

# **A Man for All Seasons: Frank John Dixie Barnjum, Conservationist, Pulpwood Embargoist and Speculator!**

Thomas R. Roach et Richard Judd

Volume 20, numéro 2, autumn 1991

URI : [https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad20\\_2art06](https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad20_2art06)

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Department of History of the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (imprimé)

1712-7432 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Roach, T. R. & Judd, R. (1991). A Man for All Seasons: : frank John Dixie Barnjum, Conservationist, Pulpwood Embargoist and Speculator! *Acadiensis*, 20(2), 129–144.

## A Man for All Seasons: Frank John Dixie Barnjum, Conservationist, Pulpwood Embargoist and Speculator!<sup>1</sup>

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOREST INDUSTRIES of Canada and the United States has always been characterized by a complex mixture of interdependence and competition. During the recent negotiation of the free trade treaty and the earlier problems with softwood lumber, businessmen, foresters and politicians debated a wide variety of issues involving the trade in forest products between the two nations. As a result of these discussions, Canadians have become aware of the complexities of the international forestry situation. Yet, during the first quarter of this century, the situation was no less complex as the pulp and paper industry of North America underwent a major relocation from the United States to Canada.<sup>2</sup> The years prior to the First World War saw a rise of enthusiasm for the conservation movement, as pressure for the public management of Canada's forests reached its height. Following the declaration of peace in 1918, however, these ideals were largely abandoned. The tale told here illustrates the subtleties of the relocation process and sheds light on a number of longstanding issues that underly the continuing debate over free trade between the two nations. As well, it illuminates the various motivations which led people to support or oppose the conservation movement.

The ebb and flow of the conservation movement in Canada and the United States has been discussed elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> By analysing the career of one of the leading proponents of the conservation movement in Nova Scotia, this paper seeks to provide an insight into some of the contradictory aspects of the history of the movement. It will be seen that in Nova Scotia, the movement, while complex, was essentially profoundly conservative in nature and aimed at

- 1 A version of this paper was read to the 1986 Forest History Symposium, Vancouver, B.C.
- 2 For background to the issues discussed here see: Lewis Ethan Ellis, *Reciprocity 1911, A Study in Canadian-American Relations* (New Haven, 1939), pp. 85, 97, 102, 106-7, 138-40; Trevor J.O. Dick, "Canadian Newsprint, 1913-1930: National Policies and the North American Economy", *Journal of Economic History*, 42, 3 (1982), pp. 659-87; John A. Guthrie, *The Newsprint Paper Industry* (Cambridge, MA, 1941), pp. 130-3, 247.
- 3 The impact of the ideals of the conservation movement on Canadian forestry and conservation policies is discussed on a province by province basis and for the federal government in R. Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach, *Lost Initiatives* (New York, 1986). See also, H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 182-214, 443-64, for a discussion of the Ontario situation.

maintaining the status quo.<sup>4</sup> This paper also suggests that the conservation movement in Canada had a unique impact in each region of the country. Therefore, no single region, or province, can be considered representative of the events surrounding the ebb and flow of interest in the movement or of the impact that the movement had upon public policy.

Nobody illustrates the complexity of the international forestry situation in the 1920s better than Frank J. D. Barnjum, a businessman who was heavily involved in the trade in pulpwood between Canada and the United States. Virtually unknown today, Barnjum was a driving force in the conservation movement. Ultimately, his efforts resulted in both a major change in policy towards the conservation of the province's forest resource on the part of the government of Nova Scotia and the creation of a federal Royal Commission to investigate the pulpwood trade. Despite this, Barnjum remained an opportunist *par excellence*, working hard to further his own financial ambitions.

