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Dominion Scientist Reports Upon Sitka Spruce Diseases and Makes Shipping Comment

Sitka spruce, aeroplane spruce, or silver spruce, as it is commonly called in England, is found only along the Pacific coast of North America from Alaska to Oregon, according to a report by Miss Irene Mounce on the cultural studies of wood-destroying fungi prevalent among the Sitka spruce of the district which has just been issued by the Division of Botany of the federal department of agriculture. It may be remembered by some that Miss Mounce was in this district about two years ago conducting the investigations, the results of which have just been published.

Sitka spruce, continues the report of Miss Mounce, grows only at low elevations close to the coast so that the amount suitable for use in aeroplane construction is very limited. It sprang into importance when this wood with its combination of strength, flexibility, softness, light weight, and evenness of grain was found so useful in the structure of aircraft.

Since 1918 the demand for aeroplane spruce has been less urgent, and a large part of the purchases have been made on the ordinary commercial grade of "clear and better rough green spruce," although more recently spruce has been selected on an aeroplane grade as specified by the British Air Ministry. As a result, many complaints have been made of the quality of the aeroplane spruce which is obtained in England. It has been stated that so much spruce had to be culled, due to a defect known as "dote," that eventually this wood became as expensive as Spanish mahogany.

As was mentioned in last year's report, an investigation was undertaken to determine whether or not "dote" is present in aeroplane spruce stock before it is shipped to England. Thanks to the kindness of mill operators in British Columbia, specimens of defective spruce

were obtained from aeroplane spruce "rejects," from seasoned stock, and from freshly cut green timber. Type specimens of "dote" were received also from the Air Board in England.

The investigation has been confined to two defects of aeroplane spruce, the one known as "white dote" or "compression shake," the other as "dote." So far no work has been done on the various moulds and stains which develop on timber in storage and during transit.

"WHITE DOTE"

A comparison of specimens has shown that the defects of aeroplane spruce, known as "white dote" in British Columbia and as "compression shake" in England, are one and the same thing. Spruce of this type looks normal in color but is very brittle or "brash." It lacks strength and breaks across abruptly without splintering. No fungus has been obtained in culture from the few specimens of this defect which have been available. Microscopic sections show the presence of very fine fungus hyphae occasionally, but the defect is in all probability a physiological one due, perhaps, to unfavorable growth conditions or strains to which the tree was subjected before or after felling.

Pulling up the fibres to test the strength of the wood is part of the routine inspection of aeroplane spruce, but, since reports indicate that a great deal of spruce showing "white dote" or "compression shake" has been sent to England, still more stress could be laid on fibre strength tests. In this way, perhaps, more spruce suffering from this defect could be culled before shipment.

A study of a number of pieces of Sitka spruce sent from England as typical specimens of this defect has shown that "dote" is a general term used to cover a number of rots caused by various wood-destroying fungi. All of the specimens of defective aeroplane spruce received from England were so badly rotted and discolored that they would have to be discarded at any mill. They showed three types of decay—

1. Wood in which certain areas were more or less uniformly discolored. The infected area is darker than normal, and in advanced stages the wood is dark brown in color and easily powdered between the fingers. Some specimens of this type have a very strong odor of anise seed or bitter almonds.
2. Wood in which there are "elongated pipes of decay" with areas of apparently sound wood between. The decayed wood is reddish brown and easily crumbled.
3. Wood in which minute pockets of rot occur here and there. Their presence is indicated by small areas of discoloration in which the wood is uniformly a darker brown. In later stages checks occur and the wood in the pockets is brittle and easily powdered. Specimens have been collected in which these pockets were twelve inches and more in length, separated by eighteen inches of apparently sound wood. In such cases the rotted wood is dark brown, much checked, and easily powdered. This rotted wood frequently drops out of the centre of the pocket leaving large holes edged with rot which passes abruptly into apparently sound wood. Although the wood between the pockets looks normal, cultures have proved that the fungus is frequently present throughout.

NOTICE.

TAKE NOTICE that an application will be made to the Parliament of Canada at the next session thereof for an act.

