen, Jim Clark. Date Unknown, courtesy Ossie Hansen.

In January we had several meetings in Edmonton. Wayne Sawyer, our Industrial Relations manager arranged a meeting with the International Woodworkers of America to discuss their interest in certifying their union to represent our woods operations. I was included with Wayne, Gordon McNab, our new Resident Manager Tom Easley, because they anticipated a man named Joe, Vice-president of the IWA (International Woodworkers of America) in Vancouver would attend the meeting with Grey and Johnson from Alberta. Joe and I had been school chums in Nanaimo, BC so I might act as a good distraction to keep him occupied while Wayne and the rest felt out the aspirations of the local IWA.

Our January meeting with the Alberta Forest Service was held to review the forest fire situation experienced by our Company in 1956. Des Crossley headed our group which included myself, Bob MacKellar, Guy Dempsey, Frank Laduc, Stan Hart[6] and Dexter Champion. Each of our members had a copy of our composite report prepared from employee submissions. The Forest Service contingent was headed by Janssen with Frank (Platt), Buck, Bill, Harold and Mike; the Director of Forestry sat in for the first hour and then joined us again in the afternoon for the last hour. Jensen chaired the meeting; our report was tendered to the chairman with agreement that it form the agenda for the meeting.

[6] Guy Dempsey was a logging supervisor, Frank Laduc and Stan Hart were on loan to the operation from St. Regis. Laduc was in charge of operational inventories, Hart was assistant woodlands manager.

It was a terrible meeting since the government members treated each item in sequence from our report as total criticism of their employees. We talked, we referred to maps, we talked about options that were irrelevant to real situations, we agreed there were too many employees on both sides with too little practical experience. Des Crossley admitted this included him, which got a laugh, but it also got agreement on one item by both sides.

As the irritation of the meeting continued, the participants slowly realized that factors related to money or budget allocations to the Forest Service were the major causes of poor performances we experienced in 1956. Des Crossley pushed the government to realize our Company could not operate the pulpmill on firekilled timber; we were investing sixty-five million dollars on the commitment by the government to make quality timber available each year to our needs. How was the government going to meet this need? It was at this point of subject discussion that the Director returned to the meeting. He perceived immediately that his staff was in a commitment bind and the Company had identified a most acute situation related to success or failure. The pulpmill was nearing startup, which needed success to justify its future. There had been some political mistakes about the creation of the town of Hinton. The Director took charge of the meeting.

"Gentlemen, there is a need to finish this meeting, and in a positive manner. I need a way to assure more money is made available to my Forest Service to give good forest protection. You need some positive commitment from us to assure the timber losses to forest fire is minimized on an averaging basis. I am thinking of writing into your current Memorandum of Agreement a commitment whereby we attempt to keep the average annual timber loss by fire to—let's say—something less than one tenth of one percent of the area of the forest management area, averaged over a rolling average twenty year period. I think this commitment should help your need from us and it, in turn, if you accept this proposal, should pressure us to improve our forest protection. I don't think we need your acceptance today; think about it and advise Jack. Why don't we go to dinner at the Steak Loft; I've made reservations on me."

Bob and I were out in the bush in February to look at the possibility of building a winter road into the Berland River country so we could start harvest planning there. It was a snowshoe walk east from the oil road built by Imperial Esso; we walked about seven miles along a new seismic line through mature pine timber. A herd of twelve caribou played hide-and-seek with us through the meadows of Harvey Creek for about four miles. We had our lunch over a small fire about eleven o'clock and headed back to the pickup truck; by two we were crossing the bridge over the Athabasca River and headed to the highway. We passed the Hinton Hotel and Bob remarked, "What the hell is that smell? You feel it?" I did but didn't have an answer. Then I saw smoke.

"Look, there's smoke coming out of the mill. It's started."

We drove across the railway tracks and down the highway into the valley to the new office. We stood at the truck and watched the smoke wreath around the water tank on its four legs way up in the air. In the office everyone was talking. "Have you seen it?" "The mill's going, did you know?"

The elation of startup was short lived. The mill was running but not producing much pulp, which was a normal occurrence. But too many piping plugs were occurring, too many equipment breakdowns and too many system stoppages. We also worked with imposed safeguards to assure a quality product was made from unknown wood species' mixes. This was the first pulpmill in the world to use Kaymr digesters to make bleached Kraft pulp from lodgepole pine wood. The eight-foot length wood was delivered from the forest in separate species of pine and spruces which were separately piled into inventory in fifty-five foot high block piles in the woodyard. The minor volumes of balsam fir produced was delivered and piled with the spruces. Pulp production was scheduled to produce pinewood pulp with wood taken from woodyard inventory in the pine block; then the production would concentrate on use of the spruce to produce pulp for a scheduled period of time. Over a long period of production we were to realize that the species separation method produced equally good pulp from either species; eventually we mixed species and still

achieved high quality pulp production. We eliminated the separation of species in our logging operation and achieved a significant productivity increase and cost reduction.

Establishing the First Allowable Annual Cut

We met with Forest Service staff in Edmonton in March of 1957 to discuss the problem of Annual Allowable Cut to be assigned to the Forest Management Area on an interim basis. The Company could then prepare their first Forest Management Plan for the first ten year period of management. This was a requirement of our Agreement with the government. Reg Loomis and Charlie Jackson accompanied the Director of Forestry, Eric Huestis; Des Crossley and I represented the Company. The meeting was a short one as nobody doubted the need for a preliminary figure but all of us were sure any figure agreed upon was speculative.

"Why don't we think about a figure of say, 350,000 cords allowable cut per year? I picked it right out of the air to get us started talking," the Director said to get some figure identified.

Reg sat with a pencil and did some figuring; he knew the Director would ask his opinion as head of forest management. Finally he looked at the Director. "That works out to zero point one eight cords per acre per year, for an average figure for their F.M.A. of three thousand square miles or one point nine two million acres. That's a pretty damn good growth figure average, in my opinion. I would support your suggested figure until the Company develops their own inventory of the area, and their calculation of a future Allowable Cut figure."

Des Crossley looked at me for input but I just kept quiet; he knew my opinion by my silence. "We would accept the three hundred and fifty thousand cord figure as an interim cut per year. It allows us to produce five hundred and eighty-five tons of pulp per day for three-hundred and forty-two days per year at a wood-use conversion of say, one and three-quarter cords per ton of pulp. Our mill is designed for four-hundred and forty-two tons per day. Your suggested use figure gives us a thirty-three percent cushion to play with." He stopped and looked at me; I nodded agreement. "We'll accept your suggested figure and expect your letter at your convenience." Our first (preliminary) forest management plan was produced in 1958 and the annual allowable cut calculated to 375,640 cunits or 442,000 cords, which was only twenty-six percent greater than the speculative 1957 figure.

Skulduggery in the Woods and a New Management Team

We talked on the drive home about our current timber cruise in the Gregg River burn area of 1956 and about why we were really doing this work to utilize firekilled timber. Both of us agreed we would not use firekilled timber, so why the hell were we doing the cruise in such inaccessible country.

"Well, Des, think about the Robb Road construction that's ongoing right now. We're south as far as mile eleven, at the turnoff to Camps 4 and 5. We're scheduled to punch the road to mile thirteen and then west up Anderson Creek to the Camp 3 proposed site. That's the end of planned construction of roads into the south McLeod Working Circle", I said. "And would you believe we've built the eleven miles of the Robb Road for twenty-three thousand dollars per mile, so far. I checked the cost with Leo last week. Hamp's going to run out of work for his Cats by next week. Maybe we need to build more road south so we can cruise the Gregg Burn", I said. There was a long silence as we drove and enjoyed the warming sun of springtime.

"That fellow Hamp you mentioned is Gordon McNab's brother, isn't he? He owns the Cats," Des Crossley commented finally. "I think you're telling me Gordon McNab has some interest, maybe even ownership, in those machines and could be using the Gregg Burn as a reason to build more road to it. But how could we justify it to use firekilled timber. It doesn't make sense. Got any ideas?"

I mulled the conversation a bit. Then I said, "What if some pretense is made about the government wanting us to log the patches of green timber left all over the burn, before they blow down. That may be one reason or excuse for the road. Or maybe the sawmill at Obed is pushing the government a bit to make those patches of green timber available, especially the patches with sawlogs in them like along the Gregg River, if our Company isn't going to use them now. Think about how these dreamed up reasons can be used."

I continued driving. Des Crossley finally started talking again. "You know, this starts to make sense to me when I relate it to the Gregg Burn cruise your crew is doing. Do you get any kind of comment or observation from them that in any way relates to what we've been discussing?"

"Only two comments have come back to me, both of them from Bob, who is in charge of the crew. He commented about meeting Albert Eisen and his helper two weeks ago on the seismic line south of Anderson Creek. Eisen was apparently scouting a prelim location for a road following the creek with an overland location change to the southwest to hit the Gregg River near the old Gregg Cabin. Bob said he saw some of their blazes on the trees near the seismic lines Bob's crew travels into the Gregg valley.

Another comment from Bob was a query about why they are doing the cruise, as there isn't enough green patches to justify the Company logging in there now. I can confirm this last comment as being a valid observation; I've spent a fair time in the burn with the guys getting black and dirty from the charcoal. We're going to have a great new forest grow after that burn; you can hit the black spruce and pine trees and the seed fall from their open cones is like snow showering down."

We got home to Hinton, Des Crossley to his new home and me to the Panabode we were renting. I walked in the door to greet my family and newly arrived mother-in-law. My wife immediately said, "Des Crossley wants you to call him; he's upset or excited about something". I called Des Crossley, sitting down.

"Jim, Gordon McNab's been terminated by Pete from New York. We have a big meeting first thing Monday morning in the boardroom. Be there. Our talk wasn't for nothing I guess."

Stan, Des Crossley, Wayne, our pulpmill consultant Harry Collinge, and Doug and I were assembled around the boardroom table at eight o'clock on Monday morning. We smoked and talked about the current subject in an almost whisper level. The mill was still experiencing production problems related largely to equipment; Harry Collinge was trying to solve the problems and seemed to have them close to solution. The boardroom hallway entrance door opened at eight fifteen and Pete walked in with another man in a black overcoat and grey hat. They both shed their coats and hung them on the coat tree. Pete sat at the head of the table with the other man on his right.

"Gentleman, the man on my right is Adrien Provencher from Winnipeg. He will be joining us in a month as Woodlands Manager and will move into the middle executive house off the access road. For the month's hiatus without Adrien you will report on Woodlands matters to Stan. I know you will all operate cooperatively. Adrien has worked in Woodlands' positions in Quebec and Ontario and is familiar with horse-logging operations. You will have a chance to visit with him during our lunch at the Athabasca Hotel today.

"One other item I wish to announce is the resignation of Tom Easley, our resident manager here, effective immediately. Our Company made a mistake thinking we could assign a non-pulp production man to a new technology plant. Tom Easley indicated this unique situation to us as reason enough for his withdrawal; he is correct and we admire him for his courage. He is replaced by Harry sitting there, as of Monday morning. An Employee Information Bulletin will be issued today related to these changes, by Wayne's department. Thank you for attending this morning and we will meet at the Athabasca."

Tom Easley also joined us for lunch. It was a fine chance to meet the new Woodlands Manager, to tender regrets which seemed more like congratulations to Tom Easley and to shake hands with Harry Collinge as our new resident manager. Our management situation was maturing and improving quickly. By year end the pulpmill problems were solved and production improved in quality and quantity.

First Woodlands Picnic

On August 27, 1957 our Woodlands group had its first annual picnic, at an outdoor clearing at Camp Number 1, attended by Pete Hart from New York, as it was his birthday. It turned out to also be Tom Easley's and Scotty's[7] birthday so it was a triple celebration that continued for several years in our group. Our new Woodlands Manager and his family attended, and Gordon McNab also dropped by. Harry Collinge was there as an interested onlooker. It was a fine opportunity for them to meet our very cohesive crowd. It was the day we found out our Woodlands Manager was also an enthusiastic fisherman when Bob Dow tossed a spinning lure into the lake at our picnic site. He hooked onto a five-pound rainbow trout and Adrien waded into the lake to help net Dow's fish fighting at the end of his line. Then Adrien hooked a rainbow and Dow helped him net it. That was the end of their picnicking day as they fished until dark.

Expanding Operations: 1958

Contractor logging camps Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 9 were established south of Hinton, and all operated in 1958. Two contractor camps, Numbers 8 and 10 were established and operative in the Berland River country in the northwest of the F.M.A. We also constructed a winter access road into these Berland camps. Our road maintenance supervisor Lloyd was the man who made the Berland wood production program so successful because he looked after it almost twenty-four hours each day. This man in his quiet, unassuming way, created success for our wood deliveries by his diligence in road maintenance year after year until his death in 1967. He was killed by an unattended, runaway dump truck as he walked slowly in an alley in Edson unaware of the threat that hit him from behind.

In 1958 we hired Jack Janssen the Forest Service's former Chief Timber Inspector (Fire) as Purchased Wood Buyer for our Company. Several Licensed Timber Berths were operative in the Berland River country of our F.M.A. and in the Nosehill Creek area north of Edson. These L.T.B.'s, as we called them, resulted from a clause of our Forest Management Agreement that had allowed Alberta sawmill operators to apply for timber on our agreement area until April of 1955. They were then allowed to operate the L.T.B.'s for fifteen years at which time they would be cancelled. The government would regenerate them and transfer the land area back into the Company's F.M.A.

In the meantime, the Company saw the operations of the L.T.B.'s as an opportunity to purchase pulpwood. The tops of the trees harvested could make eight-foot pulpwood while the sawmiller used the larger-diameter material for sawlogs. It would provide better utilization of the forest and give the sawmiller additional income from his logging and sawmilling. Jack, our Wood Buyer, could buy this wood for us. Unfortunately, his overtures to purchase failed; the sawmillers couldn't be bothered with logging "the pecker wood," as they called pulpwood. "There was no money in logging that wood," was their attitude.

We only changed the opinion of the sawmillers by a fluke. One sawmiller was operating an L.T.B. and there was some large lodgepole pine timber outside of his L.T.B. in our Company's Forest Management Area (FMA). Bill Nigro, the sawmiller, visited our Woodlands Manager to see if he could get the patch of pine timber in our F.M.A. to manufacture railway ties. Our manager deferred Bill's request until we field-inspected the timber. Then Bill was offered the timber provided he produced pulpwood from the small-diameter timber cut to a five-inch diameter stump and a four-inch diameter top. It was a payment - on - delivery

[7] "Scotty" was the nickname of Margaret Clark, Jim's wife. Her maiden name was Scott

contract. Bill accepted the deal, delivered the pulpwood and even admitted he thought he made more profit on the pulpwood than on railway tie production. Jack bought a lot of pulpwood for the Company after Bill's success story was spread around.

Annual Operating Plans related to forest harvesting, planned road location and construction, forest renewal programs of cutover areas by scarification, seeding or planting, forest protection planning and organization, including equipment acquisitions, were all amalgamated into a yearly submission to the Alberta Forest Service for their information, perusal and approval. This was a continuous process that has improved in content and presentation and results through subsequent years. It was complemented with a five-year prognosis plan outlining possible situations related to harvest methods and changed timber volume acquisitions by sources. These annual planning submissions complemented the Forest Management Plan which forms the approved guideline for forest management for a ten or twenty year period or a differing application period as required by the Forest Minister. All the current plans made, submitted for government approval and used for action programs are an adequate substitute for Environmental Assessment Plans that are so flippantly requested by non-accountable environment groups in their exhibitions and exhortations to gain attention and identity.

In the fall of 1956, our Chief Forester made the first scarification trials on cutover lands in the Camp Number 5 operating area for 1957, south of Hinton in the McLeod Working Circle, and also at Camp 10. Bert Guimond was the bulldozer operator who piled the logging debris with a brush blade (Flecco Rake) and scalped the surface layer of the ground to expose soil. By 1958 a new scarification system was designed with three rippers mounted on a D-9 cat owned by Dick Corser, and forest engineer Owen Bradwell was conducting trials with it.

Forest Engineer Owen Bradwell Examining new Scarifier, 1958. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection.

The lodgepole pine cones left in contact with the soil after scarification would open their scales by solar heat radiation off the exposed soil; the pine seeds would fall from the opened cones and germinate in the bared earth. Two years later in 1960, the area was revisited for success evaluation of regeneration. The scarified logged area of 1957 had very successful regeneration of pine and some white spruce; there was very ample evidence of opened pine cones in the area indicating adequate seed source is left after logging. Pine cones require a +45 Celsius temperature heat on their scales to achieve a melting of the scales' resin bond to achieve release of the seeds from the cone. It was obvious the radiant heat from the ground was adequate to effect this release and the disturbed, exposed soil was a receptive medium for seed germination.

Crossley had achieved successful natural forest regeneration after logging. Our Company would be able to economically meet its obligation to replace the harvested forest. In subsequent years the Cats used to scarify the logged lands pulled drags of anchor chains welded with gouging tines to expose mineral soil, on which the species seed would germinate. He would achieve this success on an industrial scale at a very reasonable cost varying from $14–$20 per acre ($35–$49/hectare.).