Frank James Dixie Barnjum was born in Montreal in 1859 to parents who had emigrated to Canada from Norfolk, England, some three years earlier. At age 13, he became an office boy at a firm of Montreal stock brokers. Six years later, he emigrated to Boston where he worked as a tanning-bark purchaser for W.W. Kellett and Company. Shortly thereafter, he established his own business, a horse breeding farm. During the next 20 years he developed a remarkable talent for land speculation, beginning by converting his farm into a housing subdivision. By the early years of the 20th century, Barnjum was a wealthy man. Like many other Boston financiers, he purchased large areas of forested land in Maine. The sale of pulpwood cut from these lands netted him profits of 50 to 1,000 per cent on his original investment.<sup>5</sup>

Barnjum also became an influential force in keeping forestry issues before the public during the years following the First World War. He showed that he had considerable skill as a propagandist. At his own expense, he wrote and published pamphlets and reprinted magazine articles, written by him or about him, that supported the cause of conservation. Writing in 1944, Toronto *Saturday Night* correspondent, P.W. Luce, noted that "every Canadian and scores of American writers of factual articles were on his mailing list for form letters which occasionally arrived with a personal note".<sup>6</sup> Barnjum also regularly purchased advertising space in local newspapers. Every member of Canada's House of Commons

4 The inherent conservatism of the conservation movement in the United States has been discussed in Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York, 1963).

5 Frederic Robson, "The Story of Frank J.D. Barnjum", *Illustrated Canadian Forestry Magazine*, 19, 4 (1923), pp. 221-4; Floyd S. Chalmers, *Frank J.D. Barnjum: An Appreciation of Canada's Most Practised Propagandist* (Toronto, 1924).

6 P.W. Luce, "British Columbia Newsletter, The Obituary of the Barnjum Dream", *Saturday Night* (11 October 1944), p. 35; Robson, "Barnjum".

received his material, as did political leaders in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.<sup>7</sup> Barnjum's first series of pamphlets appeared in 1920 and most people who received them assumed that he was a dedicated conservationist distributing his material to advance the cause.<sup>8</sup>

From January 1920 until just before his death in Paris in 1933, Barnjum carried out his campaign. On the surface, he appeared to be strongly in favour of the conservation of Canada's forest resources. His message rarely varied: as a result of both over-cutting and forest fires, the country was facing a shortage of wood that, unless dealt with, would cripple the forest industry in the future. He suggested that to avert this approaching crisis, Canada should stop the export of all logs regardless of whether they were cut on private or on Crown land.<sup>9</sup> In the early years of his campaign, Barnjum advocated this step almost exclusively as a solution to the "shortage". He predicted that the imposition of such an embargo would result in higher prices for land, pulpwood, lumber and paper, thereby enabling the land owner "to set aside something to spend for increased fire protection, burning of slash, selective cutting, and reforestation".<sup>10</sup> At the same time, he argued that an embargo on the export of privately cut pulpwood would reduce the amount of pulpwood cut on Crown Land in Canada by 50 per cent per year. This calculation was based on the assumption that private woodlot owners would not reduce their cut but would, instead, divert the logs they currently exported to mills in Canada.<sup>11</sup> This was a remarkable proposal. Taken at face value, it presumably would have meant the destruction of the trade in which Barnjum was heavily and successfully involved.

Besides his efforts as a pamphleteer, Barnjum sponsored two essay competitions on the subject of how best to protect Canada's forests from fire and insect

7 Barnjum's correspondence to some well known Canadian politicians, as well as copies of his pamphlets, can be found in: Sir Lomer Gouin Papers, MG 27 III B4, vols. 2, 11, 12; and the Arthur Meighen Papers, MG 26 G, vol. 91; MG 27 I, vols. 61, 121, National Archives of Canada [NAC]. Because Barnjum made a habit of distributing copies of his letters to all and sundry, these men received a fair sample of his correspondence to other politicians and people Barnjum considered important. Unless otherwise noted, copies of his privately published material may be found in these locations.

8 Robson, "Barnjum". Barnjum was also publicly praised in the House of Commons. See: Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 159, 5 (25 June 1923), pp. 4350-1.

9 Frank J.D. Barnjum, *Some Startling Facts about Canada's Forests* (p.p., n.d.) and *An Open Letter on the Delusion of a Net Annual Growth in Our Forests* (p.p., n.d.). These two pamphlets were widely reprinted in newspapers in Eastern Canada and the United States during January and February 1920. A later, 90 page pamphlet, repeated many of the same arguments: *Startling Facts and Fallacies Regarding Canada's Forests* (Montreal, 1930).

