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PEST REPORT

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September 14, 1976.

WESTERN HEMLOCK LOOPER INFESTATION

IN AND NEAR WELLS GRAY PARK

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During aerial surveys in mid August, heavy defoliation of western hemlock was observed near Clearwater River south of Donald Creek, and from the south end of Clearwater Lake to Azure Lake. The extent of the infestation is about 10 500 ha (26,000 acres). Through co-operation of the B. C. Forest Service the area was visited early in September by helicopter. Ground observations were made at three locations within the infestations. Numerous western hemlock looper moths were in flight. No eggs were seen, however pupae were numerous on the tree stems. Many standing western hemlock, Engelmann spruce and western red cedar trees were examined at the lower bole, and 10 to 20 pupae per square foot were found in bark crevices. Two felled western hemlock stems were examined at mid crown, and 25 to 40 pupae per square foot were found in bark crevices.

The infestation along Clearwater Lake is more active than the one south of Donald Creek. This area has obviously been infested for two, or perhaps three years, and considerable tree mortality has resulted on approximately 1 200 ha (3,000 acres). Defoliation ranges from 50 to 80% of the total foliage on most western hemlock trees but the number of pupae found in bark crevices was much lighter in this area than in the other.

Egg laying will not be completed for several weeks.

A continuing heavy looper population is predicted for the area in 1977 along Clearwater Lake and further mortality of western hemlock trees may be expected in the area south of Clearwater Lake.