Horse Logging, Woodlands Efficiency Improvements, and a New Town Council: 1959

1959 brought a rationalization to some of our logging; we sold our four yarding cranes that had never really worked well as a logging system tool in our timber, our ground conditions and terrain. The horse as a timber skidder was hard to beat from a productivity and cost standpoint. The logged, piled wood was roaded, loaded and hauled from November to March each year. Some continuous piles of eight-foot long wood stretched for a mile or more. The woodyard was filled with two, fifty-five foot high blockpiles of eight-foot wood containing about two hundred and forty thousand cords of wood by the end of March. It cost us eighteen dollars and fifty cents per cord to produce and deliver it. A cord contained 85 cubic feet of useable wood; its delivered value was 21.76 cents per cubic foot. The forest industry now uses metric units of the cubic metre to measure wood. The m3 contains 35.315 cubic feet or 0.415 cords. The delivered cost of 1994 wood is $25 - $29 per m3 in Alberta; in BC the cost is as high as $117 per m3. The value per cubic foot ranges from 71 cents to $3.31. The reader can appreciate how wood values have escalated from 1958 to 1994 by an exercise with your calculator.

Our small volume of purchased wood cost perhaps one dollar less per cord. It was the time of relatively cheap wood, the time when a horse cost $1.50 per day to feed, water and maintain with harness, collar, hames, shoes and single tree. A barn boss was employed at each camp to feed, doctor and assign the reliable beasts, so one horse could work for a two-man crew and skid eight cords of wood each day to the piling site. The men earned seventeen to twenty dollars each day and paid $1.75 board and room. A draught horse could be bought, delivered, for five to six hundred dollars; a complete harness cost one hundred and fifty dollars.

By 1985, the delivered wood cost including purchased roundwood and sawmill chips had escalated to $61.20 per cord, of 85 cubic feet of useable wood. (In 1985, it was modern to use metric measures of the cubic metre; 2.407 m3 equals one (1) cord while 2.832 m3 equals one (1) cunit of wood or 100 cubic feet. One (1) cubic metre (m3) equals 35.315 cubic feet and these are enough conversions to avoid confusion!). The twenty-seven year time span created a cost increase of two hundred and thirty-one percentages in wood cost and a seven hundred and forty percentage increase in men's take-home pay; the labour cost to the Company, including fringe benefits escalated nine hundred and twenty percentage, or thirty-four percentage per year. Quite an accomplishment! Of course, the horse was replaced with a skidder machine costing $88,000. The two powersaws for felling, limbing, topping and bucking the trees, costing $700, were replaced with a feller-buncher machine costing $350,000. It was operated by one man on an eight-hour shift on a two or three-shift basis to fall and bunch trees. A third machine was added to the processing system; it was a limber-topper-sorter machine that cost $350,000 and had to be operated on a two- or a three-shift basis each day to justify its capital cost. This combination of expensive equipment will produce 200 cunits of wood with eight

men operating the equipment on a two-shift basis daily. The capital cost per unit of wood production per day, based on an operating year of logging at 240 days, is $18.25 per cunit of 100 cubic feet of wood; this is almost the total cost of wood delivered in 1959 to the consuming mill!

I once was privileged to visit a logging operation in 1968 in Chile in South America where trees were being skidded to roadside by oxen. "Would you not prefer to use a machine to pull your wood from the forest, rather than those two oxen you use, Senor?" I asked the logging contractor with whom I was visiting. His reply so startled me that I have never forgotten it; it was. "Oh no, Senor, because I could not eat the machine, which I can do with my oxen if they should die, Dios prohibir." Maybe his common sense is as valid today as it was in 1968. The machine expenditure of $876,000 in 1993 could buy 1460 horses at $600 per horse and they could skid 2.8 million cords (2.38 million cunits) of wood in a 240 working-days year; the modern machinery application produces 56,500 cords estimate. One wonders where you purchase 1460 draught horses with harness, single trees and teamsters in 1994.

Hinton's first municipal elections were held in 1959 for a mayor and council. Harry Collinge, our resident manager issued an Employee Information Bulletin urging all employees to vote on election day and telling employees if they wished to run for office the Company would support their holding office by allowing them time off from work to attend to Town business and by pledging the Company to allow the employee freedom of decision on town matters without any Company interference. Six Councillors were elected. Five were Company employees and I was one of them for 6 ½ years.

Company Christmas parties came into vogue on a large scale in 1959 under the new manager. Four were held each year to accommodate the four shifts of pulpmill employees plus the Woodlands, Forestry, administration employees and contractors. Each party started with a warmup reception from the open bar; a buffet dinner followed and then dancing, until one in the morning with a pay-bar, finished the evening. The parties were a big success each year. Our logging contractors each had a suite in the hotel where the party was held and their open bar entertained many guests by invitation only.

Fire Fighting at Maskuta Creek and a Visit with the Queen

In May, 1959 we experienced a most unique forest fire occurrence in the headwaters location of Maskuta Creek below Folding Mountain south of Highway 16 in our Camp 2 operating area. Two loggers were working on timber blowdown cleanup near one of our temporary logging roads. They were living in a trailer parked on the road. While relaxing in their trailer on a Saturday afternoon their propane stove suddenly exploded and started a fire in one of the bed mattresses. They tossed the burning mattress out the door and busied themselves with the fire extinguisher to douse the trailer fire. Then they went outside to stop the mattress fire. It was too late as the fire had spread into the roadside grass and forest debris and was now running quickly up the sidehill and into the green forest. The men jumped into their half-ton truck and headed for Hinton to report the fire and to get help.

In the meantime, the Athabasca Fire detection lookout, directly north of Maskuta Creek, had already spotted the starting fire and reported the fire by radio to the Edson headquarters of the Alberta Forest Service. They in turn reported the fire occurrence to our Company, which was agreed procedure.

Both agencies soon had men and equipment on the fire, which had travelled east up the steep hillside of the valley and was burning in old growth forest on the east rim. A bulldozer was brought in to the fire campaign and was dispatched to fireguard the area burning on the east rim. The fire was corralled from spreading eastward but at nine that Saturday evening the wind changed direction. It blew sparks, from the valley rim fire, west into timber growing on a large island of steep, rocky cliffs between the two

branches of Maskuta Creek. The fire was now confined to the island. The east flareup on the valley rim was now fireguarded by the bulldozer-built, flammable-material free barrier.

A large group of firefighters spent the night on a logging road high on the east side of the valley watching the island-confined fire. We watched to see if the fire would jump westward again to the valley's slopes stretching to Folding Mountain and then into Drystone Creek, the last valley barrier before Jasper National Park's boundary. The wind died during the night and the fire intensity diminished. By morning we moved into the isolated island location of the fire with men, tools, firepumps and hose to begin extinguishing the fire with water. Grumman Avenger water-bomber aircraft were scheduled to start water-drop attacks on the fire at eight o'clock that morning. They operated from their airport base at Edson where they fuelled their aircraft and charged their water tanks with pink-dyed, wet-water. This is water into which a wetting agent of drilling mud is dissolved to make the water stick to surfaces it hits.

Six aircraft bombed the fire during the daylight hours of Sunday. The men on the fireline manned firepumps and fire hose to wet down the fire with water from Maskuta Creek. Monday was a repeat attack on the fire with men, water and aircraft. By that afternoon all the hotspots were extinguished. One problem arose in that we had difficulty getting the bomber aircraft to stop their drops in spite of our verbal orders by radio to cease bombing. Bill Hanington and I were driven to our knees on one occasion when we were hit with wet water from an aircraft drop as we stood and waved from a rock promontory at a bomber that we thought had heard our wave-off order. Aircraft number 13 was bad news for the two of us as we staggered out of the fire in beautiful, spray-painted pink.

I passed Ken in the late afternoon of Monday as we changed shifts; he was going in for the night shift. "See you tomorrow morning," he said, thinking we would pass again in the morning.

"Not tomorrow," I told him. "I'm off to have luncheon with the Queen tomorrow, Ken. See you the next day."

"Yeah, and I'm visiting God tomorrow," he said jokingly.

On Tuesday, my wife and I drove to Edmonton with Adrien and his wife and we four did have lunch with the Queen on the Legislature grounds, and did shake hands with Prince Philip who irritated his wife because he wanted to stop and talk with almost each individual in the reception line. We received invitations to attend this most privileged function because Adrien represented the largest company of the Alberta forest industry and I represented the Canadian Institute of Forestry on the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) of the Alberta Forest Service.

The FAC was the creation of the Director of Forestry; its membership represented various agencies as follows, with members' last names and their affiliation. Gregory - Alberta Research Council, Bickell - Plywood Industry, Swanson - Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA), Fisher - AFPA, Welch - Retail Lumber Association, E.B. Johnson - AFPA, McLenahan - Federal Forestry Branch, Provencher - Pulp & Paper, Baker - Canadian Forestry Association, Clark - C.I.F.. The first meeting of the Committee covered a review of: Alberta Forest Service - staffing in 1962 was 462 employees with 3 under the Minister's office including the Director, 268 in Protection Division, 28 in Forest Management, 36 in Surveys and 26 in Radio Branch, 91 in the Forest Reserves from the Rocky-Clearwater south along the foothills, and 2 in the Forestry Training School at Kananaskis. The various division heads detailed their respective responsibilities in Protection (Frank Platt), Radio (Earnshaw), Surveys (Bob Steele), Management (Reg Loomis). Members of the Committee detailed their agency's function. The AFPA was formed in 1927 but only became active in 1946; it represents 65 % of the Forest industry.

Timber sales were discussed on the basis of sales being made on stump scale with all "cut" trees to be marked on a selection-cut removal. There would be a fifty-cent per thousand foot board measure (fbm) charge for tree marking. Dues would be billed on the stump scale plus the additive cost for marking. It was reported W. Nigro had one marked sale in progress.

AFPA reported a history of their membership activity. In 1954 they covered four sawmills producing 78 million fbm per year. In 1956 the members' production increased to 89 million fbm with the milling cost being $49.15 per Mfbm and the average selling price was $64.10 per thousand. Gross profit was $15.05, per thousand fbm, stumpage was $7.15 and net profit was $7.90. In 1958, production dropped to 54.4 million fbm, selling price dropped to $54.10 per thousand, dues were $6.80, gross profit was about $4.80 and net was $2.00, all per thousand fbm(/Mfbm). By 1963, the current situation was a selling price of $60/Mfbm, milling costs of $51/Mfbm, and stumpage of $3.75/Mfbm.

Like many good creations, FAC lasted about two years and was replaced ultimately by a Forestry Committee of government and Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) members.

On Wednesday morning I met Ken on the trail from the fire as he came off his night shift. His first comment was, "Did the Queen tell you she enjoyed her lunch with you yesterday?", as he grinned at me from ear to ear.

I grinned back. "No, she didn't Ken. But Prince Philip did. And he asked me to give his kind regards to Ken out on the Maskuta Creek fire. And you can confirm we were really there because Adrien was also there and he's parked down near your pickup truck. Ask him about yesterday."

Transfer to Woodlands: 1960

In 1960, the Woodlands Manager asked me to change jobs from that of Assistant Chief Forester to District Superintendent in the Woodlands Department. I accepted the job and reported to the Chief Forester on my moving into Woodlands. He was surprised at my move and showed it with his comment, "I am surprised at your accepting the job of Superintendent as there's no prestige, in my opinion, in working in Woodlands." I was surprised at his opinion.

I was assigned a brand new red half-ton Chevrolet truck, Number 69, and three Company logging camps plus three independent contractors, all in the McLeod Working Circle. Lyle was also an inheritance I acquired as an assistant; I was pleased with the help because I could see we would be busy with about one hundred thousand cords of wood to produce each year. Unfortunately, Lyle stayed with me only about six months for two reasons; there was friction between us and another superintendent thought he was overworked with one Company camp to look after so he asked the Manager for help. The Manager asked if I could release Lyle; I agreed. It all worked out well and I enjoyed my work.

In my new job I had exposure on a regular basis to many immigrant employees in the logging camps. Many of them spoke little English. At dinner one evening at home I mentioned this peculiar circumstance of language difficulty among the workers to my family, including my mother-in-law who lived with us.

"You know, Jim, I'm willing to go to the camps and teach the men English if you can arrange it," she immediately said after my telling the story. I was a bit dumbfounded but I could tell she was sincere. I told her I would look into the problem and get back to her.

Jim Clark with his family and Mrs. Gimbarzevsky, early 1960s. L-R. Jim, son Doran, daughter Dorothy, wife Margaret (Scotty) and Mrs. Gimbarzevsky. Photo credit: Gimbarzevsky Collection.

I discussed the situation with my Manager. He immediately grasped the problem and was understanding of it. He telephoned our Industrial Manager about it. "He'll be right over so we can talk about it," was Adrien's invitation for me to stay. We three talked about the language situation. Wayne said he thought we should do something about it with the volunteer help from Mrs. Scott available. The camps in my district were canvassed for interest; two indicated a high attendance. A class schedule agreeable to the teacher was proposed and it met the students' need. An employee of the Industrial Relations department took Mrs. Scott to two camps each week for two - hour classes. She dedicated herself for three years of this teaching experience. Years later many employees she taught would often ask me about her, the Florence Nightingale of logging camp education.

Our Forest Management Agreement with the Alberta government had a section devoted to our Company not harvesting sawlog trees which were reserved for sawmill operators on our F.M.A. The section described a sawlog tree as "Any tree having a stem length of four, twenty-foot logs to a top diameter at the fourth log of eight inches felled at a twelve-inch stump height above the ground." Just before I transferred my job to the Woodlands Department, I had been preparing to tackle the riddle of the definition of this sawlog tree. Now the Chief Forester came to ask my help to determine what the specifications meant. He would assign a summer student employee from his department if I would supervise the student's work in my logging areas to measure logged trees, and guide him in the data analysis. Larry worked with me for two months and gathered reams of data. He presented the data and his analysis to me as he returned to university. I finished the analysis and report. The "sawlog tree" definition turned

out to be a tree of a minimum dimension of a twenty-inch butt or base diameter, and minimum length of eighty feet to a top diameter of eight inches. Less than one-tenth of one percent of the trees by number on our Forest Management Area (F.M.A.) achieved this sawlog-tree dimension. Their reservation from harvest by our logging would be a ridiculous requirement which we were sure the government never intended. The report and data was given to the Chief Forester and he and I subsequently attended the Forest Management staff of the Forest Service on the subject. They deleted the related section of our Agreement without hesitation.

The following two years passed in the routine of enjoying living in our community, the birth of our youngest son, the challenge of developing the Forest Management Area of our Company, both physically and data-wise. Our southern road system was extended into the Gregg River valley and Camp 33 was built and in use by planned deadline of September, 1962. This campsite was in a beautiful location with Drinnan Creek flowing from Mystery Lake to the west outfalling into the Gregg River at the campsite. Fishing was excellent in both streams and it was a short walk overland to the south to Mary Gregg Lake where there was challenging fly fishing from the lake's shoreline.

Camp 33, 1965. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

The Robb road was also extended at Mile 15 to the hamlet of Robb which was previously a coal mining community in the Coal Branch chain of mines. Our road from Robb to Hinton was a Class A road with a forty-foot wide running surface of packed gravel; its distance between the communities was thirty-two miles and its posted speed limit was fifty miles per hour, or, after 1966 it was eighty kilometres per hour in metric measure. By posting speed limit signs the Company's roads were subject to patrol and speed enforcement by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); this was a Company objective so that use of the roads was subject to discipline. The Company-built and maintained roads were subject to a use payment for commercial use by other users. The cost levy varied over time from an original price of seventy-five dollars per mile per month to one hundred and fifty dollars per mile per month in later years. The levy was reviewed periodically by dividing our yearly repair and maintenance cost of permanent roads by the mileage of the roads. The oil and gas industry was a big user of the FMA roads with the coal and forest industry as lesser users. The general public used the roads free of charge as required by legislation related to License of Occupation roads like ours.

In 1962, Camp 22 was constructed and operated as a Company camp with a yearly assigned production quota of twenty-five thousand cords. This camp and logging site became somewhat of a nemesis, a bit of a proving grounds in the learning process of harvest planning. The standards of clearcut logging in irregular shaped blocks was applied in the Camp 22 compartment, as was common to all the other harvest sites on the FMA. The results after logging differed radically from all other FMA logging. We would no sooner finish logging a block or two blocks than we would have severe blowdown of the residual timber, on the cut block's perimeter. Some blowdown areas were large and would always be on the northeast edges of blocks, exactly one hundred and eighty degrees to the prevailing winds from the west, from the mountains forty miles away. The blowdown occurred always on the lee side on ridges running north and south on the Robb - McLeod River plateau.

The occurrences became a research project for our Forestry and Woodlands departments to determine where the wind roiling effect over the ridges dissipated. With this knowledge, we believed we could design cut blocks to eliminate extreme wind roil. So we cleaned up the blowdown timber patches and then waited to observe if additional blowdown occurred within the pattern of the initial harvest. The study took two years of our time to accumulate hard data on wind effect and topographic relationships that allowed us to plan blocks' layout to minimize blowdown. We even planned some blocks with leave of scattered single trees and clumps of trees to determine loss of standing trees cut to a selection or partial-selection system.

In late November, we had a tragic happening one weekend at our Camp 33 when our clerk committed suicide with a rifle shot to his head. It was a case of happy love suddenly becoming disillusioned love by the slip of a lip from a chum. The victim was a wonderful human being who had seen much tragedy as a French soldier in Vietnam prior to the defeat of the French army at Dien Bien Phou. He was a Dutch citizen enlisted with the French; he was repatriated back to France and then emigrated to Canada.

Stanton G.V. Hart with First Woodlands Vehicle 1950s. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

Seven days later, our Camp 22 suffered a fire in one of the camp's empty bunkhouses, which was totally consumed. Unfortunately, the foreman had hidden his Christmas presents for his wife and children in that particular, unoccupied building. The camp was empty since the employees had all vacated for the two-week Christmas break. Only the foreman's family was resident. He and I had toured the camp the previous Saturday on a check of security and heating thermostat settings, after it was vacated by the employees on the Friday. It was a lucky happening we made the tour since it enabled me to draw a Company advance of funds for the foreman to replace his loss of presents for his family.

