

Brief On Jaakko Poyry Report

By Norman Richardson

I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the Jaakko Poyry Report. I will begin by telling you about myself. I am married, have three children and have been working in the woods since 1965. I am also a woodlot owner living in the Miramichi. I am a Director on the Conservation Council of NB, a Director on the Northumberland County Woodlot Owners Association and the Marketing Board. I am also a Director of the NB Christmas Tree Co-op and a member of the Bartibog Fish and Game Association.

When I read the Report, I was concerned about the contents. In 1982, the forest industry lobbied the government and convinced the government to give the Crown land to the forest industry to manage. This was done, in my opinion, with no consideration for other users of Crown land. Other users include small private contractors. A small private contractor is considered to be one skidder operator and a two man crew. I am one of these contractors that were forced to abandon the Crown land and start cutting trees on my own private land. There were many more contractors that had no place to go to work. Some of these individuals went to Alberta and other locations across Canada. They had to leave New Brunswick to earn a living in the woods. The displacement of private contractors was very hard emotionally as well as economically. Neither the government nor the forest industry, offered us any compensation for what they were doing to us. We were left with nothing. The forest industry started to increase the amount of wood being cut by using expensive mechanical harvesters. Some private contractors had to purchase these costly machines just so they could keep cutting wood on Crown land. The wood price being offered to the private contractors was so low that many had to declare bankruptcy.

At that time the forest industry was only interested in pulp. Therefore, we were under the impression that all the off-species wood, which includes log, pine, poles, cedar, hemlock and juniper, would be available to the private contractors. This was not the case. We were told by the government that we would have to accept the offer that the forest industry made us in order to cut the wood on Crown land. The forest industry then decided to buy all the small mills in the province. This would allow them to cut all the species of wood themselves, leaving us with no wood at all. Since the government and the forest industry had no plan for us private contractors, we were forced to over cut the private woodlots just to survive.

I believe that a part of the Crown land should go to the small private contractors. I am certain that we could do a better job in preserving the forest. What I am seeing on Crown land is terrible. I could work year round just by cleaning up the mess the big companies are leaving behind. At the same time, these same companies are complaining of a shortage of wood. Contrary to some of the briefs I have heard, I know that all of the wood needed could be cut by chainsaws, providing a lot more jobs.

A lot of brush saw operators have told me that they made a lot more money when they were cutting trees with a chainsaw. A lot of money is wasted on planting trees in areas that would grow trees naturally. Some big companies in this area are not interested in these trees; however, there are others that are. Instead of wanting to double the trees on Crown land, the focus should be on doing more with the trees that we have. This would in turn provide more employment in our province. A mixed forest is a much better protection against fires, wind and insects. It also entices more

tourism to our area from all over the world. Communities would be better served by eliminating the harvesters. This would help to provide jobs in our own communities. The forest industry now has a fear that government is leaning towards community woodlot. That is why in the last four years, the wood being cut has accelerated. Even wood that is right in the backyards of our homes is being cut. I believe this is occurring because the big companies are scared that the government may give this land to the private contractors. I reside in Little Bartibog and there were harvesters working twenty-four hours a day right behind my home. The noise even kept me from sleeping at night. I have never heard of people cutting with chainsaws at night, keeping citizens awake.

When companies have to cut twenty-four hours a day to provide wood for the mill, the province of New Brunswick will never have enough trees to satisfy the greed of the industry.

The Department of Natural Resources and Energy (DNRE) is not helping matters either. This department should be trying to protect the environment and wildlife in the province. Instead, they are hand and hand with the big companies. The DNRE is more concerned with picking on the citizens of NB who are trying to make an honest living instead of making the big companies accountable for their actions. Why is the forest industry still allowed to keep cutting on Crown land even when the big companies owe the province millions of dollars in stumpage? I used to cut on Crown land and you will not find any stumpage owing by me. With that said, I am still not allowed to cut trees on Crown land. Some big companies in this area were even fined for infractions on Crown land. If I were fined for cutting on Crown land, my rights would be taken from me and I wouldn't even be able to walk on Crown land. With all of the infractions and the enormous stumpage bill of the forest industry, why does the government still cater to these big companies? To me, there is no difference if I was fined for cutting wood on Crown land and the judge gave me a five thousand dollar fine and said to keep cutting on Crown land until you have enough money to pay your fine. It seems that this is the kind of deal that the DNRE has with the big companies.

In conclusion, we need to have a public inquiry into what is happening right now on Crown land. Thom Erdle, a professor of forestry at the University of New Brunswick, should write a report on Crown land and the effect that it has on private woodlots. I also believe that primary source of supply has to come back to the Woodlot Owners Association immediately and not after all of the wood is cut. Mechanical harvester operations within five miles of rural communities need to cease immediately. Crown land access should be given to small operators under direct stumpage with the province. Herbicide usage needs to stop to allow natural growth.

Remember that your committee has been selected to make decisions about the future of our province's natural resources for a long time to come. It is a crucial task. I would urge you to be prudent in analyzing what the Jaakko Poyry Report is suggesting. If we don't stop cutting with harvesters close to our rural communities, it will be too late to do anything within our generation.