

A REVIEW OF PLANT QUARANTINE WORK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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In order that the early history of Plant Quarantine activities in British Columbia should not be overlooked, permit me to give an outline of this work from its first inception.

In gathering up the threads of the past, and to get a clear conception of this early work, let us go back to the year of 1897 where we find "An Act" respecting the Provincial Board of Horticulture, cited as the "Horticultural Board Act" (1894 C. 20 S. 1) in operation.

This enactment was the result of two previous Acts regarding the Board of Horticulture, the first coming into operation about 1892 and which might be considered the first steps in British Columbia to protect the fruit industry in this province from the invasion of foreign pests and diseases.

In the wording of this Act it states that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council shall appoint a competent person with practical experience in horticulture, who shall be known as "Inspector of Fruit Pests."

There is much credit due to these first inspectors who were entrusted to carry out this work. Probably the first to receive the appointment to this post was Mr. Ernest Hutcheson of Ladner, B.C., in the year 1892.

Two years later he was succeeded by Mr. R. M. Palmer, who had charge of this work for eight years. Then in 1902, the late Thomas Cunningham was placed in charge, who retained this position until the year of his death in 1916, when the supervision of this service was entrusted to his assistant, Mr. W. H. Lyne, who during his tenure of office as Chief Plant Quarantine Officer under the Provincial Department of Agriculture, also acted as collaborator for the Federal Department, under the Destructive Insect and Pest Act, until his retirement on July 1, 1933.

To show the foresight of these earlier guardians, we find that as early as the year 1895, plans were made, and a Government Fumigation Station was erected, through which all imported plant life must pass for inspection and if necessary, fumigation. The late Thomas Cunningham, who was a member of the Board of Agriculture, supervised this work.

In the year 1900, the Federal Department of Agriculture, under the direction of the late Dr. James Fletcher, Dominion Entomologist, operated a separate fumigation chamber in Vancouver, under what was then known as the "San Jose Scale Act."

This fumigation chamber was erected adjoining the Provincial inspection station, the late Mr. Tom Wilson being placed in charge. The Dominion Department would receive, and fumigate these foreign importations, which would then be passed over to the Provincial Department for inspection.

This dual service was carried out by the two Departments for several years, when the work was co-ordinated and since that time up to August 1st, the service has been carried out under the supervision of the Provincial Plant Quarantine Branch, whose officers were acting as collaborators under the Dominion Destructive Insect and Pest Act.

In giving this record of our past Quarantine activities, in British Columbia, I wish to gratefully acknowledge records prepared by the late Mr. R. C. Treherne.

In the fall of 1932, the Provincial Agricultural Act and Regulations thereto were declared ultra vires and were rescinded. This left the Provincial Plant Quarantine officially fatherless, so that in the spring of 1933 negotiations were entered into between the Federal and Provincial Departments for the transfer of the Provincial Plant Quarantine Branch to the Federal Department, which was finally consummated on August 1 of last year, and this service comes directly under the supervision of the Secretary of the Destructive Insect and Pest Act.

In connection with the transfer of this service, there are still a few minor points to be settled, but the general procedure to be followed will be similar to that carried out in other parts of Canada.

The purpose of quarantines is still the same today as in the earlier days of its first inception, only the scope of the application of the principles involved has been broadened to meet present existing conditions, but the same fundamental purpose remains: i.e., the prevention of the spread of foreign pests and diseases that may be brought in on imported plants and plant products.

The final test of the value of any law is the ability to successfully execute all of its provisions, and quarantine regulations can best be enforced by a staff of inspectors sufficient in number to cover all trade channels where plants or plant products are permitted to enter.