In June of 1964 our Woodlands Manager was promoted by our New York corporation to General Woodlands Manager for Canada and was transferred to Montreal. His assistant Stan at Hinton was promoted to Woodlands Manager and I became his assistant.

Logistical Problems Lead to Mechanization Studies: 1964

In 1964 year we began to experience difficulty in the hire of loggers. Our production plan for the year obligated Stan to action the hiring of 500 production employees while I was responsible to purchase a minimum 350 horses and a maximum of 480. By June, Stan had hired only 350 men and I had purchased 486 horses. We were in a quandary for production. We bought our way out of the problem by increasing our purchased wood price substantially. We also began buying chips from British Columbia, delivered by railway cars.

The experience of production shortfall prompted us to initiate a study of logging mechanization. I assigned Owen Bradwell, a forest engineer, to begin the investigation and analysis of the conversion. Over the next two years we experimented with many differing machine applications to the wood harvest and delivery of timber to our millsite. We looked at the study as a total system review, which included our forest management obligations for the next twenty years and the road system construction to meet the commitments as well as provide safe and efficient transport of timber.

The study gradually indicated a conversion to mechanized, tree-length timber production that utilized coniferous trees to a minimum top diameter of four inches and a minimum stump diameter of five inches measured twelve inches above the ground, should be instituted. The harvest and utilization of standing, dead coniferous trees was proposed after we had done an extensive study of its occurrence in our commercially merchantable conifer forest. We found this dead, sound resource represented fourteen percent of our harvest areas by volume. On an annual basis, it represented 49,000 cords of our speculative Annual Allowable Cut of 380,000 cords. Our resident manager was intrigued with this "dead" portion of our conifer resource because we had never allowed it to be harvested or delivered in our shortwood deliveries. He asked that we deliver some deadwood for pilot digester cooking and pulp characteristic analysis in our laboratory. The experimental results were highly encouraging and we began the separation and delivery of a thousand cords of deadwood for a special pulp run of one day's production. The deadwood manufacture run was a complete success with pulp quality within ninety-five percent of the green wood furnish normally fed to the mill and recovery at eighty-one percent of greenwood. We would accept standing deadwood harvest in our logging planning.

By June of 1965 the planning for harvesting mechanization was yielding encouraging results related to productivity and costs of production. The whole program had to be rolled into a composite plan of action to include programs of road construction and equipment acquisition including improvements to our wood handling system at millsite. The capital budget for 1966 and the five-year forecast went to New York for approval, with a praiseworthy endorsement by local management. It was noted the historical past of horse logging was finished and our Company had to ride the wave of needed change into the future, enthusiastically.

Owen Bradwell (left) when not working as a forest engineer, sang in the Forestry barbershop quartet, the "Four Cords" with L–R Bill Hanington, John Millar, Jack Wright. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

The 1966 capital budget was approved and the conversion to modern, mechanized logging took place over the next few years. Our Purchasing Department inherited a terrible headache, from the changeover, in the form of two empty buildings both of dimensions of 40 feet long, 20 feet wide and 10 feet high. We filled the two buildings with horse harness, traces, collars, hames, single-trees, miniature barrels of horse shoes and shoe nails, farrier's tools, cases of medicinal creosote for coating cuts and abrasions, cases of antibiotics for heaves, and raw leather belting, hides and lacings. Four or five forges were also included somewhere under the inventory that had to be disposed of by our imaginative Purchasing people led by Len. They eventually gave it to some third world country with the freight being paid by the Canadian federal government.

CHAPTER 3: A NEW CAREER IN SASKATCHEWAN

1966 was a time of change for me and my family. It was a change precipitated partly by boredom and disappointment with our life of eleven years in a small town in backward Alberta. At least this was the reasoning applied by us parents and accepted by our three children. Eventually the truths of the situation would reveal themselves through our children's reaction to their new living environment.

I had seen an advertisement in a trade journal for a Woodlands Manager's position in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and after discussing it with my wife, I applied in writing for the job with Parsons and Whittemore. Soon I was contacted by phone from New York and asked to visit the prospective employer for an interview. It was an interesting experience, first with the manager of Personnel Relations, then with the Project's Manager who was responsible for forest industry projects worldwide. The final interview was with the owner of the Company, Karl Landegger[8] himself. He was accompanied by two vice presidents, Joe and Sam, respectively responsible for Public Relations and for legal counsel; both men were impeccably dressed, attentive to the occasion and deferred participation in the interview to their employer. The interview was broken for lunch at a club on the 57th floor of the Pan Am building, six stories up from the floor where his offices were.

After lunch the interview continued. The noticeable pattern of involvement during the interview session was the continual interruptions for telephone answering by only Mr. Landegger. The interview finished at four o'clock. "Mister Clark, we have reserved a hotel room for you tonight at the Doral. Dieter, my chauffer will drive you there now. Mister C here will show you the way to the underground parking. I ask you to change your return to Alberta by routing to Regina, Saskatchewan to stop and see the Deputy Minister of Forestry there for a short visit to meet him and let him talk to you. Our transportation department has airline tickets for this changed schedule for you, including hotel reservation. Leave me your home phone number in Alberta and I will call you about the job on Thursday evening. Thank you for coming and for going to see the Deputy, whom you might enjoy knowing."

"I already know the Deputy, Mister BP, in Saskatchewan. May I give him your regards, Mister Landegger?" I replied. "Very good. By all means say hello from me. That's very good you already know him. Yes. Thank you for coming again. Until my call on Thursday, a safe trip. Goodbye."

Dieter dropped me at the Doral Hotel in MR. Landegger's black limousine. I flew out of JF Kennedy airport the next morning by Eastern Airlines on a flight to Winnipeg and on to Regina. I visited the Deputy Minister to renew his acquaintance and learn he wanted to talk to the prospective woodlands manager about the government's involvement with the wood furnish to the planned Parsons and Whittemore pulpmill to be built at Prince Albert. He gave me a copy of the agreement being proposed between the partners for supply of the wood. He filled me in on the partnership and working arrangement being envisioned to make the project fly. He assured me there was no risk involved in employment loss if I joined Mr. Landegger's Company; the Company would honour their commitment. My major job would be to protect the interests of the Company in the development of a woodlands organization by the government. Parsons and Whittemore would acquire that woodlands organization for better or for worse at the end of seventeen years. I left Regina with another part of the story related to the Prince Albert project. The segments were fitting together.

Mr. Landegger phoned me as promised on Thursday evening at about seven with the comment, after recognitions and niceties, "Mr. Clark, we would like you to join us on the Prince Albert project as woodlands manager. The salary would be thirty thousand dollars per year with a production bonus added to it, say of five thousand dollars. We would move you completely. A car is

[8] Editors' Note: Mr. Clark in his memoir refers to "KF" and a review of the history of Parsons and Whittemore makes it eminently clear that this was Karl F. Landegger who was the owner of the Company at the time and is credited with starting the operation at Prince Albert. He was inducted into the Pulp and Paper Hall of Fame in 2009. He died in 1976.

provided and you can buy a home through our planned housing development program or buy one independent of the company. An employee benefit package of pension, medical and dental will be available and other normal amenities are included."

The official offer came by special delivery two days later. It covered all aspects of the job we had discussed. I was satisfied with his commitment respecting the job and its scope of responsibility. My wife was always accommodating to improvement in our community location, income and the opportunity it afforded our family for education, social involvement and friend making. The three children exhibited a degree of hesitancy to the change, especially our oldest, the daughter, since she owned a horse and wanted to be certain that it would move with us. I dispelled her worry by telling her, "I'm sure Mister Landegger will agree to pay for the move of the horse to P.A."

Woods Manager in a Startup Operation—Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

My new job as Woodlands Manager of the Company was to oversee and approve the plans and the activities of the government body of the Province of Saskatchewan that would be responsible for managing the forest, harvesting the timber for delivery to the pulpmill, building the roads including capital main roads which were really public highways, protecting the forest from destruction by fire and other causes like insects. The agreement related to formation of this government agency and its responsibilities was something we tackled as a first priority, when I arrived on the project.

Early on, we met with the Saskatchewan Timber Board, the Director of Forestry and the Deputy Minister to flesh out the details of the woods management agreement, responsibilities for wood supply and delivery and costs. The commitments were extracted from the master agreement already signed by both parties wherein the objectives were stated in broad strokes. The Timber Board would be responsible for creation of a government woodlands organization that would function independently of the Board, would be government-funded by approved budgets, and would report to Cabinet through the Timber Board. It would be somewhat of a Crown corporation with an identity like Woodlands Enterprises Inc. Its planning, actions and acquisitions would be subject to review and approvals by the Company's counterpart. The cost of delivered wood per unit and allowed yearly percentage cost escalation was defined for the Agreement period, which was seventeen years.

My boss asked me to try to define a base price we were prepared to pay for a unit of wood delivered to our pulpmill in Prince Albert. We also needed to address the question of price escalation in a manner that obligated the responsible government agency to apply constraints to cost increases. We agreed to tell government we were prepared to pay a base price of $18.50 per cord of wood delivered in tree-length form. A cord was to be our unit of wood measure containing 85 cubic feet of sound coniferous wood inside the bark, of jack pine, white and black spruce, balsam fir. Both parties would devise a sampling and scaling system to relate delivered weight of wood to a conversion to cord units.

We also agreed to ask that cost and price escalation be limited to a maximum increase of three percent of base price per year. This increase was $0.555 yearly and over the 17 year agreement period the price could increase to $27.38 per cord. The increase was basically a 48 percent change. After difficult negotiations, the agreement was finalized to incorporate the Company's proposal for base wood price and escalation limits. The government would be responsible for all capital road costs built and maintained by the Department of Highways. Temporary, low standard roads in logging areas would be built by and costed to the Harvesting-Delivery agency responsible for the Agreement. The manager of the Saskatchewan Timber Board would be responsible to implement the Agreement on an interim basis until an organization could be assembled to administer the Agreement permanently. Interim funding would be available through the Board to meet the initial needs of the new management organization.

Our Company and government agreed the immediate need was to hire a manager for the Woodlands Division agency. Canada-wide advertisements were placed in major newspapers in every province for the manager's position. In spite of a short time interval to

receive applications, we were flooded with replies of varying quality, from cranks and egotists to a high calibre of abilities and ambitions. George, the manager of the Timber Board and I carefully scrutinized over two hundred submissions and boiled our interest into ten high quality candidates. We arranged appointments by phone to see and interview these people. Our search trip took us into six provinces in Canada with some interesting exposures and results. I met a navy friend in a motel in Ontario whose father had worked for me in Alberta and the son, a navy musician, recognized me from a photo sent by his father. One interview in Thunder Bay, Ontario resulted in the wife being included in the session with her husband, at her insistence. Neither of them got the job. One candidate in Nova Scotia was interviewed to the point of job offer when he admitted he didn't want to leave his community as he had too much investment in real estate. The income from it bettered his job salary and it needed his attention constantly. We finally agreed on a job offer to a man interviewed in Longlac, Ontario; he accepted the offer from the Timber Board with arrival in Prince Albert in six weeks.

In the meantime, Parsons and Whittemore assigned me to investigate a timber offer from the province of New Brunswick to enable us to build a pulpmill. My wife and I were in New York when the Company identified the opportunity at a management meeting in their offices on the 51st floor of the PAN AM building. "I ask you to travel to New Brunswick when you leave us here, Mr. Clark, to make a survey of the timber allocation with a report to us personally presented in say two weeks from now", Mr. Landegger said. "Draw what funds you need here for travel and for work clothes, et cetera. Please assure that your wife flies to John F. Kennedy airport by helicopter from our building here so that she has a fine view of the city of New York and its surrounds. I will see her off when she leaves so I can personally apologize for your change of plans and her return home alone". Two days later Mr. Landegger did see her leave from the heliport. We had enjoyed six wonderful work and sightseeing days in New York with trips on the circle island tour by boat, to the U.N. building, to Central Park and the Metropolitan Opera and the Lyric Theatre, the latter two exposures courtesy of the Company's legal counsel, Sam—the man who always had tickets for some special function for me or us to attend while in New York. He was a prince of a man.

In New Brunswick I obtained maps of the Lots of timber areas to be allocated to the Company by the government. A plane was chartered in Fredericton and I spent four days flying the timber allocation areas to assess quality and quantity, and to identify landmarks that helped me to visit some of the areas on the ground. My evenings in the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel were used to compile my data into an analysis of the total availability of the current timber growing stock and an assessment of growth rates. The Forestry Branch provided me area figures on each Lot. The province used the first system of survey in Canada which was the Lot system tied to baseline survey along the coastline and major rivers.

Within the two-week deadline, I returned to New York and reported that the area allocations would support a hardwood pulpmill of 500 tons per day or 170,000 tons per year. My recommended location for the mill was west of Fredericton at Nackawic on the St. John River, above the Nackawic Dam. I highlighted the availability of potential purchased hardwood volumes from private lands adjacent to the millsite.[9]

I returned to Prince Albert and caught up with family, and my work with the Timber Board and the pulpmill. Frank was our resident vice president for mill construction. He arrived in Prince Albert while I was in New York and New Brunswick. His wife and son were motelling with him while they bought a house and waited for their possessions to arrive. Interweaved with the rash of current activities were new happenings, occurring before they were even announced. Our Company president was hired and arrived in Prince Albert unannounced and unknown. Luckily, Frank twigged quickly and arranged an immediate luncheon for Mac, our President. Roy arrived on the scene from the historical past of the construction project at Hinton in 1955. His family arrived three weeks later. Glen came on staff, as another historical remembrance from Hinton, as the Industrial Relations Manager. The pulpmill project was suddenly

[9] This became the St. Anne Nackawic Pulp & Paper operation in Nackawic, N.B.

creating increased activity in personnel acquisitions to the Company and in the community by Mayor Allan Barsky's council legislating a change to the boundaries of the city of Prince Albert to encompass the pulpmill site for taxation purposes.

A Brief Return to Hinton for a Sad Occasion

On January 6 1967, Harry Collinge died in Hinton from a collapsed lung and too much smoking. Our telephone in Prince Albert rang incessantly that evening advising me about his death. The funeral was to be held on Thursday. I chartered an aircraft from Athabasca Airways and flew to Edson where I rented a car to drive to Hinton.

Harry Collinge, a visionary manager was committed to education and supporting Hinton students. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

Almost one thousand people attended Harry's funeral on a cold, blustery winter day with internment at the local cemetery off the Company's logging road, the Robb Road. Friends, associates and relatives came to the small community of Hinton to pay tribute and recognition to a man much loved by his family, community and fellow-employees and much admired and respected by his equals and peers. The community named its high school after this unpretentious, involved and sympathetic man who had time and an interest for everyone.

Ivan K. Sutherland was promoted by default to the Vice President - General Manager position to replace Harry. While I was in Hinton I visited my friend Hank Somers and his family. My visit was planned as I needed someone to help keep track of actions at Prince Albert when I was absent in other places. He and his wife seemed genuinely interested in a change in jobs and community so I told him of my need for a backup employee. I would act to get approval for hire of an assistant. I returned by Athabasca's plane to Prince Albert.

Before Leaving Hinton, Hank Somers worked in the Silviculture Department – seen here using a clearing saw to mechanically thin the Gregg Burn regeneration, around 1963. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

A Tour of Duty in Europe

Four items of import required my immediate attention on my return to Prince Albert. First I had to catch up on the final agreement regarding the creation of the government Woodlands agency. Then came a phone call from Mr. Landegger advising me that he wished me to go to France to look at the woodlands' operations of his pulpmills there and in Belgium[10] with particular attention to be given to expansion opportunities and to improved wood production systems and woodyard handling. This was my opportunity to get approval to hire an assistant and Mr. Landegger's reply was, "You hire the staff you need and tender them the usual coverage of moving, adequate salary, help with housing and proper responsibility recognition to enable them to do the job you expect". The fourth item he threw at me while we were on the phone was, "I need you to also collaborate with our new president of Prince Albert Pulp to find a woodlands manager for our New Brunswick project which we have decided to build. Once the manager is in place there, I will need you to visit him each month to give him guidance and assure of his capability. Put this all in writing to me so we have a record of our agreement of things to do. In the meantime, proceed doing them on your initiative. Thank you."

[10] Editors' Note: La Cellulose D'Aquitane in France; La Cellulose des Ardennes in Belgium

Glenn gave me help in advertising for a New Brunswick manager, after I had contacted our President, Mac, to catch him up on Mr. Landegger's request. Then I contacted Hank regarding the offer to join us in the Prince Albert project. Glenn and I had detailed the job offer regarding salary, benefits, moving and housing, job content and responsibilities. All of our telephone conversation would be confirmed by special delivery letter.

I arrived at Orly Airport on June 7th where I was met by two Andre's, Bastie and Valery. We drove by taxi into Paris for a short visit with Pierre, the Managing-Director of our Company for Europe. To save time, lunch was served in his office while we reviewed the purpose of my visit and my itinerary. We reviewed the situations of the current production capabilities of the mills as being 560,000 tonnes per year yet they were only producing 374,000 tonnes. There was a potential of 186,000 tonnes of increased, yearly production if the Company could acquire about 995,000 steres of wood, or 276,000 equivalent cords additional. Valery admitted at our meeting, after much calculating and checking by Dominique that the logging operations at the St. Gauden mill in southern France had access to an additional 165,000 steres, or 45,000 cords currently per year if they wished to harvest, deliver and use it. They presently used only 545,700 steres and he believed they could find another 200,000 steres per year to make up the evident shortfall to maximize production. This was the definition of the problem.

