

SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WOOD SUPPLY

Mark Connell, Sussex Society of Public Interest, Geosleuths mineral Services

It is hard to believe that a democratically elected government in New Brunswick, acting in the best interests of the people who elected them would accept the demands of six transnational companies to double their wood harvest on crown lands, guarantee their supply and compensate them for shortfalls.

Certainly no business that I've been involved in, would accept a deal like that, so why would our government? Even if we were fools enough to make a deal, how can we? New Brunswick already harvests more cords per acre than any other province in Canada. Clearcuts, the preferred management technique of the foreign license holders, can only be harvested once every 50 or 60 years. Why would we make a deal, when we know, and studies show that continued mechanization of harvesting on crown lands and its attendant planting and spraying results in job losses, habitat loss and the accompanying eviction and further elimination of the 36,000 species that inhabit our forests with us. Where are the studies that show what we are losing; economically, socially and environmentally by converting to plantations? Where are the studies that show world oil reserves outstripping supply by 2013 or global temperatures rising to an estimate 3 degrees above present in 50 years and the resultant effects on our forests. There are too many variables known and unknown for any rightminded steward to sign a deal.

The Jaakko Poyry Report is such an obvious land grab by the transnational corporations that it should be laughable. Surely we aren't collective masochists? The recommendations of this report if implemented would be an unprecedented give away of our public lands and policies to the TNC's. Their new found control and consequent leverage would make life even more untenable for private woodlot owners, contractors and sub-licensees than it already is. Ah, sweet misery how we New Brunswickers love to wallow in it.

The government that represents us surely wouldn't pass legislation that would make our lives worse for all but a few?? Come on this must be a joke.

The TNC's simply put, eat trees and defecate money. Their CEO's and owners in far away lands want to have more and more money for themselves, just like the boys at Enron or Conrad Black they love money. So in order to have an ever increasing money supply they build very expensive machines to cut trees and supply state of the art mills to manufacture paper faster and faster. These machines are always made in some distant land and they operate night and day. All of this allows, their friends, the bankers, also with their headquarters in distant cities, to stay very happy, for they too like to make and eat more and more money. The distant manufacturers get rich, the bankers get rich and a lot of the New Brunswicker's who work in the woods lost their jobs because they couldn't afford to buy half a million dollar machines while others who could and were coaxed to buy the machines missed payments with the consequence that the machines were seized by the banks.

But a few operators kept their machines. These survivors being good Samaritans along with others of us helped the TNC's along by lobbying for them to get bigger concessions and eventually so much land and power that they started telling our government what to do with our crown lands and that's when they wrote the Jaakkko Poyry report.

A great advantage of the tree eating Machines for the TNC's is that they don't go on strike and they don't figure out better ways to work in the woods or parcel them out because of their unceasing appetite for more supply they just can't kick their habit and neither can their buddies the banks that finance them. These guys are cleaning up all the trees in our very finite and very limited little landscape that we call New Brunswick. Like junkies they are always going to want more. Give them a bigger fix and they'll come after more. So someday, maybe today, we'll have to face the music, and get the TNC's off their habit and move them into a transition house... and you and I will have to develop home made solutions for our crownlands.

In the transition house there are many diverse forest economies with a wide variety of ownership, mechanisms of tenure and manners of harvesting that could answer the broader range of everybody's needs including that of the forgotten First Nations peoples who probably own the land.

Did the Jaakko Poyry junkies, in their techno equations that cost \$7000 / page even consider the two fifths of our population that are either unemployed, on welfare or underutilized? Did they offer them any hope? Did they search out the maliseet, the Pasamaquoddy or Micmaq to work out joint tenure deals? It is impossible to see how they would... because they aren't about sharing our common resources... They're into taking them and keeping them for themselves. Just read the report it says so.

Yet there are many innovative and practical solutions to the stewardship of forests and the economies they engender. These can create more jobs, retain and circulate wealth garnered from profits, require less capitalization, maintain watersheds, ecosystems and the environment. Some innovative solutions have been proposed right here in New Brunswick at Macadam, St. Martins, Legaceville and elsewhere to establish community based forest operations. To date the government has ignored these empowering and democratic solutions, preferring to play the role of dealer in their misguided efforts to help their junkie friends; the TNC's, the foreign manufacturers of harvesting machines, and the banks.

Now over the past decade or so on the other side of the country in British Columbia and in nearby Quebec several alternative forms of developing forest economies have been explored and met with success. I want to describe some of these to you as viable possibilities which could be applied to our crown forests here in New Brunswick as transition mechanisms to help New Brunswick shake off the grip of the TNC's. These solutions will rejuvenate rural and forest communities, employ and empower the citizenry, develop self respect and self sufficiency as they have done in the jurisdictions mentioned. It's not a pipe dream here's how some have worked.

