



Interested forestry personnel filled the galley of Colchester council chambers on September 26th to witness how council would vote on a motion to send a letter to Premier McNeil regarding the Northern Pump mill in Abercrombie. (Rees Photo)

Forestry Impact \$2-Billion

By Maurice Rees

What is the composition of the many truckloads of timber we see travelling down the highways from a private woodlot or crown lands destined to a sawmill or pulpmill? The breakdown of the usage of all the softwood timber harvested in Nova Scotia was explained in a presentation to Colchester Council on September 6th by Earle Miller and Robin Wilbur.

Basically a softwood tree harvested in Nova Scotia it is used in the following ways: lumber, 30%; pulpwood material, 51%; bark, 14% and white-wood material, 5%. Of the softwood product extracted from woodlots 70% goes to

sawmills for logs and studs, with 30% of the product being pulpwood going to pulpmills.

Forty two percent of lumber going to sawmills is lumber for logs and studs; 38% becomes chips; 6% is sawdust and shavings, while bark is the remaining 14%. Pulpwood has the following breakdown: 30% pulpwood; 82% chips; bark, 14% and fines, 4%.

The figures of what composes the timber we see going down the highways is confusing at best, but it is important for the general public to understand sawmills are primarily owned and operated by families within a community. In order to be successful, they must create as much high

value lumber as possible from each piece of wood; selling the lower value by-products such as bark, chips and files to provide additional revenue which keeps a sawmill going in rural communities; creating employment for other workers such as harvesting and trucking.

Throughout the province there are 493 forestry firms supporting the rural economy. Eighty nine percent of those firms have less than 20 employees generating over \$2-Billion in economic impact in 2015. Gardner Pinfold and Statistics Canada report the forestry sector is responsible for 6,100 direct jobs.

Debarkers, Chippers and Chips Introduced

By Maurice Rees

In the 95 years following the first pulpmill being established in Nova Scotia there have been significant changes in the province's forest industry. The Miller-Wilbur presentation to council on September 6th listed some of the ways the introduction of pulp and paper mills changed the industry.

Some of the most important changes were: Sawmills installed debarkers and chippers since pulp mills bought chips - slabwood market was declining with residential heat changing to convenient and fairly cheap oil; Bark and sawdust was burned at pulpmills to produce power - creating a revenue stream for sawmills and reducing fire hazard by stockpiling the residues and chips used to make paper created a revenue stream for

sawmills.

Overall, in the past there was no market for the under valued timber, or sawdust, fines and barks, which are by-products from sawmills. With the bark removed, as the timber is squared for timber, the outside cuttings, without bark (basically barkless slabwood) is turned into high quality chips. It dispels the common assumption high value timber is turned into chips. Lumber has much higher value than chips. The sawmills were able to develop an additional revenue stream from selling chips, bark and fines.

Other ways in which forestry across the province grew included: New market for pulpwood created opportunities to remove the low grade wood during harvesting and not just the high grade sawlogs. As a result silviculture

was born. New markets and additional revenue streams from chips and barks created enough money in the industry to pay higher wages and invest in sawmill and harvesting equipment to make the work less back breaking and much more environmentally friendly.

Pellet plants came along later to consume the sawdust and shavings from sawmills making better use of the renewable resource. As pellet plants became established, domestic consumption was not large enough to consume the volume of pellets being produced. As a result export opportunities were identified and now export of pellets continues to grow.



Several managers or owners of prominent forestry firms attended council committee on September 6th to support presentation being made by Earle Miller and Robin Wilbur. Included in the support team were: Jim Verboom, Nova Tree in Glenholme; Andrew Watters, Group Savoie - hardwood sawmill in Westville Pictou county; Mark Baillie, GM of Scotsburn Lumber; Mark Wilbur, Elmsdale Lumber; Les Flett, JD Irving in Valley and Derek Prest, Eacan Timber - lumber brokerage firm. (Rees Photo)

Nova Scotia Pulp Mills Started in 1924

By Maurice Rees

The Miller-Wilbur presentation to Colchester council on September 6th can be partially described as a history lesson revealing the first pulpmill in Nova Scotia was established in 1924, and following establishment of pulpmills there were three things which subsequently changed. The changes increased the earning capacity of sawmills and increased pay to employees creating a more significant economic generator. Previously, there was no market for low grade timber and by-products from the sawmills.

Prior to sawmills: Sawmills did not remove the bark from logs and produced slabwood burned for residential heat because it was cheap and convenient; Sawdust was piled behind mills as a fire hazard when farmer bedding demand was insufficient and Forest industry was known for low pay and for those of weak minds and strong backs.

The following is a chronicle list of when Pulp and Paper facilities were established in Nova Scotia: 1924: First NS Pulp Mill built in Sheet Harbour - sold to Scott Paper 1964 - closed 1971; 1927: Opening of Minas Basin Pulp and Paper - closed in 2012; 1929: Bowater Mersey Liverpool - closed 2012; 1962: Stora Port Hawkesbury - closed 2011 - reopened 2013 produces coated paper with challenging markets and 1967: Scott Paper Abercrombie - Paper Excellence purchased in 2011 - continues to run with growing market demand in Asia for tissue products.

Gardner Pinfold and Statistics Canada report that in 2015 forestry has a \$410-Million direct contribution to GDP.



Earle Miller, foreground, and Robin Wilbur during a presentation to Colchester Council committee at a presentation session on September 6th. (Rees Photo)



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