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PEST REPORT

BLACK ARMY CUTWORM INFESTATION NEAR GOLDEN,

NELSON FOREST DISTRICT, B.C.

Jack Monts

An infestation of the black army cutworm, *Actebia fennica*, is causing moderate to severe bud damage and defoliation of Engelmann spruce seedlings on the site of the 1971 "Sue" fire near Golden. The pest occurs on an estimated 4,000 acres but so far severe damage has been limited to seedlings planted in low lying areas of the valley bottom. Moderate seedling damage was observed on the lower slopes of, and along, Blackwater Ridge in the burned area.

Masses of larvae have stripped most of the deciduous ground cover including fireweed, willow, rose and alder in the areas of heavy infestation and are now feeding on the buds and, to a lesser extent, the old foliage of seedlings established on the burn. An estimated 50% of the Engelmann spruce seedlings on 400 acres at mile 24 have more than one-third of the 1973 buds damaged, while more than 75% of the seedlings on 600 acres at mile 27 have over half of their buds destroyed. Douglas-fir seedlings at these locations have been lightly defoliated.

Planting on the area has been discontinued and planting crews have been moved to the Beaverfoot drainage where there is no black army cutworm threat.

The cutworms are presently in the late larval stages and will continue feeding until the latter half of June, when pupation will occur. The rate of defoliation will greatly accelerate with increased size of the larvae. The infestation is expected to result in extensive heavy defoliation and seedling mortality in the plantations if the feeding is not arrested promptly.