We would spend the next three weeks visiting the Company's mills and the forest operations in Belgium near Virton, in Luxemburg and at Alizay west of Paris. We would travel in southern France in the Lande area and in the Pyrenees. We went into the Dordogne Valley near Lascaux, famous for its Neanderthal Man's caves which are still occupied by modern Frenchmen who have installed electric lighting, automatic washing machines, dryers, television, computers and air conditioning in the caves, while their Citroen and Peugot cars are parked outside.

We talked to Andre's supervisors everywhere we travelled as he was the largest logging contractor in France and his employees knew all the landowners in their respective districts. They had many suggestions for acquisitions of additional wood volumes. We compiled a record of all the ideas and suggestions by location identity. We observed many active logging operations including the first chipping-in-the-woods application I had ever seen.

This was 1967 and I was not aware of any similar operation in North America or elsewhere at the time. I learned from Bastie that they delivered wood chips to the pulpmills at St. Gaudens and in Virton in Belgium for 23 Francs per stere which translated to me as a cost of about $19.17 Canadian per cord. I was impressed to see coppice growth wood of two to four inches in diameter being harvested in the forest from old cutover hardwood stumps of hornbeam, oak and beech, and delivered by Latil skidder to the portable chipper machines where the chips were blown into chip vans and delivered to the pulpmill. On one logging operation in southern France we saw a crew of Yugoslav loggers delivering the harvested wood to the chipper with a Logma forwarder manufactured in Sweden. The operator had to drive right through a pig farm with his carrier to get to the chipper working at a turnout on a paved road. The pigs of differing sizes, segregated into different feeding-growing pens, oinked at the forwarder operator as he passed and waved at the pigs. There was a mutual respect between the pigs and the operator as they both had defined production functions to do. It was a strange situation for me to learn that no Frenchman will work in the forest at harvesting timber for pulpmills or sawmills.

The Basques of southern France, resident largely in the Payee, or district, du Basque are the best loggers in all of France. Much of their logging labour was performed in the steep and rugged country of the Pyrenees Mountains wild beech forests. Here, roads were built only in the valley bottoms to ensure a cost minimization. The trees were felled and sectioned in place into 1.2 metre (four-foot) lengths. Then the wood was longitudinally split if it was of large diameter. Two forwarding methods were used to get the wood moved from its felling spot onto the roads in the valleys. The first system was the tumbling or "lonsage" method where the men literally lifted

the lengths on end in their clasped hands and tossed the section into the air downhill where it bounced and rolled to a stop. It was like tossing the caber in traditional Scottish games. The method was repeated ever downhill until the wood was located at roadside. There it was loaded by a self-propelled, hydraulic-boom loader machine into a shortwood-boxed Unimog, a four-wheel drive truck which delivered the wood to the pulpmill or to a staging woodyard for transfer to highway-type trucks. You can imagine the stamina and strength required to tumble the wood down the mountains.

The second method of wood transport down the mountains was the "Cablo lassoo" system which was basically a continuous wire rope mounted above the ground on trees. This travelling rope moved outward from the engine-propelled drum over which the wire rope passed. A bundle of wood pieces, again of the 1.2 metre length, was chain-wrapped on an attached hanger and this secured wood bundle was lifted to the "live" wire cable where the "hanger" was secured onto the rope or wire. Each hanging bundle passed along the continuous cable in a descending circle down the mountain slope to the unload zone on or near a road. Here another man lifted each wood bundle, including tie chain and hanger, from the travelling wire rope. This system had to locate its cable or wire rope in close proximity to the felled, split, sectioned wood or the wood must be tumbled into concentrations so the cable transporter could be located close to these "load-out" concentrations of wood.

The men worked 13 to 14 hours per day lifting the bundles onto the cable system, and off. They parked their truck on the valley road and walked up the mountain in the mists of sunrise. They worked all day in the forest lifting the wood, with an hour's lunch break of bread, cheese, perhaps some sausage, and cheap wine. Between five and six o'clock in the evening they descended from the mountains in a shuffling, sometimes leaping gait, while they communicated with each other, in a continuous yodeling loud voice, about what they would do tonight or wouldn't do, or other important information. They avoided travelling in the open forest glades where the narcissus flowers grow as it is a hexed bloom that can bring bad luck, and even death. They liked living in a rustic shelter, even one where the logging skid horse they may have owned could be stabled in the same building so they could see it as they slept or ate. The horse may be substituted with a motorcycle. My friend Valery once built his Basque workmen a beautiful bunkhouse with cooking, sleeping and recreation facility accommodation. They refused to occupy it and lived outside in shelters in the forest for six months. Finally, after the six-month period of assurety that the building was not hexed, they moved into it. They speak a unique language that has a close relationship to only the Rumanian language.

During my visit we were able to identify improvements and cost savings of significance. There was consensus on changing as much of the delivered wood volumes as possible to production of 2.4 metre-length wood. This move enabled a productivity increase to be realized and a cost saving of 3.98 Francs per stere or $2.98 per cord. This translated into a cost reduction per tonne of pulp of $6.44. We agreed that seventy-five percent of the maximized production of pulp for the future could experience this production cost decrease, which resulted in a $2.7 million Canadian per year saving. As Valery put it in perspective, when he said over our wine one evening, "The saving will certainly pay for your trip, Jeem, and it will cover our cost when we come to Canada to visit you in September. We will have some left over to pay for the wood handling modifications we will need at our three pulpmills. And there are other opportunities we have exposed but not costed yet, like the sawmill chips we may be able to encourage from our small French mills. We know there are about 100,000 steres of chip wood adjacent to the St. Gauden's mill. We think this opportunity may also exist for the other two mills".

I left my new friends and France, after a wonderful evening in Paris with a Raeder Pneumatic representative named Chantepier, which included dinner and stage show at the LIDO. There was the September visit of four French friends to anticipate and plan as a result of my visit here.

When I returned home, there was a letter from Hank accepting the job offer with an expected arrival date in Prince Albert in two weeks. Glenn volunteered to advise him of moving procedures and coverage of the expenses for the whole family. They arrived on July 16 and Hank was assisting me competently within ten days.

Mac, Glenn, Hank and I reviewed the applications received for the New Brunswick manager's position in early August. There were only thirteen names and resumes to choose from. Not one was a repeat from the previous group of applicants for the Prince Albert manager's job. Our boss, Mr. Landegger, had insisted he wished to interview the best candidate selected by our group to give him comfort that the lone manager in New Brunswick could cope independently. We therefore boiled our selection list down to three applicants and agreed that Glenn, Mac and I would each interview a candidate in sequence. The best would be taken for interview in New York. Glenn met his applicant in Edmonton, Alberta and reported his impression was not favourable. Mac interviewed the second candidate in Thunder Bay, Ontario and reported unfavourably. We met again and agreed that we had only an applicant in Marathon, Ontario for final selection. He appeared to be the most experienced of our final list. We gambled on a decision to invite this candidate to meet me in New York at the Doral Hotel on a Saturday. I would have dinner with him and on Sunday drive to Mr. Landegger's Connecticut estate near Ridgefield on Wilton Road for final interview. He was the only promising person left for selection. Mr. Landegger was advised of the situation and agreed to it.

The meeting at the Doral Hotel and dinner went well; it was a chance for me to explain the project in New Brunswick and the anticipated activity and responsibility the woods manager would have in the initial phase of development. The next morning we motored by taxi to Ridgefield for lunch and the next interview. The driver found the house easily; it was a pleasant estate property complete with about ten Merino sheep grazing to the right of the driveway leading to the three-story granite stone mansion. Mr. Landegger and his lawyer, Sam, and chief engineer, George, met us at the taxi. I introduced the applicant, John.

"I didn't know you raised sheep," I commented to my boss. "I don't Mister Clark," was his curt reply. "Oh, I thought those Merinos down the driveway were yours," I said indicating in the direction of the sheep whose backs were just visible in the tall grass. Mr. Landegger looked for a long time towards the animals, turned and said, "You are right, they are sheep but not mine. I must find out about them. Anyway, let's have lunch together."

We interviewed John during the leisurely lunch and continued the scrutiny into the early afternoon. As our team pursued their questions about the details of managing for assured wood deliveries and organizing for contractor production it became obvious that John had never been responsible for major programs associated with large scale production. It was doubtful he was a forceful person capable of making major decisions. Finally Mr. Landegger asked John to leave our group so we could make a decision. There was consensus that this man could not fit our need and we must keep looking. John rejoined our group and Mr. Landegger told him he would not be offered the job. John and I joined the waiting taxi and returned to New York. His expenses were approved and paid a week later.

Visitors from France

We let the problem sit on a shelf for a while. I met the four French friends in Vancouver for their tour of Canadian logging. Their tour began at the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver because we had to kill some time. The forests were on a fire closure because of extremely hot, dry weather. The Frenchmen were delighted with the PNE exposure because there were logging sports in progress at the exhibition. We watched these events all one afternoon. Then Andre noticed Rouge Sauvage tents pitched on the exhibition grounds near the logging sports. We left the area and strolled towards the Indian Teepees where a miniature village had been erected. Many table booths were set up with native artifacts for sale. "Jeem, look, this little pole is like the big one we saw in Virton, you

remember?" Andre said to me quite loudly.

"Virton, Virton", said a voice from the teepee behind the counter of artifacts we were viewing. A tall, middle-aged native man with grey hair in braids emerged from the teepee's entrance. "Who made reference to Virton? Virton is in Belgium and my wife and I last year took a very large, carved totem pole there and erected it on a major street intersection. It was a gift from the Canadian Army personnel stationed there to the Belgium people who have treated them so well. What do you know about Virton?" he asked.

"In June of this year I travelled with these gentlemen of France to Virton. They showed me your totem pole and told me the story behind its being there. Now they are visiting me here in Canada and he wants to buy that small totem pole on the counter there because it reminds him of the one in Virton," I told the Chief. "It should remind him, as it is the model for the Virton totem. He has good eyes. He can buy it and I will sell it for half price. In fact, anything they buy will be at half price. My wife and I are delighted to have your visitors here. You have cameras; let's get your friends in our war bonnets and take their pictures with me and my wife." The Frenchmen were grinning from ear to ear with pleasure as they posed for pictures, bought carved, wooden masks for half price and had them autographed on the backside by the chief as, "Chief D. George—for Virton."

We all shook hands and finally left.

As we slowly walked away from the teepees, Andre B. offered me a cigarette, a Gauloise, and grinned at me and asked, "how did you arrange for us to meet the Chief from Virton. You are one good organizer, Jeem. Incredible." I was never able to convince him that the occasion all happened by chance; by Kismet. He is dead now. So it doesn't matter, dear friend.

We toured together through coastal B.C. forests at MacMillan Park and in the Vancouver watershed to see balloon logging and at Nanaimo Lakes to be impressed with Kenworth logging trucks and the log dump into First Lake.

At Hinton, Alberta, they were impressed with tree-length skidder logging, as it reminded them of their operation in France. The scale of operation, the continuous forests of the foothills, and the logging camp organization including cookhouse and meals impressed them. The contractor Nick presented each of them with a beautiful sand-coloured, felt Stetson cowboy hat which they all wore proudly the rest of their trip. Andre had another question about the hats. "Jeem, how did Nick know our sizes so right?"

Then we motored into Saskatchewan to see the beginning of the Prince Albert logging development, after which I saw them off by plane from Saskatoon, on their return flight via Montreal to Paris. I was to see them a few times again.

On my return to work, Mac advised me by phone from New York that he had found and hired a woodlands manager for New Brunswick. It was Tedo and he had worked for a pulp association but Mac had persuaded him to quit for a better job and money. He would be moving to Fredericton in a month and I was expected to visit him every month to get him started in the job. I knew the man but not his background or ability. I had my secretary prepare a New Brunswick Project file. A month later I visited Tedo. I got a major surprise when I walked off the aircraft in Fredericton. Len and Vic from B.C. were standing in the arrival line to meet me and so was Tedo. The two friends had learned from my secretary where I had gone and had beat me to the Maritimes. The four of us roamed together for four days introducing Tedo to his new job, the proposed millsite and the location of most of the forest allocation. We visited the provincial Forestry Branch, the university, found Tedo an office, and set up an agreed work program for the next two months for the new manager.

Len and Vic were treating their trip as a holiday as neither had been to New Brunswick. They'd just come to see what Clark was up to

again. Maybe there would be some opportunity. When I left on the fifth day, the three of them presented me with eighteen, parboiled lobsters to stick in my sample-case briefcase for a dinner in Prince Albert. I smelled up an Air Canada aircraft from Fredericton to Saskatoon with the aroma of lobster. They tasted good too when we ate them. Those lobsters have been talked about for years by three guys.

The Chilean Project

Mr. Landegger asked me in February of 1968 to go to Chile as one of a Company team to organize to build a pulpmill in partnership with the government. My job was to determine the availability of sufficient area of Radiata pine plantations for the project, and to devise an organization to encompass the plantations land owners harmoniously and equitably into a profit-creating and sharing agency to manage the forests and provide wood. The team was to gather independently in Santiago at the Grand Hotel by March 3.

We gathered, met our Chilean counterparts and reached understandings and agreement on responsibilities, offices' rental and designations of use, staffing and an initial program of work, in Santiago. Since I was the only Woodlands person assigned to the project, with no counterpart from government, I was able to function independently. The project site was south of the capital in the central cordillera area near Conception, at Arauco. I spent most of my time resident there. I lived in the hotel at Concepcion and rented a car, a Volkswagen Beetle, to get around the country. I had acquired much forestry data of the area from the Chilean forestry institute on Belgravia Avenida in Santiago, including land ownership records. I also hired a Norwegian guide named Lars who spent the first week with me introducing me to local customs, identifying the plantations and introducing me to the owners, some of whom were resident in the area. There was little indigenous forest in the Conception country as it historically had been burned off by the Spanish in their conquests around 1550 A.D. The results of the denudation were evident in the massive erosion occurrences and the clogging of the rivers, like the Bio-Bio, with water-borne silt. Some erosion valleys—yes, valleys not gullies—were large enough and deep enough to enclose, say, one thousand railway cars without one hardly noticing them in the depths.

Lars took me to a funeral near the coal mining town of Laca one day, since we were passing it on the road anyway. It was the ceremony of a young girl. The priest and altar boys led the procession followed by the father packing the small coffin on his shoulder. Relatives and friends and dogs followed to the white walled cemetery. The graveside ceremony finished and the attendants all exited down the road to home in Laca. The next day we saw a similar funeral procession winding its way up the road to the cemetery and returning down the road to Laca. Lars said to me as we sat in his pickup truck, "Senor, that is the same funeral group as yesterday. You probably recognize them, no. It is a custom here, brought by the Irish immigrants, to have funeral wakes as an evening party after the daytime funeral. They can have at most five wakes with the same dead person. In our climate, more are not possible". I believed him.

Laca was a company town, provided by the Company and built by the workers. The Company gave the worker a piece of real estate about thirty feet square and a supply of used, dry, old one-inch lumber to build a shack and a fence around the land, which the worker built. He was generally helped by his wife or sweetheart who dressed in her best white blouse and black skirt and talked to him while he built. She was proud of her man who could build their house. He was proud to build their house because it showed he had a job from the patron. It didn't matter the nails were old, rusty and bent. Maria would straighten them. It didn't matter the hand saw was forty years old, rusty and needing sharpening. Just push it harder and oftener through the board. No, we don't paint any house as the dry, old boards soak up too much paint. We can't afford it anyway.

The situation related to the Radiata pine plantations and their availability to the pulpmill project required my total work dedication to assure the enterprise was viable. The government had obtained commitments from major land owners in the Arauco area to make their plantations available. This commitment was of 23,800 hectares. There was a need to acquire an additional 5,800 hectares to be

assured of an annual wood volume of 633,000 cubic meters for pulpmill consumption. My analysis indicated the wood would be obtained as follows: clearcut of mature plantations of 20 to 25 years old pine—565,200 m^3 (cubic meters) per year: harvest of thinning material of 8 to 11 year-old plantations—42,400 m^3 per year: purchase of 25,400 m^3 per year in chip form from local sawmills, or as roundwood from distant (over 50 kilometer distance from the pulpmill) plantations.

The recommended rotation was 20 years for the plantation forests. At this liquidation age, there was an investment in plantations of $560 U.S. per hectare for land preparation, planting, thinning and protection. If we wanted to manage the forests on a rotation age of 25 years, which yielded sawlog-sized material, the investment escalated to $1260 U.S. per hectare. This was an increase of $700 U.S. for a five-year incremental improvement period, or $140 per year versus $28 per year on a 20-year rotation.

The woodlands organization proposed would be a profit generating agency with shares issued to the various participating members. The shares would be allocated on the basis of plantations' values inputted or on cash infusion to buy equipment, buildings and to build roads. The original plantation values involved were agreed to be $4,600,000 U.S., determined from investment values associated with plantation age classes. A more detailed survey of precise plantation ages of the timber resulted in the valuation increasing to $5,300,000 U.S. A cash investment of $500,000 U.S. was made by the two major partners, our Company and the government. Shares were valued at $10 U.S. at original issue to the various participants with dividends to be paid yearly.

