

Presentation to the Committee on Wood Supply
Edmundston Dec 22, 2003

My name is Anne Knudsen, I live in Victoria Country. I am a co-owner of a 300-acre woodlot, am an educator, a concerned citizen and one of those environmentalists. I have been co-managing our woodlot for 30 years, supplying some firewood, saw logs, pulp, Christmas trees, maple syrup and fiddleheads. We maintain a small sawmill mostly for our own use, and we maintain trails and roads for recreational purposes such as skiing, dog sledding, snow shoeing and walking.

A debate about wood supply in NB has been long overdue, and with the Jaakko Poyry report we have been given a forum to start this discussion. A couple of years ago the industries told government it needed more fiber, and for government to change the Crown Land policies. From there the JP consultation firm was hired, and the resulting report produced. How we got to have public hearings I am not sure, but the criteria for presenting is that as presenters we can only comment on the specific recommendations of the report. In other words we can only comment on a very small part of the issue. What really is needed, would be an overall in-depth debate about the whole Crown Land use and its place in the livelihood of the people of NB.

Let me first express that I find it totally unacceptable that:

- 1) Big Business dictates to our government to change the Crown Land Act or policies, just so it can gain more control over an already majority share of the land;
- 2) that our government complies and pays for a large part of a study of how to do this. Why did industry not pay for this report? Is it not part of business to make projections and studies? Let them do their own work and let us not, subsidize this type report with tax money.
- 3) that NB hired a Finnish firm to do the report rather than using people from the province or at least Eastern Canada. Local knowledgeable people would be preferable, and at the same time government would be supporting the local economy by hiring experts in various fields from this province.

Briefly put, the JP report specifically makes 3 recommendations: initiate more intense growing of fir and spruce in order to double the volume cut on Crown, guaranteed wood supply from government and guaranteed compensation if this supply is not met.

The 6 licensees that cut on Crown Land have access to app. half of all public land now, and the proposal to turn much of this into plantations to satisfy the pulp and paper industry is totally irresponsible. How can we still think that we have the right, capabilities and knowledge to do this and get away with what would amount to totally changing the landscape of NB? Have we not enough evidence around us and enough expertise to inform us that nature exists in a subtle balance, and even when only few small pieces of this structure is disturbed, everything is off balance until equilibrium can be found again. There is a limit to the size of the changes we can make, and still retain balance.

NB forests are diverse, and although some of their diversity has been lost already, everything from soil levels, to wildlife, plant life, water sources, and tree species are in

balance through years and years of existing within this specific region and environmental conditions. If we clear-cut large areas, treat those areas with herbicide to kill off natural regeneration, then plant fir in neat rows and manage these thousands of acres with more herbicide until the soil is barren (at which point we might have to use fertilizers to grow the trees!) or only support the unnaturally imported or generated trees, we will have lost a whole world of natural life, and the balance within the eco system will most definitely be lost. Can we afford to be off balance in a time of climate change? or in a time of budworm outbreaks? Why would it be a benefit to us to wipe out hardwood and concentrate on softwood species on app. 40% of the Crown land?

Giving the industry guarantees for wood supply or compensation for loss of supply are preposterous recommendations that I hope Big Business would be too embarrassed to even consider. Maybe this practice is common in Finland, but in this country guaranteed annual income is discussed for lower income families who for some reason are in a crises situation. Furthermore how could our government guarantee that wood will be available from Crown Land for the next 50 years when the First Nations people already have treaty rights to this land? It is not in the power of the provincial government to legally bind this land or its resources to others until a settlement with First Nations has been reached.

The nature of industrial companies within our capitalistic society is such that they need to grow every year, they must make a profit, and have larger annual earnings to satisfy the investors. So no matter how much we give the industry, they will want more, and obviously they will try to keep their costs down as much as they can. When their resources are dried up, they will move to another location. It is a fallacy to believe that subsidizing big business will benefit us all. The money earned by these licensees leave the area; after all, 5 out of the 6 licensees are foreign owned. We have seen examples of how local resources are used for profit making for the good of Big Business such as the cod fishery in NFL that dried up and left the communities in poverty. This can happen in the forest industry as well.

The 'boom and burst' cycles are simply part of the nature of the beast called Big Business; there is nothing evil about it; that is just how it works. When we debate an issue like wood supply, we don't want to get lost in the "They and Us", nor in the scare tactics of lost jobs if industry does not get what it wants. We have to realize that we cannot rely on Big Business to 'take care' of us. The role of the government is crucial. Politicians are of course under huge pressure to give these large industrial companies what they want from this province. But government has the mandate to govern for long-term effect for the people, not for the short gain of the companies. There is no way the people would be best served to have to guarantee supply and compensation for long-term industrial use of common land.

We have to recognize that what has been done on Crown Land so far and what is further recommended in the Jaakko Poyry report is not sustainable. It is detrimental to our environment, the health of the forest, and to the local economy as fewer larger companies become more mechanized with less jobs offered.

The sub-licensees that are hired by the 6 main licensees have to operate under already made management plans. Some of the sub licensees do a responsible job but become frustrated as they see examples of their skillful selection practices reversed by the next cutter, who can make more money by cutting down what the first cutter carefully left. There are no rules, only guidelines for environmental violations on Crown Land and not

enough personnel to reinforce these regulations. If the DNR personnel see skidders driving through a brook, they can only report the incident to the ministry who has the discretion to deal with the complaints as they see fit, when they have time. In contrast, if the DNR catch a poacher, they have jurisdiction to take action under the Fish and Wildlife act. This mismanagement of Crown Land does not give confidence to handing over more control to the groups who have already been regarding the land as their own.

Crown land is public land. It is land that should and can benefit all of us living in NB. We have to stop following the same old outdated model of use of this large piece of our local world. We will have to take responsibility for caring for all aspect of life and all people living here. It has not been responsible to leave it to industry. Let us manage it for the people and let it be done by local people.

My recommendations are:

- 1) A total rejection of the Jaakko Poyry report
- 2) An open public debate and public hearing on the use of crown land, how to best care for this publicly owned land base.
- 3) A study by a diverse group of other models of managing land. Models that have been in use other places and which include community forest, municipal tenures and individual tenure.
- 4) A study exploring diverse livelihood of the forest benefiting local economy
- 5) Study how to increase value and overall health of the forest, and apply such practices as small patch cuts and crop tree release. Identify areas where natural regeneration will provide seedlings and where planting is necessary. Identify and respect deeryards, buffer zones and streams.
- 6) A study of alternatives to satisfy our pulp and paper needs including other wood fibers, recycling and other sources of materials.
- 7) An inclusion of the First Nations in these debates and studies.

In conclusion I thank you for the opportunity to speak and for adding extra days to these hearings as you saw the need for people to be heard. It should be more common practices to have public input in matters that concern us all. Judging by the interest in these wood supply hearings it seems obvious we need to allow time to come to an understanding of how to do the best for our Crown Lands.

You as a select committee have a lot of responsibility, and I hope you will be taking the recommendations you have heard over these last weeks into due consideration before you make your own recommendations.

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully Anne Knudsen