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PEST REPORT

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FOREST TENT CATERPILLAR IN THE PRINCE GEORGE FOREST DISTRICT, 1974

Stan J. Allen and Leo S. Unger

Forest tent caterpillar populations caused varying degrees of defoliation of trembling aspen in the southern and eastern parts of the District. Traces of defoliation were evident between Prince George and Strathnaver, where severe defoliation had occurred in 1973. Patches of intermittent moderate to heavy defoliation were observed in 1974 west of Prince George to the Chilako area. Sporadic reduced patches of defoliated aspen were observed from west of McBride to Mount Robson. From Mount Robson to Lucerne, defoliation was heavy and relatively evenly distributed over 2,500 acres along the valley bottom and lower slopes.

In September 1973, a heavy egg population was general throughout these areas, indicating heavy populations in 1974. However, apparently unfavourable weather conditions during the early larval stages greatly reduced the infestations. A sample of larvae from Yardley Lake Road, Hixon area, contained Nuclear polyhedrosis (as determined by the Insect Pathology Research Institute at Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.), indicating this disease may have also played an important role in the failure of some of the infestations to develop.