In 1968, the monetary conversion in Chile was 7.2 Escudos for $1.00 U.S. The black market conversion was 10–12 Escudos, with the hotel bellhop generally offering the highest. I was responsible to investigate a second pulpmill opportunity near Constitucion, north of Concepcion. This mill was to be a 450-tonne per day, unbleached kraft pulp plant.[11] It would require a wood supply of 695,000 m3 per year. I found there was 50,000 hectares of Radiata pine plantations, immediately adjacent to a feasible millsite on the coast. The forests were poorly managed; some thinnings had been made but the pruning of branches to improve form and yield had been ignored. Within 50-kilometres of the millsite there was an additional 37,600 hectares of plantations. The mill required only 28,000 hectares to support wood supply, on a 20-year rotation. It is interesting to realize the Radiata pine plantations can support a harvest of 25 m^3 per hectare per year.

I returned to Prince Albert and finished the Chilean project report on May 8, 1968; it included 69 pages of report, eight appendices and 31 figures, pictures, maps and graphs. The organization, financing and operation of the Woodlands agency was implemented successfully as proposed. Chile is a wonderful country in which to practice forestry, and enjoy fly fishing for trout and steelhead.

All their excellent wines were made in one location, Santiago. They press the grapes at each vineyard and send the juice to the capital in wooden tanks on trucks. The dregs of the presses, the excess juice, ferments in the concrete inventory vats. It is scooped up in tin cups and drunk by the local alcoholics. They weave their way home on the narrow rural roads at the end of each day of drinking, smoking, and talking. If you approach them from behind with your car and honk your horn, they instinctively throw themselves down the slope from the road—to avoid hurting the car—so they tell you!

The Call Back to Hinton

The phone was ringing at 5:00 a.m. on May 12 1968 when I finally awoke to the realization there was some noise in the house. I headed for the kitchen phone to avoid waking the whole family. "Jim, this is Adrien Provencher. Are you awake? I'm in my office

[11] Editor's Note: Probably Celulosa Constitución S.A. (1969)

in Montreal," said the voice in my ear. "I wanted to catch you before you went to work. Would you be interested in returning to Hinton as Woodlands Manager. Stan Hart wants to return to a job in the U.S. with the Company."

The sleepiness finally left me and I began to understand what the conversation was about. "Adrien, I know what you are asking now. I will have to think about this as I have some commitments here. I have to go to Rome, France and England on June second. I will call you back at eleven my time, that's about two your time. I will give you an answer then. OK?" We hung up.

I made some coffee and read the newspaper while the family slowly woke up, one at a time; and each one always with the same question, "What was the phone call about at five o'clock?" My wife volunteered to set the table and get breakfast ready for a family meeting before everyone went to school or work. Even the mother-in-law was included. We started our breakfast. I told them, "I had a call this morning from Adrien in Montreal; he asked me to consider going back to Hinton as Woodlands Manager. I —" and quit talking with the sudden, happy, positive reaction of the children. "Yippee, let's go." Or "When do we leave." It was immediately evident that the family management team had made a decision.

Adrien Provencher, 1958. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection.

"Are we sure we want to return to a small town again," I asked them. "There are plusses and minuses involved. There's your education, friends, and other things." Dorothy threw in, "Yes, Dad, and there's lots of people who don't want the pulpmill and us. Why stay with that garbage."

My wife sort of clinched things by saying, " You have an indication of our wishes; why not phone Adrien, make an arrangement to see him and discuss the job and then make a decision. You're in the driver's seat in negotiations." I phoned him at eleven that morning from my office. "Adrien, we should meet to discuss your proposition. I have a major time problem in that I have to go to Rome at the beginning of June. That is a commitment I cannot change. What do you suggest?"

"Could you rent a plane at Prince Albert, fly to Edson where Ivan Sutherland and I can meet you and take you to Hinton. Bring Scotty as she will make it look like you are both on a holiday. Could you meet us on Thursday? I'll leave here tomorrow, be in Hinton on Wednesday and meet next day at the Edson airport, you. We pay your expenses. OK?"

I agreed we would fly from Prince Albert early Thursday and be in Edson say at one o'clock. Everything was arranged.

Athabasca Airways confirmed they would have a Cessna 185 ready for me at the airport at seven Thursday morning; that should get us into Edson by noon with a refuelling stop at Edmonton. All their large planes were committed that day but the 185 should give us a comfortable flight.

We left on Thursday at seven and had a headwind all the way to Edson, in spite of the brilliant blue, sunny sky. We touched down at Edson at two-thirty. Ivan Sutherland and Adrien were standing at the car as we lugged our suitcase out of the plane, met, and introduced our pilot. At Hinton, we were billeted at the west hotel near the highway, where Adrien was staying. Sutherland, Adrien and I met that evening after dinner while Scotty went off to meet Helen for a visit.

Ivan Sutherland, 1969. Photo credit: Weldwood Photo Collection.

Adrien led the discussion about the job and Stan's move to the U.S. Then he put the ball in my court to tell them what I needed to interest me in returning as Woodlands Manager. So I told them. "I want a salary of $42,000, participation in the Company pension plan, with the right to pay makeup funds into the plan to recognize my past eleven years of employment, entitlement of inclusion in any management incentive program of bonuses and share options normal with the job, normal vacation allowance and a Company car for work. Do you two want to talk about it, and about anything else? I would not be able to start here until perhaps mid-August because of a business trip I'm committed to in Europe for my employer. Should I go and have a coffee, say for fifteen minutes?"

I went and had coffee. Two fellows I had worked with here saw me and brought their cups to my table. It was thirty minutes before I got back. It sounded quiet in the room as I knocked on the door.

"We agree with all your requests, Jim," Adrien said. "We may have some trouble with pension makeup idea but we will talk to New York about it. All of our discussion is to be confirmed by me in writing if you would itemize a list of the things for me, say tomorrow morning. I will copy Sutherland. An additional item we did not talk about is housing. You will be offered rental housing in the middle executive house the Company owns at the reservoir site in the valley. Sutherland tells me the rent is $200 per month and all maintenance including lawns and gardens is included." He shook my hand and I noticed a twinkle in his eye.

Adrien met us for breakfast the next morning. I gave him the list of items we had discussed and he perused it. "That's a good list of agreement items. Did Margaret, sorry, Scotty see it?" he asked, looking at my wife. "Yes," she said. "I saw it and you both forgot to put moving expenses on the list, because one takes that for granted. Right?" Adrien looked at my list. "You're right," he said, and wrote in moving expenses at the bottom of my list. Then he asked. "How much would you charge me to fly with you today from Edson to the Edmonton International Airport, as I can catch a four o'clock flight to Montreal." He had a big grin on his face.

"I'd charge you nothing as you're paying for the plane to take us home. I'll just check with our pilot to tell him we'd like to leave here say, ten o'clock for Edson departure at eleven-thirty. You could be at the International at one and we'd be home about five." Stan drove us to Edson in his Company station wagon; his wife Ruth accompanied us and she and Scotty had a chance to catch up on life and living in Hinton and Prince Albert.

Adrien's letter of agreement of our Hinton discussions arrived four days after we arrived home. It committed to all items including moving expenses but deferred on the pension makeup item until a ruling was made by the corporate office. He included a comment to the effect the pension item was a minor situation that could be compensated by the salary stated in his letter herein at $45,000 per year. Margaret and I were satisfied with the reply and the change made to indicate corporate sincerity. I wrote two letters as follow up action. The first was to Mr. Landegger and was my letter of resignation effective July 31, 1968. The second was my letter of acceptance to Adrien, copy to Sutherland, of the job offer as outlined and confirmed by Adrien's letter of May, 1968, with expected arrival in Hinton by mid-month of August, to allow us to register our children for school.

Chapter 4: Back to Hinton

Our family left Prince Albert in early August, without the horse which we had sold because our daughter had lost interest in Misty; she had grown to almost eighteen hands tall and was a real challenge to handle. We arrived in Hinton on August 13, our furniture came on the 14th and we slept in the middle Company home on Hanington Drive on the 15th. We also discovered the huge raspberry patch in the forest below our house on the north side. Harry Collinge had the commercial berry canes planted in 1959 when he first occupied the Manager's home, east of our house. Our family and many friends enjoyed the delight of those lovely berries for many years.

On August 16, 1968, I met Adrien at my designated office with Stan and his assistant. A meeting was arranged for ten o'clock in the boardroom for the Woodlands and Forestry Departments' supervisors to hear Adrien announce the Woodlands' changes and to meet me. I could tell that Stan was enthusiastic to be returning to the United States; he was tired of Hinton. His assistant was a man of six-foot six, named Norm Denmark. The first shock I got was to be informed by Adrien that the Woodlands-Forestry

departments were on strike with the International Woodworkers of America and it was my first job to get the strike finished. All this had happened after our late May contact and while I was in Europe.

Stan advised me that the R. Angus dealer in Edmonton had delivered 55 Timberjack skidders to us in Hinton in 1967 as proof that the Hinton operation could finally finish with horse logging. Adrien reminded me about our previous discussion about terminating the logging contractors to switch to an all-Company operation. This would be another priority item for my attention with particular emphasis on an equitable buyout of Nick Tomkiw's skidders which the Company had sold him originally. That became item four in my notebook list of things to do.

Line of New Timberjack Skidders, 1967. Photo credit: SGV Hart Collection.

We had our gathering to meet and advise the supervisors. I was already familiar with most of them. Then Adrien and Stan invited everyone to lunch at a local dining room; it was fun to talk with many of the fellows I had previously worked with in pre-1966 days.

I started work the next day meeting my familiar secretary, talking to Norm about his responsibilities and background and about the strike situation. The Industrial Relations manager, Wayne Sawyer, further filled me in during an afternoon meeting. I phoned an Edmonton friend in late afternoon to enquire about renting some property his company owned at Obed, sixteen miles east of Hinton. He offered it gratis with only a proviso that he be sent a letter holding him harmless for anything our Company did to or on the land.

Woodlands Strike and Resolution: 1968

The next morning at ten o'clock I phoned friends in Kamloops and Prince George about our strike situation and about the opportunity to buy sawmill chips from them or from their supplier sawmills for delivery by rail to us. At four o'clock my secretary phoned to ask Ivan Sutherland, the I.R. manager and the Transportation manager to attend a boardroom meeting with me and Norm at eight the next morning. They all confirmed their attendance so Norm and I toured the woodyard to see the dwindling volume of wood available for continued production. It looked like about a two-week supply, only of roundwood. We drove through the picket line at the entrance gate to the woodyard. Some of the fellows I recognized and they yelled back my name so we stopped to talk to them.

Stan came to the meeting the next morning also, just to say goodbye to everyone. He stayed for my presentation. The subject was about the strike, as everyone knew. I proposed that we open a wood buying yard at Obed to start receiving wood from the Edson purchased wood suppliers. We would put an unloading crane on the private land I had leased, we could quickly fence it for security, and we could start receiving wood with scale to be done with a portable weigh scale. Scalers would work there in shifts to measure and ticket the suppliers with payment to be made weekly. The IR manager could advise the union of this as a goodwill gesture. We were keeping the wood suppliers solvent in an emergency situation. Everyone agreed to this move.

My second proposition was to buy 39,000 Bone Dry Units (One BDU = 100 cubic feet of bark-free wood) of sawmill chips per month in British Columbia to be delivered by rail from the Kamloops and Prince George regions. We agreed we used about 28,000 BDU's per month so the offered supply had an adequate excess to keep the pulpmill operating. The key now was to start the logistics of commitment by source and to this marry an adequate supply of reinforced-bottom rail cars to start moving the chips. This must happen now; we had two weeks supply of wood in the yard and after that we were shut down. I suggested a representative from our Transportation department should charter us an aeroplane and he and I would quickly visit the BC suppliers and coordinate the movement of chips, starting immediately. I would also sign interim supply agreements on site including the price for the wood chips at sawmill site. The management group approved the plan of obtaining this wood supply.

Paul and I left the next morning in a Cessna 206 aircraft from the Edson airport flying to Prince George. We had talked by phone on the previous afternoon with the coordinator of chip supply in Prince. He had the wheels in motion to have fifteen cars per day moving east into Alberta. That same day we started putting the paperwork together to satisfy the suppliers about the mutual understanding of volume supply, supply period as phase one and two, with a rider to extend if necessary, and price penalty that would apply. The agreed base price was negotiated until we finally compromised on one price for all suppliers. On the evening of our arrival, we had the agreements ready and we signed them. We had a great dinner at a German restaurant in Prince George.

Paul and I flew to Kamloops the next day and met with the coordinator of the chip supply for Hinton. We repeated the whole procedure of the Prince George supply, made five separate supply agreements and finally agreed to a base price identical to that paid at Prince George. The Kamloops suppliers kept playing on their chips having superior pulping qualities because there was Douglas fir species included that improved the pulp tear strength. We countered with the fact the Doug fir created a coarser pulp which our customers disliked. Don acted as their coordinator and he brought the subject to an end when he suggested, "I'll toss a coin, and if it's heads you pay two dollars more a BDU. If it's tails you pay what we've discussed as the lower base rate, and I'll buy the dinner at the dining room at the motel on the hill where you're staying". He tossed the coin and it came up tails. "The agreements will be ready for signing about ten tomorrow morning," Don said over dinner. "I'll send a car up for you at 9:30."

We had the documents signed by 10:15 and Don drove us to the airport to catch our plane. We shook hands before we climbed into the Cessna. "You will see fifteen cars of chips, on the CNR line up the North Thompson valley as you fly up there. They're

already headed for Hinton and should meet up with another fifteen cars coming from Prince George. The CN says the thirty cars will be in Hinton on Sunday morning, before you go to church. Good luck.”

The Cessna flew over the chip cars from Kamloops near Vavenby. At Tete Jaune we looped west to follow the Fraser River and the railway for a short period. We saw fifteen cars of chips on the railway west of McBride, heading east. Paul and I were very pleased with our trip to BC when we landed at Edson. On Sunday morning the thirty cars of chips arrived in Hinton on a siding on the mainline. By evening the weigh freight had moved them into our woodyard and to the chip unloading dump.

The purchased wood inventory yard was established at Obed and wood began to flow into it from the first day of operation. The chip supply from BC became a managed success with 15 to 30 cars delivered every day including Sundays. The IWA strike continued with picket lines manned each day at the Woodyard gate. The continued supply of chips was visibly evident to the strikers each day as the weigh freight train took out empty box cars from the millsite and brought loaded chip cars into the millsite. Box cars filled with baled pulp and empty chip cars left the millsite with the same train.

The negotiating teams for the Company and IWA met again after a two-week interval of continued chip supply deliveries. The atmosphere of negotiations was markedly changed and many insignificant demands of the union soon were withdrawn. The major item of wage demands was the final division to settlement. One hourly paid grader operator on the union negotiating team was dug in for more money to the hourly employees' rates. The Company's team withdrew to caucus. "Why in hell is that guy Beauchamp, or whatever is his name, so dug in on those hourly rates,” our Industrial Relations manager asked when we sat down in his room at the hotel. "He's not dug in on all the rates' increase we've offered. He's just pissed off that the bulldozer rate is fifteen cents more than the grader operator. He thinks he's as skilled as a cat operator,” I answered.

"And is he?” asked the I.R. manager.

"No, but don't tell him that or we'll never get settled."

"OK, why don't we offer a fifteen cents increase only to the grader operators' rate. Hold that. How many grader operators are we talking about?” the manager asked.

"Five people,” I replied.

"What,” he asked. "Why the hell have we wasted so much time on this stupid situation if it's only five people?"

"I guess because you never discussed it before. And because you never identified it as the hang-up in these negotiations,” I said. The rest of our team nodded their heads in agreement. We advised the union we would return at one o'clock after our lunch.

Both parties were in place at one. The IR manager started. "We believe we both want to settle these discussions and get back to work. That at least, is our wish. Let me suggest that the only item to finalize is the hourly rates. It seems you are satisfied with our general increase offered of twenty-five cents per hour. We want to make one minor adjustment in that area to correct an inequity that we have both failed to identify previously, so that value is paid for value earned."

I sat and listened to this smooth, diplomatic talk that I had heard so many times before with different words. I thought, “He’ll kill them with kindness by loving one negotiator to death."

He continued. "Having said that, and having identified an error, we want to put an offer on the table to increase the hourly rate for grader operator by fifteen cents per hour so that the new rate will be identical to that paid for bulldozer operator. Both rates will still reflect the across-the-board general increase of two bits per hour. Why don't you caucus and discuss this. We think you will find our proposal fair and it should address everything for a settlement." And he stood to indicate to us our withdrawal.

The union team could have the negotiating room and could get at their discussions right now, instead of wasting time by telephoning the wives to say they'd be home for dinner, or would bring the cheque home as it was Thursday and payday.

We were notified by the Union of a return to bargaining, in twenty minutes. We went back fifteen minutes later. Their spokesman Stan started with a summary review of all items finished to date. It took about ten minutes of flipping pages, identifying the item, and denoting status: "Finished"—"Finished"—"Finished." The last item was hourly rates, "Revision to Grader Operator rate of fifteen cents per hour to finalize at equivalent to Bulldozer Operator." Stan looked at us, grinned, and pronounced, "Finished."

Our I.R. manager invited everyone to our suite for a toast drink and to shake hands. The next morning we all met in our boardroom for review and signing of the final labour agreement. I asked Norm to tell the log haul truckers to start loading and hauling wood first thing Monday morning. We could start breathing easier and could advise the chip suppliers of our strike situation and agree on a termination of chip deliveries.

Norm phoned me on Saturday morning to tell me the truckers would only start hauling after they met with me to discuss an increase in haul rates. I told him to get back to the haulers and tell them to start hauling Monday morning as a sign of good faith and I would meet them at eight o'clock Monday morning to discuss rates. That was the way it was going to be.

