

Account from the ...

A PRESENTATION
MADE AT THE

PUBLIC HEARING ON
FOREST TENURES

NELSON, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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BY

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Introduction

Over the recent past there have been many changes in B.C. policy, administration, and legislation relative to our natural resources.

Only a few years ago the Wilderness Advisory Committee was set up and directed to look at and recommend on 26 "environmental hotspots" in B. C. Shortly thereafter the Ministry of Forests issued a White Paper which addressed 46 forest policy issues. A revised stumpage policy was recently developed in response to a threatened U.S. countervail duty on lumber.

Last year you commissioned a consultant to travel throughout B. C. to investigate and report on the Ministry's Woodlot Licence program. I understand new policies in this regard will be released later this month. In the fall of 1988 your Ministry issued a White Paper on Incremental Silviculture. The results of this are not yet formulated or at least not yet published. The Range Section of your Ministry is presently undergoing an internal review and Jan. 16 of this year circulated a White Paper for public input.

In July of 1988 your Ministry circulated a White Paper to a selected audience which included your Ministry staff, other resource ministries, and potentially eligible forest tenure holders. This paper contained your Ministry's proposals relative to expansion of the TFL Program.

Why wasn't it advertised and made available to the general public as per the normal procedure for other White Papers?

In response to public criticism of this proposed policy, you are presently travelling throughout the Province and after an eight day tour, ostensibly are going to develop forest policy, which if implemented as per your proposal, will impact upon the management of one of the most valuable resource bases in the world for the next 25 years.

Mr. Minister I question the credibility of what you are doing!

At the very least, following your tour, your Ministry should develop a White Paper on this topic and circulate it for additional input before developing a formal policy direction for B. C.

However, in view of the above situation and broad spectrum of issues and resources involved, what should happen is that the Premier of this Province should set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry with its terms of references being broad enough to address the entire natural resource spectrum in B. C.

Decisions and policies that guide or influence any one natural resource will, by their very nature, impact on every other resource. Recreation, Wilderness, and mining offer a specific and timely example.

With that introduction and recommendations I respectfully would like to comment on the proposed tenure conversion policy as described in your policy paper of July, 1988.

Philosophical Policy Direction:

You recently attended and gave an address to the Future Forest Policy Conference at the University of Victoria. In your address you referred to the Bruntland Commission report "Our Common Future" and, I believe, stated that your Government generally supported the findings of this report. The Ministry of Environment, in fact, has set up a task force to implement many of the practices recommended by the Commission.

I would like to take a short quote from this report "...the time has come to break out of past patterns, economics and ecology must be completely integrated in decisionmaking and lawmaking processes, not just to protect the environment but also to protect and promote development". This integration of ecological and economic goals would be "best secured by decentralizing the management of resources upon which local communities depend and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources."

In 1986 the World Health Organization passed resolutions calling for the empowerment of communities, local ownership and control, the protection of natural environments and the conservation of natural resources.

In October of 1987 the Premier of this Province presented his plan for decentralization. In this plan he stated that " To be effective...to get the job done...our communities and regions need more than increased freedom and autonomy...they need tools and resources."

When Mr. VanderZalm appointed his cabinet (with you as Minister of Forests) he did so with the belief that you were the individuals who could best implement, on a more specific basis, his overall policy directives.

With these "community involvement" thoughts in mind I would like to recommend that the Annual Allowable cut in B. C. be apportioned as per the following table.

PROPOSED PROVINCIAL AAC APPORTIONMENT

| | <u>Approx. present allocation**</u> | <u>Proposed by Govt. **</u> | <u>My Proposal</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Forest TFL | 29% | 67% | 50% |
| Industry FL&TSL | 63% =92% | 15% =82% | - |
| Community F.L. | .002% * | .002% | 25% |
| Small Business | 6% | 16% | 15% |
| Woodlot License | .6% | 1% | 5% |
| Forest Service Reserve | <u>1.4%</u> | <u>1%</u> | <u>5%</u> |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% |

} 5070 ***

* Mission has a TFL with an AAC of 43000M³; The Stuart - Tremuleur Indian Band of Ft. St. James has a TFL with an AAC of 120,000M³.

