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PEST REPORT

Pacific Forest Research Centre • 506 West Burnside Rd. • Victoria, B.C. • V8Z 1M5

July, 1984

FOREST TENT CATERPILLAR INFESTATIONS

in the HAZELTON-KITWANGA AREAS of the

PRINCE RUPERT REGION, 1984

Nick Humphreys

Forest Insect and Disease Survey

The forest tent caterpillar, Malacosoma disstria has severely defoliated trembling aspen stands from Hazelton southwest to Kitwanga. Defoliation is severest along the Hazelton-Kitwanga north road, and affected about 800 hectares; spot infestations occur also along Highway 16 from Kitsequecla north to Hazelton. Willow, alder, black cottonwood and white spruce are occasionally affected.

The severest defoliation occurred in mid to late June. Larvae will pupate in late June to early July.

Populations in the area increased significantly in 1983 for the first time since 1964. Egg mass assessments by CFS-FIDS in late 1983 indicated increasing populations this year based on ratios of old to new eggs of up to 45 to 1 in parts of the Region.

Tree mortality caused by this defoliator is rare, but some branches are killed and tree increment can be reduced by up to 90%. Populations are often controlled by late spring frosts, starvation, high temperatures (over 38°C in shade, during moth flight), and more than 40 species of parasites and diseases.

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