At six o'clock on Monday morning I was at the hauling dispatch office. Ken was on shift and I could hear him talking to the drivers by radio to tell them their loading areas. When the chatter died down, he lit a cigarette and turned to satisfy my curiosity. "Anything I can do for you, Jim?"

"How many trucks are out this morning, Ken?" He scanned his schedule list. "At this time of 6:10 there's twenty-one rolling. Three more should be out by 6:30 to 7:00. That'll be them all. No call-ins yet for sick or breakdowns." I thanked him and left in my station wagon. The Green Tree restaurant was a bit busy when I slid into a booth to read the Herald and have breakfast. Over an hour yet before I met with the truckers to talk haul rates.

Margaret brought a tray of filled mugs and a carafe of extra coffee to the boardroom as I sat there at 7:45. Her quick good-morning indicated she knew something important was up. "To you also, Margaret. I'll be back to my office about 9:00," I replied.

Nick Tomkiw, Tony Guimond, Albert Boutin and Yvon Guimond arrived together at eight. We shook hands and they took a mug of coffee each. The doctoring of cream and sugar was quickly finished, they sat and exchanged pleasantries.

"Let's please begin the meeting as I have a busy day ahead", I began. "We are here to talk haul rates, at your request. OK. Our recent negotiations resulted in labour rates increasing 6 point 5 percent. The fringe benefits increased 1 point 9 percent so we ended up with labour increasing 8 point 4 percent total. Your current rate has a labour component of twenty-four percent. We are prepared to increase that component by the 8 point 4 percent negotiated amount. The Company has always worked this way in terms of adjustments resulting from their negotiations. We recognize you do not participate in union agreement changes so we pass on to you increases to your rates to compensate for changes to your labour costs. We propose to make the increase as stated. Have you some comments to make now?"

I knew something was afoul when they replied through Yvon as spokesman. He was the accountant for Tony's and his family's involvement but he wasn't physically involved in the loading and hauling in the bush. His knowledge was dollar figures. Five brothers' families and the father's family lived off the income generated from the load and haul and the logging contract they had with the Company.

"We need more than an eight and one half percent increase in rates to satisfy us to keep hauling for the Company", Yvon said to me." We need a fifteen percent increase at least, starting today".

"And if you don't get it, are you ready to stop hauling for the Company, starting today?" I challenged him. "You had better reflect on your answer because you haven't worked since the strike began in June, and some income about now should be very nice, Yvon".

"Well, Jim, we'd like to think about this a bit. We have to have fifteen percent in our opinion right now. We hear your offer of eight and a half or almost that. But we're serious about a good increase."

"OK, Yvon. You all go away now. I will implement an increase of 8.4 percent, starting today, on the rates. I want you to come back on Thursday at eight with your final figure demand. We'll meet here again. In the meantime, I'll do some homework. On Thursday I will give you an answer to the Company's position which may include, for all I know, an alternative to how we do business with you now to some other way. So until Thursday, you are making more money starting today. Thanks for coming."

They returned on Thursday morning. Yvon started as spokesman again, with a Good morning. I sat and waited. "Jim, we've thought about the rate situation and we have to tell you we want twelve percent increase starting today or we have to pull our equipment and there'll be no more haul."

"Will you clarify for me Yvon," I asked, "If you expect a rate increase of 12 percent to your bulldozers building roads and clearing snow at the loadout landings, would you pull them out also if you shut down the haul?"

"No, the bulldozers are not included in rate increase. They can keep on road building if you need them," he conceded.

"Gentlemen, I have listened to your need today. Here, then, is what the Company is prepared to do. One, we will increase your haul rates by twelve percent starting last Monday. Two, we propose to advertise our loading and hauling for proposal tender as soon as possible so we can accept the best bid. After we make a decision on the submissions we will change in any way we wish to benefit the Company. In the meantime, we will pay rates to you as we have promised today. Thank you for coming today. I appreciated it."

"Jim, we also appreciated your meeting our increase need. We like the idea of a bid basis for establishing the rates. Thanks," Yvon said. They left.

More Operational Change

The following week our Purchasing Department inserted an ad in several newspapers across Canada detailing our needs related to loading and hauling our yearly wood supply and inviting sealed proposals for the job, with deadline by October 15, 1968. The first proposal received was from a consortium of our current truckers. We received thirteen submissions by closing date. We wanted to announce the award towards the end of March, 1969 since this was our spring breakup period and wood hauling stopped until June or July. It was also planned to create a larger than normal woodyard inventory as a safeguard cushion to haul changeover to a possible new contractor.

The finish of contractor logging also occurred at this time. The termination happened because the IWA labour agreement was causing so much responsibility being transferred to the Company for administration of things like seniority, which allowed employees to move back and forth willy-nilly among the logging camps. The contractors had less responsibility and accountability for work load, yet they still expected an almost guaranteed profit.

I had two contractors to settle before the job was finished. Nick Tomkiw was the most complex situation of settlement because he had bought ten skidders from the Company and these now had to be repurchased. Unfortunately, when the original sale was made to Nick Tomkiw, the Company allowed a skidder cost on a per cunit basis in the contract price being paid him for wood production. Although they were charging him interest on his skidder purchase, the Company forgot to input this cost into the skidder rate per cunit paid. Each month his skidders were losing money but we could not account for the loss, until someone identified the forgotten cost of interest. Our buy-back of the skidders therefore had to include a payment for the interest oversight. This sleuthing and increase to termination payment made the contractor's severance a more fair and appreciated happening. The final buyout settlement cheque paid to Nick Tomkiw was $945,000 for skidders, camp equipment, wood transferred and two light plants. He had logging trucks and trailers plus a cable loader and two bulldozers owned by him that were additional assets he eventually sold. He also owned a large farm of 640 acres, all fenced and road accessed with an installed water system and three-bedroom home located near Peers.

Harry was the last contractor to pay off. His was an easy termination but there were still many memories disappearing after eleven years of his work. He was financially independent but concerned about his future and interests to keep him busy. He moved to Sorrento on Shuswap Lake in BC and invested in development of subdivision real estate, called Cedar Heights, I remember.

In March of 1969 we announced the successful proposal for our loading and hauling for the future. It was to Hearsey Transport of Duncan B.C. They proposed to locate twenty-one Kenworth Model 849S off-highway trucks with LT-40 model trailers in Hinton with one Northwest Model 6 cable crane and one TD 25 C model crawler tractor for loading and piledown area clearing and snow removal. The equipment would be delivered for use by August, 1969. Additional equipment would be rented locally as needed. All trucks and loaders would be radio-equipped on the Company's radio frequency. The contractor would load and haul the total volume of Company produced tree-length wood annually as scheduled and dispatch-controlled by the Company. The contract would be for five years with an annual review of rates and performance. The base starting rate schedule by one-way haul miles was submitted with the proposal. Comparatively, the proposed rates were seventeen percent lower than current rates being paid. Finally, the contractor proposed to build his own repair/maintenance garage in Hinton.

The contract haul started in August as proposed and continued for two years without any problems.

Our old, wooden Woodlands Garage burned to the ground on Halloween night. The cause was determined to be an electrical fault. Newt Hamilton, the Mechanical Supervisor was more despondent over the loss of his used parts inventory which he scrounged and hid for years in the building loft, than he was over the building itself. We immediately generated plans for a modern replacement building of metal and concrete construction. Our insurance claim would easily pay for it. The new garage was occupied in January, 1970.

My assistant was having difficulty filling his job role of responsibility for wood production and infrastructure development on the Forest Management Area. I had discussed with him, and confirmed our discussions of items and objectives in writing, a whole list of priority things to be done. The construction of a Class A road of fifty miles to our Marlboro Working Circle north of Edson was of high priority. We had the approved capital funds. We needed improved scheduling of wood hauling. We had a need for a replacement wood production foreman for one crew. Most of the identified action items had been deadlined by dates. Most of the deadlines were not being met and I had reached a point where missed deadlines were outnumbering success deadlines. I finally gave him notice that he was terminated with a severance payment of three months' salary. This was one month salary for each year of employment which bettered the current norm.

Two independent wood processing companies worked on our FMA in 1969. One company, Benbow Forest Products, had been encouraged to locate on our FMA since he was a fence post producer and our FMA had thousands of acres of stagnated lodgepole pine that resulted from previous forest wildfires. These stands could produce fence posts. Our company's FMA could be improved if the stagnated stands, those that were growing trees "as thick as hair on a dog's back" could be removed and replaced with a new stand of more widely-spaced regeneration of pine. This was a win-win situation. Benbow Forest Products got a supply of saleable fence posts while our Company got increased forest growth on the forest stand areas harvested for the posts.

The second, independent wood processing company on our FMA was a sawmiller, Don Terris who had earned an entitlement for timber allocation by his longevity of operation. We had an unwritten obligation to maintain our goodwill by allotting 750,000 foot board measure (fbm) of timber per year to him. Both Companies now had been told in writing by the government that they had an entitlement, in 1969, to a fixed volume of timber per year from our FMA. They were asked to designate if they wished to assure this supply of timber by either:

1. A Quota Certificate allocation issued by the Forest Service which was a legal document for perpetuity, or;
2. A Letter of Intent as a commitment from our Company to supply the timber volume indefinitely.

Both Companies elected to accept the Letter of Intent from our Company because of their past history of good relations, and began operations as Sale Units. Some years later the sawmiller had cause to wish he had taken the offer of a Quota Certificate from the government. Our Company had a new resident manager who was adamant about maintaining the supply of yearly timber volume to Don, just at a time when Don wanted to retire, sell his sawmill and transfer his right to timber for the sawmill to the new owner of the sawmill. In retirement, I advised Don to visit the government and have them provide copies of the correspondence related to timber supply, from the Company and from government. He tendered this documentation to the resident manager who changed his stance on the basis of new information. Don is still happy in retirement near the Bar F Ranch.

The Fox Creek Timber Development Proposal: 1970

The Fox Creek-Whitecourt Timber Development Area was advertised by the provincial government in 1970 for development proposals. Several proposals were submitted and public hearings were advertised and held in Fox Creek and Whitecourt. Three proposals were noteworthy. One was submitted by a consortium of four small sawmill operators active in the Fox Creek hamlet area; this proposal was nicknamed the FOUR M's PROPOSAL. They intended to build one large sawmill that they proclaimed would double employment in the area.

A second was submitted by Weyerhaeuser Canada to build a very large sawmill and a board plant with production of wood chips for pulpmill purchase and use near Whitecourt. The third proponent was Simpson Timber Company of the USA who proposed to build a large sawmill in Blue Ridge; a second stage development was to be a board plant adjacent to the sawmill. Wood chips would be sold or used in board manufacture, or both.

The successful proposals for development were announced by the government as the consortium sawmill development at Fox Creek by the Four M group[12] and the Simpson sawmill proposal at Blue Ridge with a government partnership of a crown corporation of Alberta Energy.

[12] Editors Note: Fred McDougall refers to this consortium in his 1998 Interview with Peter Murphy as Mulyk, Mostewich, McCorkel and Meunier (the four M's at Fox Creek)

The eventual, historical results of the successful proposals were quite different from the promoted intents. The Four M group sold their timber award almost immediately to the Simpson partnership and faded out of existence as a partnership. Simpson only received the transfer by government of timber quota volume from their purchase of the Four M award; this was volume the Four M individuals held prior to the TDA proposal hearings. One could look at this as a hoodwinking?

Simpson Timber Company and their partner built a sawmill at Blue Ridge. Today (1994) it manufactures 200 million board feet of lumber per year and uses some of the wood chips produced to make Medium Density Board. The timber use is about 858,000 m^3 per year which is about 100 percent of their available Forest Management Agreement area and Quota allocation dispositions of coniferous timber. Simpson Timber pulled out of the partnership in this company in 1981 and moved back to the United States. I personally believe they were terribly disillusioned with their incursion into Alberta's forest industry. I bought many thousands of Bone Dry Units of chips from the Blue Ridge sawmill which is currently named Blue Ridge Lumber (1981) Ltd.

Our Industrial Relations manager was fired in 1970 by Ivan Sutherland after a complaint from a local hotel that the IR manager had entered the hotel bar with the RCMP to pick up firefighting recruits to go to fight forest fires on our FMA. He had been requested to provide these recruits by the Alberta Forest Service as a courtesy, which was a traditional happening in the past. The hotel manager complainant claimed the action of recruiting hurt his beer parlour business. Our Company possibly could have stopped the issue with a $500 cheque to the irate hotel manager. No information was made available to our Company's management group on the cost of settlement of the IR Manager’s firing but it must have exceeded the cause.

Under Investigation

In August of 1971, my secretary Margaret Hamilton brought my coffee one morning and joined me with hers. It was an unexpected happening and I knew she wanted to talk. I asked her to close the door and offered her a cigarette. "OK Margaret, you must want to tell me something. What is it?” I asked.

"Well, Jim, did you know you were under investigation by the Company?” she asked me. I told her I didn't but I expected she was going to tell me about it.

"Last night I had a visit at home by a Mister Hyden, who has been hired to conduct a confidential investigation about you and your investment in Len's hauling business. I told him I knew nothing about that and that I didn't believe it. He left after a very short time. Newt and I talked about it for a while, because he was naturally curious about the visit. In spite of Mister Hyden saying it's a confidential investigation, I believe it's going to be common knowledge around town in no time."

"Well, Margaret I first thank you for telling me. Second it's not true as to the cause of the enquiry, I assure you. Third I intend to find out about the reason for it. I mean the real issue and who started it. I can guess right now, and so can you, probably. So let's leave it there, and don't keep it quiet. That's up to you. Thanks."

Before I could do much more about the revelation, Albert Boutin phoned me. "Jim, you know about you're being investigated. I had a guy at my office just now, someone called Hyden of Hyden Investigations asking about you and your partnership with Len. I told him I knew nothing and didn't believe it. He left before I had a chance to tell him to beat it. I have a funny feeling there's a cook up going on and you know as well as me who might do it. Emile told me at the Husky this morning over breakfast he too had a visit from the guy. It's supposed to be a quiet investigation; I think the town will know all about it by tonight. See you,” and he hung up.

So I phoned my lawyer and explained what was happening. His advice was curt and practical. "First, if it's your employer who started this and it sounds like it is, he has the right to do it. But you also have the right to challenge him about starting it and its

background. Where did the information come from? So go and talk to him. If he denies it is a Company generated investigation, confirm his denial in writing. You know, use the big sigh of relief approach, that you're glad it's not you. Keep in touch as this might be fun," and he signed off.

I had an immediate meeting with Sutherland by walking up to his office and asking his secretary if I could see him. She ushered me in as if I were expected. I explained the situation as I knew it and as the town was beginning to know it. I asked him for confirmation or denial. He was obviously taken aback by my challenge and immediately denied any investigation. I thanked him for his answer and told him I would confirm my understanding of our meeting in writing, which he accepted.

I wrote my confirmation memo to him. Two weeks later on a Thursday afternoon I was called to a meeting in his office. I went there and met Sutherland and our Controller sitting with a Mr. Hyden. The presence of the Controller confirmed some of the intimation that was exchanged in my phone conversation with Albert earlier.

The investigator, Mr. Hyden, introduced himself and tendered a business card. Then he began his verbal report without any invitation from Sutherland. I butted in and stopped the report presentation.

"Excuse me, Mr. Hyden but I wish to first make one comment. It is directed to Mr. Sutherland. Two weeks ago I asked you about this investigation and you denied it was happening. I confirmed our meeting in writing. I just want it known that we had a meeting and Mister Hyden knows about it. Thank you."

Mr. Hyden began. "I conducted an investigation into Mr. Clark's involvement as an investor in the truck hauling firm of Mr. Len of Hinton, at the request of your Company here. I tried to keep the investigation confidential, without it becoming common knowledge, by limiting my enquiries to a few people who knew Mr. Clark well. Unfortunately, too many people in the community know the subject, and exchanges of information almost in protest began to be exchanged. I terminated my enquiries immediately before my work was compromised. I found no evidence to support the allegation against Mr. Clark. This is the total substance of my report. I will answer questions if I am able. Thank you." Mr. Hyden sat back with no evident reaction towards any of us listening.

"Mr. Hyden, may I have a copy of your report?" I asked.

Without any reference towards his paying client, he turned to me and nonplussed said. "You most certainly can as far as I am concerned. You are not guilty of the reason for my investigation so you are entitled to share my findings." He passed me a folded letter-size page without any protest from anyone.

Sutherland looked at me and said, "Thanks for coming Jim." I left.

I phoned my lawyer and told him the outcome of the recent investigation. "So you don't want to take them to court for defamation of character?" he asked. "Strikes me you have enough friends around town to support your case." I declined.

Sawmill Development: 1971; Loss of the Reserve Area: 1972

The Minister of Forestry had visited our Hinton operations in 1970 and toured our Woodlands-Forestry operations by helicopter and ground transportation, and the next day inspected our pulpmill from woodroom to finished pulp line in the warehouse. We met with him, after lunch, in our boardroom to answer questions he directed and to discuss the future. He was very insistent we discuss the idea of our operating a sawmill in the future as he could not accept the fact we were wasting large sawlog timber material in making pulp.

After his visit, he wrote a thank you letter and made directed reference to our using large timber harvested from the FMA for the manufacture of lumber, rather than being wasted for pulp production. Our management group discussed this development. We then did a forest resource profile analysis to determine the most efficient size of sawmill we should consider for future operation allied with our FMA timber supply. The cost-benefit analysis indicated the sawmill should be sized at 50–70 million foot board measure per year with the 60–65 million fbm production indicating the least risk facility.