Individual tenure which would be very much like the way the DNR runs our tenures for mineral claims and licenses. In this system the crown land could be managed by individual licensed tenure holders, whose leases cover relatively small areas from 500 to 1000 hectares. The individual tenure agreements follow basic common ground rules established by the government and leave the tenure-holders free to develop and implement site specific management plans with respect to harvesting, stand improvements, eco-tourism, recreation and non timber forest products. Groups of adjacent individual tenure holders are encouraged to co-operate on marketing and other areas where economies of scale make sense. This form of tenure is being developed in the Bas-Saint Laurent Forest Tenant Project (BSLMF) in eastern Quebec where there are currently 24 working forest tenant leases. The BSLMF organization is responsible for

planning, co-ordinating, supervising, monitoring the harvesting and enhancement of timber, wildlife and recreational resources.

The Tenants are responsible for preparing five year forest management plans describing the activities to be carried out and cannot begin work until plans have been approved by the BSLMF.

If individual tenures were applied to New Brunswick as a transition to a citizen controlled forest it would eventually result in 3000 to 7500 tenure holders making a living from work in the woods. The present tenure system provides an estimated 3200 jobs.

Municipal tenure: Under municipal tenure, a municipal government holds tenure on a given section of Crown forest, usually within or adjacent to municipal boundaries. In partnership with the provincial government, it develops a plan to manage the forest resources. This type of tenure provides opportunity for participation of local people in the development and management of forests which are particularly important to them. Municipal tenure enhances a communities social and economic opportunities. It gives the municipality power to develop and enforce a local Crown forest management plan which brings local employment, training opportunities supports the development of non-timber and value added enterprises thereby recovering the highest possible value from the volumes harvested.

In 1993, the city of Revelstoke British Columbia established the Revelstoke Community forest Corporation (RCFC) and purchased the Tree Farm License- the equivalent tenure – for a 500,000 hectare tract of crown land surrounding the city. This tenure has given the city power to control management in the area, including the right to allocate timber harvested there for processing in local mills and shops.

This local control brought local benefits: wood from the city held tenure area processed in the community has increased from less than 10% to more than 75%. It has brought economic security as well as job creation: RCFC contributes \$6-\$7 million to the local economy every year and maintains constant harvesting levels to provide stable employment to local contractors. It has also brought both forest enhancement and environmental protection: lower impact harvesting techniques are used to protect the environment and increase employment. The goal is to keep 34% of the area in stands that are over 100 years old, to maintain mountain caribou habitat and create biodiversity connectivity corridors. Finally municipal tenure has brought revenue to benefit the community: RCFC has made a profit every year and pays the City of Revelstoke an annual dividend on the City's original investment.

Macadam submitted a proposal to the New Brunswick government to establish a community forest on the lands recently held by Georgia Pacific. If established it would encompass an area large enough to provide livelihoods for loggers and workers from areas as far away as Canterbury, Harvey and St. Stephen. The mayor of Macadam, Frank Carrol , and Jason Heron a forester, who had worked for Georgia Pacific collaborated to give birth to this community forest corporation proposal. It was structured to have a local board of directors that would include members from provincial government, local and municipal governments, forestry professionals, and conservation and recreational groups.

They formally asked the provincial government to allocate a block of Georgia Pacific Crown Land to establish their community forest. They proposed to use and manage this block with selection cut techniques in concert with responsible stewardship. Jason and financial advisors

developed a proforma business plan for a 5 to 7 year projection of markets. They did not ask the provincial government for grants. They did, however, ask the provincial government to back a loan to start up the community forest and for its operations on the land. The Macadam community forest project presented a model which would pay fair market value prices to the local loggers and contractors. Just as the Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation was a success this project will be a success if the government would take it off the shelf, rearrange tenures and let the community implement it. The Macadam community forest would create jobs, restore economic health to region, raise morale, enhance the forest and afford environmental protection and biological connectivity corridors which have been broken by the clearcut and plantation management style driven by the TNC's.

Community forests have been proposed by citizens, loggers and contractors along the Miramichi, on the Acadian Peninsula, at Kedgwick and in St. Martin's. These proposals should be facilitated rather than hindered by our government. Established as halfway houses in an effort for us to regain control over our forests, economies and communities.

First Nations Tenure In New Brunswick, the Bernard decision makes Aboriginal tenure a viable and attractive option which would bring a revitalization of Maliseet, Mi'kmaq and Passamaquody communities.

Co-tenure

A system of local communities, government representatives and the forest industry could share Crown Land management responsibility. The community partner and the forest industry partner jointly apply to government for tenure rights to a given licence. The duration of the tenure would be defined by government. Harvesting would be jointly determined depending on the needs of the community and the forest industry partners.

Transitions:

Changing tenure and management to move from the conventional unsustainable system that maximizes profits, simplifies the forest and its products, emphasizes quantity reduces the standing timber inventory with the attendant reduction in native biodiversity and environmental health to a sustainable forestry which would build assets and long term economic health, restore forest complexity, manage for multiple products, emphasize quality, sustain long term forest yields, support biodiversity and build a healthier environment to support the complex Acadian Forest ecosystem and rebuilding our rural communities is an achievable challenge. We have the opportunity if the government wishes to rise to the vision to transform our forests and our communities who are willing to put their best effort behind a workable transition. We just need a government to play more ball with its electorate and a lot less with the TNC's.

Thank you

Respectfully Submitted

Mark D. Connell,
Sussex Society of Public Interest
Geosleuths Mineral Exploration Services