For the incorporation of a company to be known as The Alberta, Peace River and Pacific Railway Company, or such other name as may be given, to construct and operate a railway as follows:—

- (a) Commencing at a point at or near the City of Lethbridge; thence in a Westerly direction to a point at or near the Town of McLeod; thence Westerly and Northerly in a direction generally parallel to the Calgary and McLeod Branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway to a point at or near the City of Calgary; thence Northerly and West of the Calgary and Edmonton railway to a point at or near Lacombe; thence Northerly to a point at or near the City of Edmonton.
- (b) From a point at or near the City of Edmonton by the most feasible route to and along the right bank of the Smoky River near its junction with the Wapiti River at or near Bezanon to the Town of Grande Prairie in the Province of Alberta; thence South Westerly through the Monkman Pass to a point at or near Alexia Lake on the Canadian National Railway to the Province of British Columbia.
- (c) From a point at or near Grande Prairie in a North Westerly direction to a point at or near Peace Coulee and from a point at or near Peace Coulee in a North Westerly direction to a point at or near Hudson's Hope on the Peace River; thence general South Westerly and Westerly direction and North Westerly by the most feasible route through the Pine Pass to a point at or near the Town of Stewart in the Province of British Columbia at the head of Portland Canal.
- (d) From a point at or near Hudson's Hope crossing Peace River in a general Easterly direction to a point at or near Whiteclaw; thence in a Northerly direction to a point at or near Westerly to the right bank of the Hay River at or near its intersection with the Northern boundary of the Province of Alberta.

The said railways being declared to be for the general benefit of Canada.

2. To authorize the said Company to construct wharves, docks and hotels and to own and operate vessels and to collect charges on telegraph and telephone messages of the public, to file upon and acquire water power sites and to generate electric and other energy and to dispose of the surplus from and collect charges therefor.

3. To authorize the said Company to issue securities in respect of the said line of railway to an amount not exceeding Forty Thousand (\$40,000.00) Dollars per mile for the prairie sections and not exceeding Sixty-five Thousand (\$65,000.00) Dollars for the mountain section.

DATED at the City of Edmonton, in the Province of Alberta, this 4th day of January, A.D. 1928.

(Signed) J. STEWART CLARK,
On behalf of the Applicant.

c/o Ewing, Harvie & Bury,
Barristers, Solicitors etc.,
Bank of Toronto Bldg.,
Edmonton, Alberta,
Canada.

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF PRINCE RUPERT

HOLDEN AT PRINCE RUPERT

Between: A. Sulear, Plaintiff,
And: D. L. Stewart, Defendant.

To D. L. Stewart, of Prince Rupert, B.C.

TAKE NOTICE that A. Sulear of Butehead, B.C., has commenced an action against you in the County Court of Prince Rupert, on the 21st of January, 1928, for the sum of \$394.95 being the balance of wages due to him by you and that under and by virtue of an order of His Honor Judge Young dated the 3rd of February, 1928, it was ordered that publication of this notice for three consecutive days be good and sufficient notice of the Plaintiff and Summons issued in this action upon you, and you are required under the said order within ten days after the last publication of this notice to defend the said action by causing a dispute note to be filed in the said action, and in default on your so doing the said A. Sulear may proceed therein and judgment may be given in your absence.

You may file a dispute note personally or by your Solicitor in the above Court at the law courts, Prince Rupert, B.C., DATED at Prince Rupert, this 7th day of February, 1928.

WILLIAMS, MANSON & GONZALES,
Whose address for service is
Royal Bank Chambers, Prince Rupert, B.C.

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF PRINCE RUPERT

HOLDEN AT PRINCE RUPERT

Between: G. W. Nickerson, Plaintiff,
And: D. L. Stewart, Defendant.

To D. L. Stewart, of Prince Rupert, B.C.

TAKE NOTICE that G. W. Nickerson of Prince Rupert, B.C., has commenced an action against you in the County Court of Prince Rupert, on the 21st of January, 1928, for the sum of \$720.86 being the balance due to him by you and that under and by virtue of an order of His Honor Judge Young dated the 3rd of February, 1928, it was ordered that publication of this notice for three consecutive days be good and sufficient notice of the Plaintiff and Summons issued in this action upon you, and you are required under the said order within ten days after the last publication of this notice to defend the said action by causing a dispute note to be filed in the said action, and in default on your so doing the said G. W. Nickerson may proceed therein and judgment may be given in your absence.