Sutherland asked me to visit the Vice President of solid wood products for our Corporation, in Tacoma, Washington to discuss the government pressure on us for a sawmill. I visited him armed with all our analysis data and draft design proposal for the sawmill and ancillary handling equipment, including a capital cost estimate and operating cost projection to profitability. Bill Hazelton gave me a pleasant and encouraging audience and I left with his exhortation, "Include it in your current capital budget and I'll guarantee you my support of it in New York next month. I'm surprised you people have waited until now to ask for a sawmill; you've got a wonderful forest resource."

In April of 1971 we received an invitation from the Minister of Forestry Allan Warrack to meet with him to discuss our use of the expanded forest management area we had arising from our 1968 revised Agreement for expansion. Sutherland, the Chief Forester and I met with him one afternoon in Edmonton. He had the Director of Forestry with him.

Our Chief Forester Des Crossley sat on the Minister's right facing him, while I occupied the chair on his left. Bob Steele, the Director, sat behind the desk facing us between me and Dr. Warrack. After pleasantries were exchanged, the Minister began a lengthy review of the history of our holding the Reserve for seventeen years during which time our Company had done nothing with it, nor had we even indicated a future use of it tied to an expansion proposal at a specific date. In the Minister's view, we no longer had a working agreement. We all entered into a discussion of associated factors related to the Reserve. Sutherland never uttered one word. Then the Chief Forester and I noticed the attention of the Minister and Director was riveted to Sutherland. We looked back and there he sat, oblivious to the meeting, it was embarrassing to all of us, and especially to us two Company employees. We continued the meeting without Sutherland; it was obvious the Minister had lost interest in our Company's attendance in his office. The conversation soon subsided; the Minister finally said, "Thank you for joining me here today, I appreciated it. I will be in touch with further, soon." We two shook hands with him and Bob Steele and left; they completely ignored farewells to Sutherland. The Chief Forester rolled his eyes at me as we descended in the elevator; I drew my index finger across my throat out of sight of Sutherland's view.

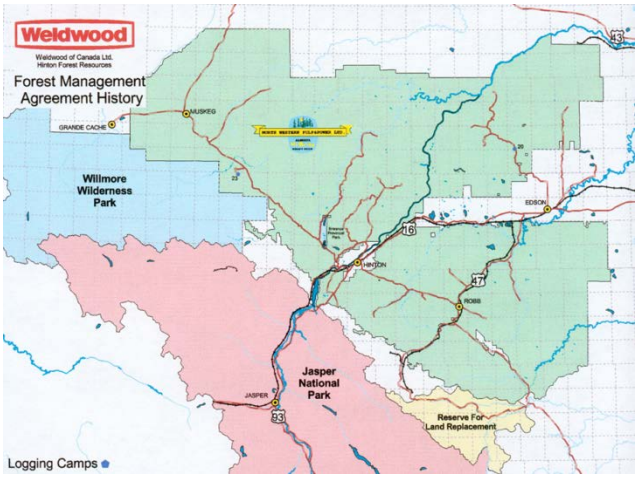
In early 1971, Sutherland took me to New York to promote our sawmill project which we had included in our capital budget, since the Minister was still riding him to stop wasting sawlogs. We went and met with our president, Bill Hazelton I did the talking promotion; Sutherland sat behind me. Finally Bill said to me.

"Jim, you visited me last year in Tacoma about this. I told you I would support your sawmill request. Now you ask me again. I tell you again I'll support it. You go home and tell your boss that. It was nice to see you." He was grinning at me as we left.

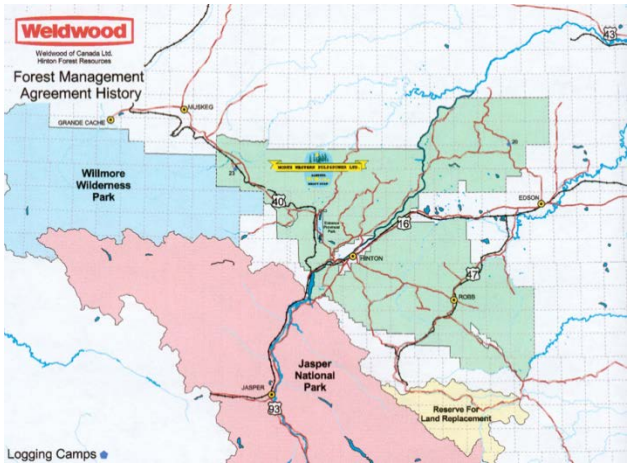
Sutherland was sure the Corporation would never approve our request for a fourteen million dollar sawmill, and anyway, "We have enough problems to keep us busy with two unions, a pulpmill and all that forest area to manage," was his reason given to us at final budget review in the boardroom. "And Bill Hazelton has left Tacoma to become the President in New York now, so our sawmill will be the least of his interests." But it was approved and construction began.

The sawmill project was included in the 1971 capital budget submission to New York that year and construction began. It cost fourteen million dollars and the capital cost was paid off in eighteen months of production.

In February 1972 we received a letter from the Minister officially cancelling our expanded land base from the 1968 Agreement and reverting to the original Forest Management Area boundaries. That same year, our sawmill began operation, although admittedly it was nowhere large enough to justify keeping the reserve area.



Forest Management Area: 1968 Agreement.



Forest Management Area
1971 Reduction to Original pre-1968 Size.

Bear Attack

Our radio operator Irene Thachuk received a call one beautiful afternoon in early October from Dick Smith to tell us he was bringing Rosaire LaCroix in by pickup to the hospital for medical aid after a bear attack. Irene came to my office door ashen faced to tell me. I phoned our new Human Resources manager, Ron, and told of the happening. He asked to accompany me to the hospital so I picked him up. Dick arrived at the emergency entrance just after Ron and me. The three nurses had the stretcher at Dick's truck and Rosaire walked to their stretcher and lay down. Duncan Reid met them coming through the entrance doors and directed them to the operating room. Grace Allan brought us two mugs of coffee and told us to be comfortable for a while.

Duncan came back to join us in an hour with the story of Rosaire's accident in condensed form as Rosaire had succumbed to the anaesthetic before it was all told. Rosaire had parked his truck south of Camp 22 to walk in the bush looking for a road route. He was walking and looking but didn't see the black bear sow with two cubs. He walked between the cubs and sow and she hit him full force on the back, bit him on the left shoulder blade as he went down. He woke some time later, saw his hard hat and reached to pick it up as he saw her and the two cubs sitting against a tree some distance from him. He slowly got on his knees and stood up. He turned and carefully walked away to the road. He was stumbling along it when Dick came along and picked him up. Dick used Rosaire's truck radio to call Irene. His condition? He'll be fine. The bear's bite was into his cape muscle on the left shoulder. Tore a small flap from the surface. It's cleaned and stitched. We'll keep him a few days. He might be ten days off work. You guys advise his wife. She might like a ride here to come and see him. She'll be emotional when you tell her.

Ron and I told her at her home. She only had a momentary reaction and was quickly calm when she knew he was only slightly injured. Ron took her to the hospital after dropping me at the office.

International Mentoring

In 1972, I was contacted by a friend who asked to visit our Woodlands operation. He wanted to assess me of a consulting project he had in the kingdom of Swaziland, Africa. He arrived by train a week later. Ian's project was development of a logging system

for Usutu Pulp Company Ltd. whose head office was in Mbabane. The forests there were plantations of Radiata pine growing on hilly to steep country. Our Hinton operation was the only Canadian example that closely resembled the Swaziland situation that Ian could think of. He made this visit to tour our operations and to discuss the logistics and planning we applied. I volunteered two days to tour him through our forest and the logging operations and to give him straight answers to his needs. He took pictures, gathered data on productivity, costs, scheduling. He agreed he would have to assess comparative data in Swaziland, particularly manpower productivity, since climate there was a major limiting factor.

Two months after Ian's visit, we received a copy of his proposal report to his client. It was patterned after our operations, with regard to methodology and equipment recommendations, and he gave recognition to our Company as the pattern example. He even included pictures of the forest in Swaziland aligned with picture examples from Hinton, to show the similarity of conditions.

In May we received a request through Ian for the Woodlands Manager of Usutu Pulp to visit our operations. Richard arrived in early June and stayed two weeks with us looking at every aspect of our operation. My wife and I spent his last weekend with him in Jasper. On a gondola trip up Whistler Mountain we spotted a mountain lion, our cougar, lying on a rock ledge twenty feet from the gondola car. Richard got several pictures of the lovely animal. “Thank you, mate, for your arranging for me to see one of your lions here. Much like ours in Africa you know," was his thanks to the gondola operator as they shook hands.

We received Richard's apologetic letter of thanks in December. He had been busy after his return, showing his 480 slides of his Canadian trip to all the ladies' aid groups in his small country.

In June of 1973, Usutu Pulp sent their transportation manager to visit our operation for two weeks. His interest was solely in our wood loading and hauling including our dispatch system controlled by radio communication. Towards the end of Jack's visit, he sat in my office and asked me, "Jim, do you think you're free to take me to Jasper on the Jasper gondola ride to see the lion that Richard saw last year? That was keen.”

We didn't see the lion that weekend but we did show him elk, one moose, lots of rocky mountain sheep and four bears, one a grizzly.

Exporting Fire-killed Timber to Support US Operations

Our corporation had a Rhinelander, Wisconsin operation that was terribly short of wood furnish for paper manufacture. Don, the woodlands manager asked me to help him get fire-killed wood from Alberta, as it was legally exportable from the province. He needed wood and a good manager or contractor to supply it. I found a huge area of wood available north of Fort Assiniboine. The finding of a contractor was the greatest problem; no one liked producing fire killed wood. Finally, I told Don we must put in a company operation and hire small contractors to cut and deliver the wood to railside. He would have to finance the project and trust the supervisor by bonding him. Then I had difficulty finding a supervisor.

In frustration, I phoned a friend in Kotakinaballo, Sarawak, and formerly Borneo. It was a longshot chance phone call as I only had the number of his logging camp residence in the jungle. He answered the phone, much to my surprise. "Schmidt, it's Jim. Are you interested in a supervisor's job here in Alberta to produce fire killed wood for rail delivery to Rhinelander, Wisconsin for our New York company. It would be shipped from Barrhead, Alberta or near there. Now you talk.”

"Wow, what a time for you to call,” he said as his voice came slowly over the phone from half a world away. "I've done nothing here for three months, Jim. Bill and the rest of them still try to get financing for this project with no luck. They get enough to keep me doing nothing. John and the rest are gone home to Canada. Both of us have our return tickets. Gizela leaves next week for

Frankfurt and Darmstadt to stay with Eingibor. I leave the following week from Kuala Lumpur to San Francisco and Vancouver to Edmonton by Thursday. We could meet. Now you talk."

"Jim here. You're into Edmonton a week Thursday. Meet me at two o'clock afternoon at the Chateau Lacombe. You'll have a room as will I. The Rhinelander manager will be there. We'll talk about everything and finalize if you take it or not. I leave the next morning to Finland. I'll stopover in Frankfurt and Darmstadt with arrival Saturday morning. Get Gizela to get me a room at the Wienmichael Hotel. I'll take them to dinner Saturday. Goodbye until we meet Thursday in Edmonton". I hung up.

Don and I were sitting in the hotel on the seventeenth. His wife was shopping. At two o'clock I answered the knock on the door. There was Schmidt with another man, who looked vaguely familiar. We all introduced and shook hands. Then Schmidt said, "Jim, this is Ruddy who used to be at Camp 20 years ago. We just met downstairs. He wanted to say hello for old times."

"Yeah, Jim, I remember you two from Edson and Camp 20. I'm one of the nuts that went up Mount Robson that one Saturday night, drunk. Remember, we left Hans up there; we never found him. Now I go. Thank you." Schmidt closed the door with a last wave to Ruddy.

"What a surprise," Schmidt said. "And I can't remember Ruddy's last name. Podurski, I think."

Then the three of us discussed the job Schmidt might take. We agreed it was solely a Rhinelander responsibility with me the local contact for quick-fix problems. Don's office would set up a bank account that allowed Schmidt to issue cheques of a limited amount. All other major accounts, like railroad, would be paid from Rhinelander. Schmidt's expenses for moving, accommodation, vehicle and establishment would be paid. We agreed Don and Schmidt would visit the government to apply for a timber allocation as I had already made the necessary enquiries and contacts to start the operation. Schmidt also confirmed his wife and friend would meet Saturday morning at the Frankfurt airport.

My plane arrived there at ten-fifteen Saturday morning. "Did he take the job?" was Gizela's first question when I met them both and hugged them.

"Yes, he did. And he told me to tell you you're going to live near Barrhead where there's good fishing and duck hunting. I have an Alberta road map for you to look at. Eingibor is to come and visit you." The two ladies were amazed at the arrangements and contacts made possible over such long distances. So was I.

We had a fine dinner Saturday night at an old converted grist mill restaurant. We all had the roe deer with dumplings, red cabbage and rich, hunter's gravy. The white spatlese Riesling wine was the unanimous choice to complete the meal.

My flight Sunday morning flew from Frankfurt to Hamburg where I transferred to Finnish Air to Helsinki. The two American companions were there when I arrived. We had come to see Finnish logging equipment made by the Rauma Rippola Company at Tampere. We saw logging in the adjacent forests for two days and then made an overnight flight by private aircraft to Kuope near the Russian border in eastern Finland. It was about 8:00 a.m. when we arrived at the small, modern airport. Six Mig model 15 fighter aircraft of the Russian airforce were parked in revetments in the forest adjacent to the landing tarmac. As we left our aircraft to walk to the terminal, a Russian commercial jet aircraft landed; it was a Tupolev three-engine model, the equivalent of the Boeing 727 Whisper jet except it had a plexiglass nose cone. It could be quickly converted to a bomber aircraft.

The representative of Rauma who met us was the spitting image of William Conrad, the American movie star who played Cannon in the popular TV detective series. We watched the Russian passengers leave their plane and enter the terminal. Cannon remarked, "They are allowed into the coffee shop only. They come from Murmansk and go to Moscow. The Russian bear is very

evident here. It's only sixty miles to their border. You saw their fighter planes parked in the forest. It rained here last Saturday when we were to have an air show, so it was cancelled. They will fly in it this Saturday."

We continued to call him Cannon as we couldn't pronounce his first name. He was a prince of a man, and strong enough to hit the base of an unopened bottle of Vodka with the heel of his forearm and cause the screw top to spin off onto the ground.

We saw many logging operations around Kuope (Ku-o-pee), with Finnish equipment being used, impressively. All three of us visitors agreed though that the equipment was too light to handle our larger trees in North America.

A Brief Experience with Railway Tie Production

At our monthly management meeting, Sutherland discussed the subject of railway tie manufacture in our sawmill. The Canadian National Railway had talked to him about their critical shortage of number one and two ties, whose depth and width dimensions were seven inches by eight inches (7" X 8") and 6" X 8". Their price offered was good and he had promised them 240,000 ties over the winter months of October to March. He advised me to make sure the sawmill had lots of pine logs to manufacture the ties. This generated lots of discussion about revisions to cutting plans and government review and approvals.

Woodlands delivered lots of good, large pine logs to the sawmill and it produced 240,000 railway ties and sold them to the CNR. The whole Alberta forest industry that year produced 360,000 railway ties; we had produced sixty-seven percent of the provincial total and made a negligible profit for all our effort. We never made railway ties again.

Trucking Crisis

Our loading and hauling contractor, approached me in 1972 for an increase in his contract rates of one cent per ton mile. He was experiencing a loss situation after three years of contract work, without an increase. The last year had been tough work with much rain to deteriorate the roads. His accountant had advised him he needed a one cent per ton mile rate increase. This represented a twelve percent improvement or four percent annually over the last three years. He reminded me the increase was in line with negotiated increases which he was paying his employees because of Company negotiated increases.

He had advised his Vancouver banker of his situation. I promised to discuss this with our management group, which I did two days later. Our team discussed the matter briefly. Then I was told by Sutherland that our Controller would handle the matter to decision. This struck me as bad news. It had shades of retribution reflecting to the past and to the investigation of my alluded silent involvement with the trucking contractor, in 1971. After our group meeting, I advised the contractor that his problem would be handled by our Controller. He was immediately upset as there were bad relations between the two of them involved.

Nothing happened for two weeks. Then the Vancouver bank foreclosed on the loan. The Company then cancelled the contract, since it was nullified by the bank's action. This whole precipitous situation left us unable to deliver wood to our mills. My boss told me to hire local truckers from anywhere possible. Rumours started that the contractor was taking the Company to court. No truckers wanted to work for us with the clouded uncertainty of operations.

Then the bank issued a disposition of assets public advertisement of the contractor's equipment, detailing each piece and its advertised price, with the bank's contact person identified with address and telephone number. This action made our management group aware of the serious breakdown in our historical success of operations. My boss, the Transportation manager and the Purchasing manager were all suddenly involved in hiring logging truck owner-operators, from anywhere. I and the Hauling superintendent were kept busy receiving, documenting, educating and scheduling them into the wood haul operation.

The results were chaos. Accidents became common. Emigrant truckers occupied every motel and hotel in town for two months.

Then one Monday morning only a handful of trucks reported for work. The other forty-two trucks and drivers were gone, back to Port Alberni, Prince George, Merritt, Peace River, Chetwynd, Mackenzie, Malakwa, in BC and Alberta. It was the beginning of spring breakup.

Then the accounts started being delivered to our Company for the unpaid hotel and motel room charges, meals, tips, diesel fuel, oil, lubricants, truck repairs, groceries, clothing, telephone calls.

