

# FOREST DISPUTE Nobody's fault, minister says

**Citizen News Services**  
VICTORIA — Neither side is to blame for the current shutdown of the B.C. forest industry, Forests Minister Tom Waterland said Thursday. Workers deserve a fair wage and companies should make a profit, he said during taping of the BCTV program Capital Comment for viewing on Saturday.

But the 60,000 striking forest workers should not be accused of threatening the provincial forest industry's competitive position on world markets, he added. "Many factors determine the cost of business," he said, noting that equipment costs in particular had skyrocketed recently. "I don't think we should attempt to blame one part of the industry for increasing costs."

He was commenting on remarks by Calvert Knudsen, chairman of MacMillan Bloedel Ltd., who said the province-wide strike is causing a great deal of concern because it comes at a time of weak demand and poor world lumber prices. Knudsen said the industry already has excessively high wood and labor costs that threaten its competitive position.

Waterland said wage increases themselves won't hurt B.C.'s competitive position. "People who work in the forest industry deserve a good wage. It's hard work and it's tough work, and I think they earn every penny they get. You can't blame them for fighting to keep up with inflation, especially as they see certain industries merrily going along with pretty substantial increases in wages," Waterland added.

B.C.'s forest industry has been brought to a virtual standstill through strikes by the International Woodworkers of America, the Pulp Paper and Woodworkers of Canada and the Canadian Paperworkers Union. Pulp and forest companies have offered all three unions a 26-per cent wage increase over two years on a base rate of \$9.96 an hour.

In Vancouver, Bill Hamilton, president of the Employers' Council of B.C., said effects of the strike will become more severe the longer it lasts. "You can't take 15 per cent of the organized work force in the province and just have them earning no money without it having a serious effect on the province," he said.

The ripple effect of the strike will show in retail outlets and in many of the smaller communities in the province that depend on the forest industry to survive, Hamilton said. Meanwhile, a U.S. market expert says B.C. sawmills face massive price reductions and even poorer markets when the forest industry strike is settled.

Phil Chiricotti, a Chicago lumber broker and editor of Chiricotti's Lumber and Plywood Forecast, said mills are out of luck if they thought the current shutdown would force prices up and bring some relief during the U.S. housing slump. B.C. sells about 70 per cent of its lumber production to the U.S., where close to one-third of all lumber that comes from this province is used for housing.

Chiricotti said there was speculation some sawmill operators might have wanted a strike in B.C. to fire up the lumber market, "but what good is that if prices jump \$50 and you still can't sell the wood?"

U.S. lumber consumption is so bad that it's mitigating the effects of the strike. There are few mills cutting in Canada and those that are, are chopping prices, he said.

Closer to home, some lumber yards are prepared to weather the strike, but the home handyman who plans to use plywood this summer had better buy it now.

**Effects of strike were felt early**

Some people started suffering months ago when threats of a forest industry strike surfaced. For instance, the number of people seeking mortgages dropped earlier this year, partly because of the possibility of a strike, said Chris Stanley-Jones, economic development officer for the Fraser-Fort George Regional District.

And in separate interviews, boat and recreational vehicle dealers said their sales were affected long before the strike started.

The last of three major forest unions walked off the job Monday, bringing to 60,000 the number of forest workers walking the picket lines. The woodworkers began their strike July 12.

The effects of the strike seem to be marginal so far, but as it drags on, Stanley-Jones said the main effect will be on demand for consumer goods, car sales, and the ability of people to pay mortgages.

About 25 per cent of this city's work force is directly involved in the forest industry. That means the effects of a long strike won't be as dramatic as it was during the last major walk-out 28 years ago, when a higher percentage of jobs were forest-oriented.

However, economic activity will definitely slow down if the strike continues into autumn, and the slowdown will certainly be felt in Mackenzie, which is totally dependent on the forest industry.

To date, the effect of the strike in Prince George has been mixed. Retailers at The Bay, Sears, Northern Hardware, and Woodwards all say they haven't felt any ill effects from the strike.

Greg Potter, store manager for The Bay, said the store's management will have to watch expenses carefully as the effects of the strike start to show.

The payroll is the only way to control expenses and that means laying off part-time employees, he said.

Vera Witt, secretary and part-owner of Howie's Marine Service said rumors about a strike earlier this year made people hold off before making big purchases.

Dave Layzell, sales manager of recreational vehicles for George Dimor Motors, said sales were not good during May and June because of the threat of a strike, high interest rates, and bad weather.

But sales increased when temperatures climbed and skies cleared at the beginning of this month, he said.

But there are also some bright spots. Rob Edge, assistant manager for Beaver Lumber, said sales are running about 25 per cent higher than last week.

