

Commentaries on Historical Documents

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This document is entitled "Comments and Policy Decisions by the Forest Policy Advisory Committee on the Recommendations of the Pearse Royal Commission", May 16, 1978.

This document is the 'missing link' between the Pearse Royal Commission Report of 1976 and the Forest Act of 1979 (our current Forest Act).

When the government received the Pearse Report, you guessed it, a committee was formed - called FPAC. This committee was blue ribbon, including notables such as the chair Bob Wood (a very respected consultant) and member Mike Apsey (future Deputy). Wes Cheston was also working in this area (future ADM Operations). The Forest Act flows out of this group and report, directly. The work translating the policy decisions to legislation was done by J. A. K. Reid and a private sector lawyer- Cambell.

A word about the organization of this document and the Pearse Report. The Pearse report contained many, many recommendations but they were all buried in the text. So, in the FPAC Report, you will often see (80m) or (80t) or (80b) in front of a recommendation. 80 means page 80 of Volume 1 of the Pearse Report, while m/t/b mean the middle, top or bottom of page 80.

The importance of this document mainly lies in the rationales for accepting or rejecting the Pearse recommendations. It gives the thinking of the day on big policy issues. Of most importance is the first few pages, that deal with the issue of the about to expire Timber Sale Harvesting Licences, and the Timber Sale Licences issued pursuant to the TSHL's. Pearse had recommended a scheme to roll them over to Forest Licences, but reduce their AAC on each rollover to add competition thru new licences.

However, if you skim thru the FPAC Report, you will see tenure, cruising, scaling, pricing, protection, rent; and every part of the business of the Forest Service.

While the Pearse Report dealt with many, many issues (and so does the FPAC Report), my view is that the central issue of the day was the impending expiry of the TSHL's. That was the central reason for Pearse, FPAC and the Forest Act.

You can use this FPAC Report in the following way. If you have a Section in the Forest Act you wonder about, you can look in the Table of Contents and find the relevant Section by the subject. You can then see the thinking of the FPAC. Then, by the (80m) code you can go back to the Pearse Royal Commission, Volume 1.

This is a very large document - some 150 page - typed by hand. I don't know which secretary typed this, but imagine the work if the FPAC decided to add a paragraph to, say, page 2.