Leo Leivo in Accounting was assigned to receive the bills, reconcile them by establishment, obtain approval for payment and issue payment cheques. My office for weeks became very familiar with the repeated visits and the common introduction of Leo entering: "Got another one for your approval." Grin.

Rumour started in our office that the settlement cost of all the unauthorized bills associated with the migrant truckers far exceeded the value of the original requested increase, for five years.

Eventually, we hired a local trucker to haul half of our yearly wood volume. The Company bought sixteen trucks and trailers to haul half. The Company wood haul was a fiasco for three years with inflated costs and poor performance by hourly paid workers. It took several years of slow, diligent work to turn the tide of frustration and disappointment into an up swell of improved performance. Len Hearsey came back after several years to help us create this improvement.

Return to Contract Trucking

The trucking fiasco of 1972 was slowly being mended and an improvement in performance by the log haul truckers was evident. Our sixteen trucks were sold gradually and private contracted truckers replaced them. Our wood loading of the trucks was still a bottleneck in the whole wood acquisition program. One day I met Len Smith in the woodyard and asked him if he would go with me to Washington and Oregon to see self-loading trucks. We left together in a Doubting Thomas frame of mind. We attended an equipment demonstration in Eugene, Oregon. We talked to a lot of people.

Self-Loading Truck, 1970s. Photo Credit: Weldwood Photo Collection

We learned that loggers here were using a lot of self-loading trucks. The truck loaders were hydraulically powered from the truck engine. There was a population of 3,500 of these loaders working in the two states. We were burdened with brochures, operating data and cost figures. We went home with Len having an offer of a free loader mounted on one of his log trucks, and a request he consider a dealership in Hinton.

Two weeks after returning home, Len had a loader mounted on one of his trucks. Six months after it started work, we checked its comparative work performance; it worked twenty-two percent more hours than the conventional trucks because of its ability to access small volumes of wood even in difficult conditions. Gradually, we converted our whole loading-hauling system.

Management Upheaval

At our March 1976 management meeting, Sutherland told me that Ed McMahon (St. Regis Vice President of Personnel and New Development) from New York would make a visit to us in April. He wished to have a woodlands tour in the morning with his assistant. I was to arrange it.

Ed and Dave arrived in Hinton. I picked them up the next morning at eight and we drove to the helicopter pad for boarding. We flew north to the Berland Working Circle operation supervised by Joe. The low hanging cloud over the Fox Creek plateau disallowed us landing near the logging site. I saw Joe driving toward the railway crossing on the highway and directed our pilot Bob Southworth to land there. Joe picked us up and toured us around his operation in his vehicle. He returned us to the chopper and we flew back to Hinton.

"You know Jim, I didn't come to Hinton to see logging," Ed said to me as we boarded my Company Bronco vehicle. "That was a ruse about my reason for coming. I came to see you, as I damn well want to know what's going on here. I hope you are going to tell me. Where can we talk? How about our hotel as I haven't had any coffee for a long time?"

We went to the hotel and slid into a booth at the very back of the coffee shop. We talked for three hours. He asked the questions and I answered, if I could. He indicated he got some surprises. Some were major revelations. I left them in the coffee shop. There was no sign of them around our office that afternoon or the following days.

On an afternoon in July, my radio-telex operator came to my open door and knocked on it while looking in. "Can I come in please?" she asked. Her face was very pale, I noticed, when she sat down after closing the door. She held a brown, letter-sized envelope in her hand. "Mr. Clark, I need your help as I don't know what to do with the telex in here," and she waved the envelope.

"OK, Irene, let's see what is in the envelope and I'll help you decide what to do with it. That's what you want, anyway," I told her. I looked at the two page telex from Ed McMahon to Sutherland. Hot stuff. It read, in summary.

"As of August 10, your employment with the Company at Hinton is terminated. You will be replaced on August 11. You will vacate the Company house you now occupy and will have access to our Company house on Dorin Drive as a rental unit. You will be employed after August 10 as a consultant to our Corporate office and will receive direction in your future work from me only. You will have no contact with our Hinton Division office. Your future salary checks will be issued from our office here to your postal address in Hinton. All other aspects of your employment including benefits and pension will continue unchanged until your retirement."

There was more to the telex, but the summary is sufficient. I understood Irene's trepidation. "Irene, I will handle this delivery instead of you. I only ask that this be confidential to me and to you. No one else will see it except the recipient. You have other

copies you file, I know. You might be more comfortable if you file your copy in my confidential drawer here in my desk, at least until the issue is finished."

She heaved a visible sigh of relief, got the other copy which we both initialed before she put into my desk drawer. I took the sealed envelope copy to Sutherland's office, was told by his secretary he was away, showed her my initialing of the sealed flap division of the envelope, and put the correspondence on Sutherland's desk. She knew I didn't want her to open it.

Jim Bowersock (who had left the Company in 1971) returned in August to fill the job of Vice President and Resident manager. I never saw Sutherland again in our community. Not long after, Bowersock was promoted to General Manager of the Kraft Division of St. Regis, and Ken Hall replaced him in Hinton.

Timber Development Area Proposals

A Timber Development Area was advertised by the provincial government in the Rocky Mountain House area for development proposals. Our Company studied the area in depth but decided against making a development proposal. The City of Edmonton participated in the hearings by publicly stating it was opposed to any pulpmill development in the TDA that used the North Saskatchewan River for its water source and for outfall of mill effluent. The River was the source of Edmonton's drinking water.

I have often thought of Edmonton's opposition to this development. Then I think about two revealed situations related to the City that contradicts the City's "purer than thou" environmental attitude. These situations are:

1. The City recently admitted that 87 outfall sewers were cascading contaminated water into the River above the fresh water intake point for its drinking water.
2. Ina 1980 revelation, my youngest son and his travelling companion told me that, when they paddled from Rocky Mountain House to Lachine, Quebec in a 16-foot Kevlar canoe they could not find an uncontaminated section of the River in which to bathe from Edmonton to the River outfall at Grande Rapids on Lake Winnipeg.

In 1979, the provincial government advertised a Timber Development Area for proposal submissions in what was called the Berland TDA. This was our former Provisional Reserve that had been cancelled in 1971. Our Corporate office encouraged us to propose a major development and expansion.

Grande Cache was identified by government for preferential benefits from any proposal. Since our current Forest Management Area abutted the advertised TDA, it allowed us to maximize our proposal for the "most- favoured" town. The TDA advertisement created great interest along the perimeter and included communities who would benefit from industrial development. The proponents received many invitations to present their proposals at Chamber of Commerce dinner meetings or equivalent functions.

Grande Cache community was the most vocal and critical town about proposals made. It was a strange phenomenon by a modern, government-created and government-funded town that was just surviving, economically. The attending Chamber members were convinced our Company could build bigger and better facilities for product manufacture, in spite of our revelation that there was insufficient timber to support such dreams.

Two major proposals shared the spotlight of award of the Berland TDA after the public disclosure meetings were held. Our Company's proposal was an expansion of our pulpmill and the addition of a light-weight coated paper machine.

Our opponent's proposal was a newsprint mill near Whitecourt, a sawmill near the "most-favoured" community and one at Knight, Alberta.

The government decision awarded the TDA to our opposition, a BC company in which the Alberta Government had a 28% share investment. The successful Company immediately built a hundred million foot board measure sawmill near Grande Cache. Then it withdrew its commitment to the other proposed developments and moved back to its home province, where it sold out its Company to a non-Canadian investor. It was a blow and an insult to the sincere proponents for the Berland TDA. It was a similar insult to government.

Establishing Fox Creek Development

Around 1979, Sam Sinclair and I got involved in trying to find funding for a group of Native people so they could get equipment and living accommodations to start logging for our Company on a contractor basis. This community of fourteen men and their families came from the Rocky Mountain House area voluntarily to find a better living environment. They were now located northwest of Hinton along Fox Creek living in some abandoned logging camp shacks off the gravel main road that was later to become Highway 40.

Our quest took us to two governments, the provincial and federal. We visualized a small community being established adjacent to the Berland River west of the main road, where good spring water was available. Heating fuel was available from the forest. The children could be bussed to school in Muskeg. Neither government was willing to establish living accommodation because it conflicted with the Indian Act. They were willing to finance the purchase of powersaws only. Sam and I decided to stop dealing with government except for the funding for equipment. We met with the Fox Creek group and offered them a contract to log and deliver timber to our Company. Sam got money for powersaws and horse harnesses. From somewhere, we also got six skid horses. The group continued living in their shacks. We found some lumber so they could weatherproof their houses.

Within a month, the employable males were being trained by one of my staff, Norm Teskey. In two months the men were working independently; my superintendent of the Berland Working Circle was supervising their work quality and contract performance. Sam devoted considerable time on the operation checking on their social, educational and medical needs. He also addressed accounting, payroll and other business details.

At the end of the first year of operation, big improvements were evident. Every husband and unmarried worker had a new pickup truck. Some families were living in purchased trailers, and the group was planning to hire a manager.

One day Sam asked me to meet with a spokesman of the group to discuss the manager hire situation and the purchase of two Company used skidders. Three of them came to my office with Sam. One of their wives was the spokesperson and she was a fine intermediary.

They wanted to hire a reliable white manager so he could represent them with other whites. We struck a deal to sell them two used skidders, and did a superb overhaul on them before ownership transfer.

Over the years this group progressed with continuing success. They are mostly town resident now living in owned houses or trailers. Their children attend school, and dress and achieve in education like model students.

Their contract situation allows them to work independent of the Company's operation. If some fellow needs time off work to hunt or attend a Sundance ceremony, he arranges his time off without a problem. Their work accommodates their traditions and ancestral way of life, while they accommodate to the work's need. It's a Native Peoples' success story and they're rightly proud of it.

Their Chief in 1979 was a very elderly man. I talked to him at Fox Creek one day after they had moved into the abandoned shacks. He, Sam and I were talking about work for them. The Chief said to us, "We want work to do. We don't want any welfare money

cause it'll spoil us. That's why we're here and we're going to stay here. You find a way to give us work and we'll thank you". He has.

Proposal for Integrating Wildlife and Forest Management at Hinton

For many years, foresters and wildlife biologists in Alberta were working at cross purposes in the management, or lack of it, of the fauna resource associated with the forests. There seemed to be no objectives in management of wildlife species nor was there a definite knowledge about their populations by numbers and placement. Biologists inputted opinions to the forest industry's annual timber harvest plans. Many of their inputs were requests for "like-to-have" items that had no justification as being wildlife beneficial.

In April of 1982, the Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources hosted a workshop in Jasper, Alberta for government and industry foresters and wildlife biologists, to address the theme, "Timber Harvesting in the Boreal Forest: Capitalizing for Wildlife".

The keynote speaker was Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, Chief Biologist of the Range and Wildlife Habitat Laboratory of the U.S. Forest Service at Portland, Oregon. He spoke, and illustrated his lecture with coloured slides, for four and one half hours about the integration process they developed for management of timber and wildlife in Washington and Oregon in the Blue Mountains. He made the understanding of concepts easy for the listener. At the end of the two-day workshop, foresters and biologists respected and understood each other much better, due largely to Dr. Thomas. The workshop concluded with Champion Forest Products (Hinton, Alberta) Ltd. offering to participate with the Fish and Wildlife Division and the Alberta Forest Service in development of an integrated resources management approach using Champion's FMA as a pilot area. A seven-member committee of industry and government worked three years to develop a final report in 1986 and this was followed by another consultant report in December, 1987. It was titled “An Integrated Forestry-Wildlife-Fish Resource Management Approach for the Champion Forest Products (Alberta) Ltd. Forest Management Area, Hinton, Alberta.”

Dr. Jack Ward Thomas is the Chief Forester of the U.S. government at this date of September 15, 1994.

The Champion: St. Regis Merger, Reorganization, and Retirement

In 1984, our Corporation began discussions with a partner about merger. Speculative investors began a campaign to acquire massive blocks of shares of the corporation to allow them access, as board members, to the decision-making process of management. The executive teams of the involved companies pressed the merger discussion to agreement and the process of amalgamation began.

The merger initially was both beneficial and demoralizing to some employees. Some were suddenly redundant through their duplication; two identical positions and functions were not needed. These were the demoralized and outcasted employees. Others benefitted, through buyout of their existing share options. One could experience the demoralized mood that prevailed at corporate headquarters when head office employees visited the divisions during merger. It was a sad but necessary period.

In 1983, the Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) elected me president; I continued on the Board as Past President into 1984. In that same year, I was elected National President of the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF). This period of my career was a busy involvement in issues like the U.S. countervail action against the Canadian lumber industry, the declining membership in the CIF, the improvement of AFPA members' performance in safety and Workers' Compensation costs and resulting rate levies.

By 1984, our Woodlands and Forestry departments were involved in a reorganization review. This was a subject I had fostered for years because I believed our forest management concepts were leading us into an integration of management of all the

resources associated with the forest, including the attendant presence and influence of man. In early 1985, my wife and I were finally interested in retirement. We made a vacation to coastal BC and bought a house south of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island at Cedar by the Sea on Dodd's Narrows. We rented the house and then returned to Alberta and to work. As owners of a retirement home, we now talked the subject every day. One day I announced to my wife, "I think I'm going to take early retirement at the end of October. What do you think?" I asked.

"Best news I've heard today. When do you advise the Company? Go for it."

A week later I had breakfast with my boss Ken Hall in Edmonton; we were waiting for a consultant to arrive from Seattle for another session on Woodland's reorganization. "When would you like to retire, Jim?" my boss casually asked. "At the end of October of this year, if that's all right," I told him point blank.

"You must be kidding," he said. "You and I are both slated to retire in 1989. Are you serious?"

"Yes, Ken, I'm serious. The incentive is twenty-eight years of Hinton. We both believe we deserve to retire to do something else. I'll give you a request memo." Just then Don from Seattle walked in.

We shook hands and he sat with us. "Jim's just told me he wants to retire in October. What do you think?" Ken asked him.

The retirement party at the Steak House was a great occasion that our whole family enjoyed and will long remember. On my wall at the right are many mementos of the evening and of those twenty-eight years of involvement with a world of wonderful people. I thank them all for the privilege of association.

Epilogue

Retirement started on November 1, 1985 with a drive west from Hinton on Highway 16 in our Ford Bronco. West of Valemount we ran into an early winter snowstorm that continued until Clearwater. We stayed overnight in Kamloops and on November 2 we shared a delightful evening with our relatives Eileen and Clive in Vancouver. They came to Nanaimo with us the next day and we all slept on our carpet floor that night in our retirement home. Since we had no dishes or glasses, we drank rye and 7-UP from the severed bottoms of plastic pop bottles. They stayed to help us arrange furniture when it arrived the next day in the moving van. We also enjoyed two evenings eating dinner of roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, mashed potatoes, vegetables and gravy at our local pub, which Clive especially loved, in equal portions—the pub and the dinner. It was a fine way to start our new adventure of retirement. Our relatives enjoyed frequent visits, so they said.

While we were busy improving our new home and property at Cedar by the Sea, I travelled frequently to Alberta to do consulting work. It involved work on the approach to forest and wildlife management integration. Then I accepted an appointment at the University of Alberta as Industrial Forest Management Professor. I signed a contract on a consulting basis for one year, to end April 30, 1988. I did not renew my contract, even though we enjoyed living in Edmonton with our children available for visits.

I started a major consulting project with a large development prospect in Alberta. This occupied me from 1987 to 1992 on a sporadic basis. A second large project was undertaken in the High Level area of Alberta for development of a hardwood pulpmill. The project terminated when we determined there was insufficient wood to furnish manufacture.

In 1990, we moved back to Alberta to be closer to our children and to reduce my constant travel.

This Memoir started out as a novel, “FORESTER” but it quickly became evident that I was writing my memoirs, not a piece of fiction. It was written with some encouragement of our three children. "Tell us what you did in your work". Our family of five had years of exposure to the forests, from 1949 when I started professional work at Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, until today.

Rocky has a unique identity for me in that it was the place I earned enough money to repay a $640 loan to Mr. H R MacMillan, which he made to me in 1948 while I attended the University of British Columbia. I still have his thank-you letter.

MAY 23, 1950

Dear Mr. Clark:
I have your letter of May 8 and wish to express my satisfaction at having been able to help you, and to compliment you on the splendid manner in which you have paid off this loan. I hope that everything goes along well with you.
Yours sincerely,
H R MacMILLAN

(handwritten postscript) It has been 42 years since I was at Rocky Mountain House—38 years since I set up first forest administration in Alberta & put out field parties on defining east slope boundaries.
HRM

My family enjoyed the forest for camping, fishing, hunting, trail riding in the Rockies to Amethyst Lakes, Tonquin Valley, Willmore Wilderness Park and Mystery Lake to Miette. We skied, snowshoed and ice skated in the winter. Even our white cat Snowy went camping and kept us awake at night while she moused. All three children worked during their summer holidays in the forest either at tree planting, logging and cruising, or in our Company sawmill.

James D Clark

Hinton, 1994

CLARK, JAMES DORAN

On August 13, 2007 James Doran Clark of Hinton, Alberta passed away at the age of 82 years.

Left to mourn his loss and cherish his memory, his daughter Dorothy MacIntyre (George Treble) of Hinton, Alberta, his son Doran James (Cynthia) Clark of Calgary, Alberta and their children Simon and Adam, and his son Warren (Erika) Clark of Edmonton, Alberta and their children Natalie, Paula and Jacob. He is further survived by his sister-in-law Lucille Clark as well as numerous other relatives and many friends.

James was predeceased by his parents Sidney and Mary Jane Clark as well as his brother Sidney George Clark in 2007.