People who are on strike now have the opportunity to tackle projects at home that they couldn't do before, and contractors who are worried about possible shortages are stocking up now.

# Sprinkling rules bent by city

The spirit of the regulation is more important than the letter — at least when it comes to the city watering its own lawns.

City parks supervisor Marty Strybos says parks crews can't always be in the right place on the right day to water city lawns strictly according to sprinkling regulations.

Passerby Thursday noticed the Chamber of Commerce lawn — an even-number address on Victoria Street — was being sprinkled although the day was odd-numbered.

City sprinkling regulations prohibit watering two days consecutively, calling instead for even-numbered addresses to water on even-numbered days and odd, on odd days.

The regulations are imposed to prevent the city's pumping system being overloaded with water demand during hot weather.

They apply to all areas of the city — with stricter controls in some outlying areas — even to the downtown commercial area.

But the letter of the regulation doesn't apply to the city's own lawns. Strybos said work schedules also have to be taken into account.

"We don't send a crew around just to turn sprinklers on and off," he said, "it depends whether crews are working in an area."

He says it wouldn't be efficient use of taxpayers' money to set crew schedules strictly according to sprinkling schedules.

Many city lawns have automatic sprinkling systems, which are easily set to water at night on the right days. It's the few lawns without such systems — like the chamber lawn — that cause the problem.

The spirit of the regulations are being followed, however, Strybos said.

Parks crews have cut down on sprinkling city lawns generally, to conserve water during the high-demand daytime period.

# WILL WE FOLLOW RED DEER? Downtown: All it takes is money

**RED DEER** — This central Alberta city is counting on petro-bucks to rescue its downtown from the doldrums.

Ask city fathers what they expect will resurrect their downtown from the body blow of almost one million square feet of new shopping centre retail area and they point to a booming economy.

Mayor, economic development officer, chamber of commerce manager alike start reciting building statistics and mega-dollar projects that would make a non-Arab recoil in disbelief: An \$18 million provincial building, a \$10 million court house, a \$60 million hospital, a \$20 million expansion of water and sewage treatment facilities, two multi-storey office buildings, and almost \$2 billion in petrochemical plants.

"The downtown will shift slowly toward being the financial-business-office centre," says Mayor Bob McGhee.

McGhee said the shift began before the new shopping centres and "more people came downtown than ever before" as a result.

He said it is now a matter of the downtown merchants shifting their merchandising to serve the office workers and not the regional shoppers. Chamber of Commerce manager Pat Henry agrees. "The growth here is almost too much," he says.



Tom Nixon is reporting on the changes in its shopping patterns.

The shopping centre issue brewing here is a re-run of a similar controversy in Red Deer in the late 1970s. Prince George is pushing for a \$55-million downtown shopping mall which would create a new town centre out of four blocks of the old downtown core. Last month, Woodward's announced plans to expand its Parkwood Mall in competition with the city proposal, throwing the whole situation into confusion. Red Deer, a regional centre for central Alberta, faced an almost identical decision three or more years ago but opted to allow suburban shopping centres, putting a downtown re-development proposal out in the cold. The Citizen sent reporter TOM NIXON to Red Deer to find out how that Prairie city is coping with the changes in its shopping patterns.

First the petrochemical announcements were made some seven years ago and then the rapid business expansion in Red Deer followed.

Henry said the new shopping centres won't permanently dislocate retail business from the downtown. He says there'll be an out-and-in changeover as stores like the large department stores, furniture stores and the like move out and small shops and quick food outlets and restaurants that cater to office workers move in.

Henry said Red Deer is not only in the centre of large petro-chemical expansions but the economy is based on a rich agricultural base that is well diversified.

Although the town has only about 45,000 people, the trading area is almost three times that and the people are well-off. Henry said Red Deer is fast becoming the service centre for central Alberta from B.C. to Saskatchewan. The provincial government's decentralization program is placing more and more regional government offices in the town, the educational facilities which include a community college are expanding and the new regional hospital means the town will become a medical centre for a large area of the province.

Along with the growth of oil industry and provincial services comes regional business offices, warehousing and similar commercial servicing. The Bay's new manager, appointed only last February, isn't throwing in the towel, either, on the fight for downtown retail business.

He's begun a change of image for The Bay, a store that shoppers thought was being used to sell goods left over from Calgary and Edmonton Bays. "Business is off," he admits. "but not as much as we thought it would be. We're changing the store. Brightening it up and counting on the loyalty of people who have come in here for the past 20 years."

He's banking on a hunch that many rural Albertans won't like the new shopping centres once the shine wears off. He says the country folk don't like the closed-in malls, and the general lack of personal service.

