

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

R.S. Smith, Forintek Canada Corp.

Vancouver, B.C.

I welcome you to the third annual meeting of the Canadian Wood Preservation Association. Since this will be my last meeting as president, at least for a while, I wish to take the opportunity to recapitulate over our past brief history and then take a rather presumptuous look at our future.

It is now well over three years since a few of your dedicated colleagues made the decision to proceed with the establishment of a Canadian association to meet the requirements of wood protection in Canada. I think that few of us at that time envisaged the amount of work involved, and if we had, perhaps our association never would have gone beyond the first birth pains. In that year of 1979, before the inaugural meeting in Vancouver, an informal group from within the present board of directors sketched out their outline for a new association, one that would truly serve the needs of Canadians in the various areas of wood protection. At that time it was realized that the protection of wood products from the various agencies of deterioration extended beyond the boundaries of heavy duty wood preservation. The protection of our multi-billion dollar resource of green unseasoned export lumber was and is of paramount importance in Canada. The chemicals used to provide an envelope of protection for this resource can be very similar to those used in heavy duty wood preservation and even the fungal pests involved may be similar, if not the same. It was also realized that the protection of wood products could involve remedial treatments, that is the use of certain chemicals and techniques to rid wood of unwanted fungal and insect pests. Such problems could exist in domestic homes, where even today virtually no professional help is available to the owner facing an outbreak of dry rot or decay of a less devastating nature. Remedial problems also occur frequently in the industrial situation. For example, the Canadian Electrical Association has a great interest in the future life of the about 9 million wood distribution poles presently in use across Canada. Where replacement costs could be as high as \$1,000 for a single pole, an increased longevity through the use of remedial treatments has considerable attraction.

So, your founding fathers incorporated these considerations into the aims and objectives of the present association, thereby making it different from the American Wood Preservers Association. Both associations believe in the promotion of professionalism and the dissemination of technical information, but I believe our Canadian association has a broader view of wood preservation and one that will best serve the needs of Canada.

Following the inaugural meeting in Vancouver on November 10, 1979, a Board of Directors was officially established and work began in earnest. Work towards the legal establishment of CWPA was started, and after many drafts a set of by-laws was finally developed and

approved. This culminated in the official registration of CWPA as a federal corporation on September 30, 1980. A membership drive was started and hundreds of people across Canada were contacted regarding this new association. Today, three years later, we have a membership of close to 100 people, which I believe most gratifying for such a young association. A membership certificate was developed, a newsletter was started, and of course a financial and secretarial function was officially set up to run the association.

We then had our first annual meeting in Montreal in 1980, followed by the second in Vancouver in 1981. It was at last year's meeting that the idea of a seminar or thematic approach was tested and proved of value. Today here in Toronto we continue with this approach and tomorrow we look forward to a most interesting seminar on poles.

Over the past three years your Board of Directors has changed very little, which must be a tribute to both their vision and their success in developing our association. They have all given considerably of their time and energy on our behalf and the future good health of CWPA must largely be credited to this group of people. But no association survives without its members, and particularly with a young association the development of an active membership is of great importance. Judging from our gradual increase in membership over the years, I would see the future of CWPA to be both certain and challenging, although the present difficult economic times are taking their toll.

I suppose that it would be fair to say that the Canadian wood products industry is today facing economic problems unparalleled over the past 50 years. Lumber sales have collapsed and the need around the world for our wood products seems to have diminished. In fact, that can be blamed on world economic recession, but in part our terrible record for investment into research and development has severely hampered our potential as an industrial nation. Nowhere are the results of such investment more evidently successful than in Japan, where investment in wood products research on the basis of the gross national product is in excess of ten times that in Canada. Canada needs new innovative uses for its wood products, which today could extend into energy, food and specialty chemical production. At all these levels of technology wood preservation will play a role, since all will involve some measure of stockpiling of the raw material with the accompanying need for protection from deterioration.

The CWPA will provide increasing benefits to Canada through its promotion of the spread of research ideas and findings. Hopefully the two recently established "working groups", receiving their trials at this Toronto meeting, will improve the dissemination of experimental ideas, results and conclusions within Canada, thereby strengthening our overall economy.

Finally, I will comment on the role of CWPA in coordinating the development of suitable data for use by the pertinent CSA committees. Historically, many of our present wood preservation standards have been developed almost photographically from those previously

established by the AWPA. Clearly such a procedure, although expedient at the time, was sure to prove unsuitable in the future. The fungal and insect hazards differ between Canada and the USA, as does the climate and geography. Then to make our problems worse, our economic wood species are mostly moderately resistant or difficult to treat with wood preservatives. Comparing this situation with southern yellow pine in the USA, which treats as readily as a sponge, it is my belief that Canadian standards should reflect Canadian conditions for use and unfortunately many existing standards do not do this. Through our CWPA and also the Canadian Institute of Treated Wood, I believe most valuable data can be generated, useful to Canadian standards in improving this present unsatisfactory position.

I can provide no levity in these opening remarks for I see a most serious economic situation before us. It is time for action, determination and cooperation. I hope that in some small way our meeting today and tomorrow will catalyze this and provide some sparks needed for our economic recovery.

Good luck, enjoy your meeting, and continue to support your association.

Thank you all.