** My best estimate based on Government statements and other available information.

*** This volume would still mostly be available to the large forest companies. However, they would be expected to bid for it on the open market as per the basic principles of free enterprise.

This proposal would have several advantages. It would implement, at least in part, the recommendations of the Bruntdland Commission, the World Health Organization, and the Premier of this Province.

It would also give the people of this province, the ultimate owners of the resources, a MEANINGFUL say in the management and disposition of a significant portion of those resources.

Too often public input is at a meeting like this where individuals go through considerable effort and personal stress to get their concerns across and once given, are soon forgotten. A quote from Shakespeare says it all when referring to such a person and scenario: " a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more".

Another example of the Ministry's idea of public input: TFL Management Working plans are advertised for public review and comment. I recently reviewed such a plan and submitted my written comments to the Regional Manager on Dec. 16, 1988. To date I have not even received an acknowledgement of my comments, let alone a meaningful response to them.

In my opinion, this is not meaningful input.

Another advantage to this Proposed Apportionment is that placement of the responsibility of management in the hands of the local concerned citizens would significantly reduce, if not eliminate, embarrassing public vs private confrontations such as have occurred on Meares Island, the Stein River, and the Babine River area with the Gitksan.

I firmly believe that if the Ministry of Forests proceeds with the allocation of 67% of the cut to the Forest Industry sector in the form of TFL's there will be considerably more public confrontations of this nature, and perhaps even worse.

Another advantage is that it would reduce the concentration of political-corporate power that the major companies have. This would enhance competition, and result in the creation of more locally-based jobs instead of a continued reduction in industry based jobs.

Attached to this submission are two additional papers that explain in more detail the Community Forest Licence concept and the rationale why area based tenures are a very desirable form of tenure. As shown in the above table, this proposal recommends that 80% of the Provincial AAC be secured in area based tenures. I strongly believe that area based tenures are an essential ingredient for improved and more intensive Forest Management in B. C.

I believe that a fair description of the majority of people in this room and of many of those that live in the smaller communities of B.C. could be given as:

honest
credible
responsible
reasonable
With a good land ethic
intelligent
and concerned about the quality of
life in their communities.

Surely it is not too much to ask that only 30% of the Provincial AAC and related resources and management responsibility be given to these people - the true owners of the resource.

The big industries can still have the majority of the cut and control, and almost all the logs and timber; all I'm asking is that the people be given the responsibility and opportunity to manage a portion of them. I know of no logical reason why the management of the resources of this province cannot be shared with its people - - surely it can!

All too often we hear about how it is done in Scandanavia, about how well their forests are managed. In Scandanavia, on the majority of lands through the tenure of relatively small woodlots, THE PEOPLE MANAGE THE FORESTS. The companies buy the logs from the people.

I'd like to borrow another quote from Shakespear. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, and we must take the current when it surges or lose our venture."

The Community Forest Licence and Woodlot Licences offer us right now a great opportunity and a positive direction for both Provincial and local fortune.

Mr. Minister, you can lead us in that direction.

I sincerely hope you will, and avail us of that good fortune.

We all will benefit, the Ministry through reduced resource conflicts, the industry through a stumpage system more responsive to market demand, and the people through acquisition of the tools and resources required so that they can truly have a meaningful say in the management and disposition of their resources.

I would like to end my presentation on a philosophical note, with a partial quote from a noted poet and philosopher Kahil Gibran.

"Trees are poems that earth writes upon the sky...."

Community Forestry and Woodlot Licences offer us an effective method that will ensure that those poems will long endure, and remain forever etched, not only in our minds, but also on our skies.

Thank you.



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