**MONDAY:  
Sprawling Main Street**

# IMPACT OF WOODWARD'S PROPOSAL

## Secret talks on town centre slated

**by TOM NIXON  
Citizen Staff Reporter**

City council could learn Monday whether Woodward's Parkwood Mall expansion proposal has seriously damaged the city's hopes for a \$55-million downtown shopping mall.

George Lawty, Cadillac-Fairview vice-president and the development company's chief negotiator with the city for the downtown mall is to meet with council for a briefing session at 3 p.m.

Lawty is expected to detail to aldermen the impact Woodward's expansion announcement June 29 will have on Cadillac-Fairview search for a second major department store for the downtown centre.

The city and the Toronto-based firm have been negotiating since last fall on a deal for the city to lease four blocks of prime downtown retail area to the company for a 46,000 square-metre (500,000 square feet), two-storey mall.

The public is not likely to learn the details of Lawty's briefing, however, because the meeting is behind closed doors, city manager Chester Jeffery said today.

The Cadillac-Fairview executive would not be able to discuss the latest developments in the project candidly in the glare of public scrutiny.

Jeffery said he is not aware of any announcements Lawty is likely to make — particularly whether Eaton's is to be

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Local news**

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City editor  
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the second large store or has been ruled out.

The city has been counting on the proposed mall to re-juvenate a stagnating downtown retail area and to forestall further Pine Centre-type suburban shopping centres until a solid downtown retail core is created.

It had been hoped Woodward's Stores would be the second large department store in the new mall along with Hudson's Bay which is already located in a corner of the

proposed re-development area.

It had also been thought Eaton's of Canada could be the second major store. Eaton's closed its small catalogue store on Victoria Street almost 10 years ago and hasn't had an outlet here since.

Late last month, however, Woodward's announced it would not go into the downtown mall and proposed a major expansion of its Parkwood Mall. Woodward's spokes-

man Bob Jones admitted the second major store being courted for Parkwood is also Eaton's. Woodward's says if it doesn't get a second major store it will settle for a junior department store in a small expansion project.

However, Mayor Elmer Mercier said two majors are needed for the

# Kemano critics skeptical

**by ARNOLD OLSON  
Citizen Staff Reporter**

A new affable attitude does not hide the fact that Alcan wants to take more of Nechako River water, say opponents of the Kemano II project.

That consensus was voiced by Graham Farstad, Spruce City Wildlife president; Gary Schlessinger, Confederation of Canadian Union of Western Canada vice-president and Louise Kaneen, Nechako Nevenkut Society president today.

The issue was raised in response to a CJCJ radio program during which Bill Rich, Aluminum Co. of Canada Ltd. explained the new company image he is trying to promote: seeking public input and attempting a co-operative attitude, for its Kemano expansion project.

Opposition arose, about two years ago, when the project was unveiled and the northwestern B.C. communities discovered the company intended to take more — perhaps all — water from the

Nechako River to produce more hydro-electric power for three new smelters. Kaneen said her Save The Nechako group is adamant to retain what is left of the river (Alcan took two-thirds of the river's volume in the early '50s).

"We can't go back 30 years," he said, "and demand they close Kitimat, but we refuse to allow them any more."

She said fisheries people say minimum flows must not be less than

2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) and must be even more in hot weather such as has been the case now.

She said not many know that the volume this week has been increased to 9,000 cf because of the heat, to reduce stress on the river's fish.

If Kemano II went ahead, the remaining water volume could be cut in half.

Farstad said he sees the company's attempt at a new image as a long-term ploy to put people off guard.

# Project under way

Construction of a new 56-lot mobile home subdivision in Chetwynd and a paved road to the village airport could begin in mid-August.

The subdivision, which could accommodate about 200 people, includes full servicing, paved streets, underground power, and street lighting.

This is the second phase of a project that was started several years ago. Ninety-eight per cent of the lots in the first phase have been sold.

The airport road extends 600 metres from Highway 97 to the airfield. Motorists have to use a gravel road at present.

Tenders for the projects close at the end of next week. The projects are valued at about \$750,000.

### A Thought for Today

Even if it's a little thing, do something for your fellow-man. — Dr. Albert Schweitzer

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# "TOYMAKER AND SON"

## A Dramatic Dance

"Toymaker and Son" was first presented in Britain in 1978. Since that time it has been performed in Italy, Canada, America, Denmark and Germany; as well as performances in Russian and French. Venues have included theatres, auditoriums, universities, schools and military bases, including the flag ship of the American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. This dramatic dance will continue to tour in the many countries that have requested it's performance, and plans are under way for it to be filmed.

**LOCATION & TIMES**  
Friday July 31st 7:30 p.m. Fort George Park  
Saturday, August 1, 7:30 p.m. Vanier Hall  
NO ADMISSION CHARGE