Canadian
Wood
Preservation
Association

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Presidents Opening Address

Good Morning. It is a real pleasure to be able to extend a warm west coast welcome to all of you. I am very grateful for this opportunity to share a few thoughts with you at this 25th anniversary conference. To begin, I would like to pass on a few comments that have been made by a few of our CWPA presenters.

One speaker from the Faculty of Forestry of UBC posed the question, "*Why treat timber*". He then explained, "*The conventional answer is to prevent deterioration by fungi and insects. Another persuasive argument is that it conserves Canadian timber resources*".

Another speaker, with a positive view of the future, pointed out that "*Despite the challenges presented by environmental concerns and changes in the costs and availability of raw materials, solutions are being actively sought and identified by the application of research effort…, Through continuation of this type of effort, preservative treatment of wood should continue to serve in its role of conserving a valuable resource while providing a versatile, durable material at energy costs well below those of available alternatives*".

A third speaker recommended that, "*In order to maximize progress in wood preservation, there are four areas that should receive priority in future research projects. These are: (1) new wood preservative systems, (2) fundamental mechanisms of wood decay, (3) improved test methods for evaluating wood preservatives, and (4) improved methods of treating refractory wood species.*"

If these comments sound a little familiar to you, it might be a good indication that you were present for the first annual meeting of the Canadian Wood Preservation Association. This meeting was held in Montreal on November 4th, 1980.

Upon reading the proceedings from that first conference, I found it quite interesting to note that the concerns expressed 25 years ago are virtually the same as the ones being echoed today. As was predicted back then, many changes have taken place in the wood

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treating industry. How do we feel about these changes? Well, I am sure that, if we surveyed those in attendance today, we would receive quite a variety of responses. Comments would probably include many descriptive adjectives such as exciting, challenging, turbulent, worrisome and maybe even frustrating. Whatever the case, one fact holds true, and that is that treated wood is still very much in demand.

Now, it is true that twenty-five years does not seem all that long when we look back at the past. In contrast, if we contemplate 25 years into the future, the year 2029 seems a long way off. One thing about the future, it does inspire a lot of questions for which there are no answers at this time. Such as, will there still be a wood preserving industry in the year 2029? If so, what sort of chemicals will be used to treated wood? And one more very important question, in the year 2029, will the Canadian Wood Preservation Association be celebrating its 50th anniversary? Well, we do hope so.

In my opening remarks, I cited Doctor Kennedy of UBC, who posed the question, *"Why treat timber"*. Well, I would like to provide a brief response to that question, in the form of a recent personal experience.

A few weeks ago, I was called upon to perform a physical assessment of the intake structure of BC Hydro's Burrard Thermal Generating Station. This facility, which was constructed in the mid 1950's, is located a few kilometers to the east, on the northern shore of Burrard Inlet. This is a natural gas fired plant with (6) turbines that employ a salt water cooling system. The intake structure consists of a combination of steel and creosote treated Douglas Fir timbers and pilings. It also has a creosote treated D Fir timber deck.

After fifty years of service, the steel portion of the structure is corroded to the point that much of the steel has to be replaced. In contrast, the creosote treated timbers and the decking were found to be in very good shape. Though the surface of the decking is well weathered and bleached white from exposure to ultra violet rays, core samples revealed good creosote penetration immediately beneath the weathered surface. The wood fiber is sound, with no evidence of decay. Regarding Doctor Kennedy's question *"Why treat timber"*, the answer is, because it works!

In two of the comments that I cited, reference was made to the fact that treated wood conserves valuable forest resources. This point really needs to be emphasized. Here in Canada, there are many negative factors impacting our forests and the forest industry. Everything from trade issues, to ever changing logging restrictions, forest fires, tree

disease, and insect infestations. All these factors are impacting the availability of raw material and the public's view of using wood as a building product.

During our program, we are going to hear some information regarding the Mountain Pine Beetle issue. I am sure that we are all keenly interested to hear Tony Byrne's presentation on this subject. Despite all recent publicity, most people still do not grasp the seriousness of this pandemic problem.

But, the Mountain Pine Beetle is not the only critter destroying our forests. There is also the Gypsy moth, the Asian Longhorn beetle, the Emerald Ash borer, and the Brown Spruce Longhorn beetle. There are also tree diseases, such as, White Pine blister rust, Chestnut blight and the Dutch Elm disease. The tragedy is that many of these forest destroying mechanisms are not native to Canada.

We know where these insects and pathogens came from. We know how they got here and we know how they are impacting our environment. What we do not know, is the amount of damage these intruders will inflict on our forests in the years to come. A few weeks ago, a new **international research organization** was formed to develop an action plan to combat the globalization of forest diseases and pests. Hopefully, this organization will come up with a viable solution for this problem.

Salvaging and marketing timber products harvested from dying trees is a very difficult task facing our forest industry. Wood preservation should play a major in the marketing of salvaged material. It may well be the key to building confidence in the minds of consumers regarding using beetle kill material. With this in mind, the CWPA will continue to monitor developments related to this matter as they unfold.

Hopefully, you have had an opportunity to peruse our conference program. Each year, the Board of Directors carefully decides what sort of information should be presented at our yearly conferences. This year, the board opted to present two main themes. Both address important issues related to the wood preserving industry.

Day (1) will focus on ***"Treated Wood in Buildings"***, while day (2) will deal with ***"Changing Preservative Use Patterns"***. We are confident that you will find the information presented to be very informative and useful.

On a more personal matter, I would like to extend a special invitation to the President's Reception, which will be held this evening. The start time is 6:30 PM in the Port of Vancouver room. As you enter the room, you will receive (2) complimentary drink tickets. There will also be a selection of light snacks for your pleasure. I hope to see you there.

One of the highlights of our conference is the Key Note Address. This year, we are very pleased to feature a speaker from outside our borders. Our guest speaker, **Jeanette Drysdale**, comes to us all the way from New Zealand. It is always interesting to hear what is taking place in the field of wood preservation in other parts of the world. Jeanette

is most certainly one who can shed light on the situation in New Zealand. She has many years of experience in the field of forestry science and technology. Jeanette is also an expert in the fields of manufacturing, automation and process technologies.

The title of her discourse is, "*Changing Regulations for Treated Framing in New Zealand'*. Please join with me in welcoming Jeanette Drysdale to the podium.