You may file a dispute note personally or by your Solicitor in the above Court at the law courts, Prince Rupert, B.C., DATED at Prince Rupert, this 7th day of February, 1928.

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From the specimens of Sitka spruce collected in British Columbia a number of fungi were isolated including *Fomes pinicola*, *Polyporus sulphureus*, *Trametes Pini*, a species of *Oedocephalum*, etc. but since these have not been found so far, in specimens of "dote" sent from England, they need only be mentioned here.

FUNGI RESPONSIBLE

From the specimens of Sitka spruce collected in British Columbia a number of fungi were isolated including *Fomes pinicola*, *Polyporus sulphureus*, *Trametes Pini*, a species of *Oedocephalum*, etc. but since these have not been found so far, in specimens of "dote" sent from England, they need only be mentioned here.

Cultures made from the specimens of diseased wood from England showed that not one but several fungi were responsible for the types of decay known as "dote." Of these fungi three may be mentioned particularly.

1. Perhaps the commonest is *Polyporus Schweinitzii*, the fungus which causes the rot commonly known as "conk-rot." The large, annual fruit-bodies of this fungus consist of a short stalk and a fleshy top; they range in color from yellow to brown; and the under, pored surface is frequently a dirty green. Cultures of this fungus show the same wide variation in color as the fruit-bodies. Cultures which varied somewhat from the type, were isolated from specimens of spruce received from England, and from others collected on the Pacific coast. These cultures grew more slowly, produced a scantier, more delicate mycelium, did not exhibit the same depth of color, and were characterized by a bitter almond odor which was particularly noticeable on malt agar cultures. Although these cultures remain distinct even in spruce wood-block cultures they have been considered as variations of *P. Schweinitzii*. This fungus was isolated from rotted wood of type 1.

2. From the pocket rot, type 3, whether the pockets were one-half inch or twelve inches in length, an unidentified fungus was obtained. In culture a white downy mycelium is produced which later becomes felted, and numerous large, more or less globular masses of velvety mycelium develop on the surface of the culture. These balls vary in color from pale yellow to light and deep buff. Microscopically the mycelium is seen to consist of hyaline hyphae which branch frequently and bear numerous clamp-connections. No sclerotia were noted, but peculiar swellings occur on some hyphae, particularly in prune agar cultures. This fungus is readily recognized but, so far, has not been identified.

3. From wood showing elongated "pipes" of decay, type 2, a fungus was isolated with a delicate, downy, white mycelium, which becomes loosely matted. The mycelium tends to grow around the sides of the tube and to become more dense at the tip of the culture, where a velvety surface results. The mycelium remains pure white except where the plug of velvety mycelium becomes tinted with pale buff. This fungus is recognized by the peculiar foliose, rusting structures, with hyaline spores, which are produced both on agar and in spruce wood-block cultures. The mycelium is composed of very broad hyaline hyphae with very many large and conspicuous clamp-connections, and produces an abundance of hyaline chlamydospores. This fungus, too, is unidentified but readily recognized.

INTERESTING POINT

The interesting point about these cultures is that they were obtained from specimens of "dote" sent to us from England. But in every case, so far, tentative cultures have been obtained from specimens of freshly sawn Sitka spruce in British Columbia. In other words, these fungi may all grow in standing living trees or freshly felled logs of Sitka spruce. It is probable, therefore, that they were present in the Sitka spruce timber before it was shipped from the Pacific coast to England, and that the "dote" was due to their development rather than to fungous infection after shipment.

There is a possible way in which some diseased spruce might be shipped to England as aeroplane stock. It has been shown that the hyphae of wood-destroying fungi are frequently present in the wood beyond the last trace of discoloration. Then, if care were not taken to discard some of the apparently sound wood beyond the last trace of discoloration, the fungus threads might be present in wood which looked normal and was still strong enough to pass the fibre strength tests. The activities of the

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