10 *Ibid.*

11 "An Immediate Export Tax or Embargo on Canada's Fee Land Pulpwood Is Now Imperative", Bulletin no. 8 (Annapolis Royal, N.S., n.d., ca. 1921), Gilbert Family Papers [GFP], box 572, University of Maine Archives [UMA].

damage. He also urged the government of Nova Scotia to create a Department of Forestry. The winner of the first essay competition was Otto Schierbeck, a Danish forester employed by Price Bros., of Quebec City, as their Chief Forester.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, when the Nova Scotia government refused to establish a Department responsible for the province's forests, Barnjum hired Schierbeck from his old friends the Prices and employed him as a "Public Forester" for Nova Scotia. Schierbeck was available to any resident of the province for free consultation on forestry problems. At his own expense, Barnjum supported Schierbeck until 1925 when, as a member of the Provincial legislature, he succeeded in convincing the administration to change its policy. Schierbeck was then hired by the Province as its first Chief Forester, a position he retained until 1934.<sup>13</sup>

Although Barnjum appears to have been sincere in his support of the conservation movement, his recommendations were always self-serving. A close examination of Barnjum's propaganda indicates a tendency towards exaggeration as well as an ability to use public sentiment to best advantage. For example, in warning that, given certain atmospheric conditions, "the dropping of a lighted match in the right place may cause a forest fire that will sweep the whole of northern Ontario clean",<sup>14</sup> he was not only exaggerating the danger, but was also playing on fears raised by a rash of wildfires that had destroyed several towns in the settlement areas of northeastern Ontario. His overdramatized messages illustrated the interplay of self-interest, nationalism and the perspectives of the mill and timberland owners with whom he identified. The truth was that, as an owner of pulpwood lands in Canada and the United States, and as an international dealer in pulpwood, he found his operations complicated by Canadian provincial regulations governing the export of raw logs. It is here, in his response to the difficulties posed by these regulations, that the real reason for his interest in conservation can be found.

The regulation of log exports by Canadian provincial governments dates from before the First World War. By 1920, each of the provinces restricted the export of unprocessed logs cut from their Crown Lands. The degree of processing or "manufacturing" required for export varied from province to province but the regulations were especially strict in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. As a

12 Otto Schierbeck, *Budworm, Beetle and Borer* (Annapolis Royal, 1922); "Biography — SCHIERBECK, Otto", card index, Public Archives of Nova Scotia [PANS]; "Otto Schierbeck", Public Service Commission, [PSC] Historical Personnel Files, RG 32, NAC. The essays submitted to the second competition, held in 1922, were published by Barnjum as *Why Canada Should Prohibit the Export of Unmanufactured Wood: Evidence of 549 Witnesses* (Montreal, 1923).

13 Frederic Robson, "A Forester for Nova Scotia", *Illustrated Canadian Forestry Magazine*, 19, 11 (1923), p. 708; "Otto Schierbeck", RG 32, PSC, NAC.

14 Barnjum to J.N. Stephenson, 1 August 1921, GFP, box 572, UMA; Barnjum, *Some Startling Facts*; Barnjum to Gilbert, 16 August 1921, GFP, box 572, UMA; Barnjum, "Open Letter", 23 July 1923, GFP, box 553, UMA.

result of these restrictions, American mills which relied upon wood imported from Canada were forced to purchase logs cut from privately owned land, because this wood was not subject to provincial regulation.<sup>15</sup>

Up to the time of the Great Depression, farmers in Eastern Canada often managed their woodlots for pulpwood production. Harvesting pulpwood afforded them the opportunity to gain a return from marginal portions of their land. The northern regions of Ontario and Quebec were also being settled during these years and the sale of logs provided settlers with a "crop" from the process of land clearing. Privately cut wood was sold to dealers who arranged for its transportation to the mills. By the early 1920s, a delicate balance had been established between the farmers and settlers who cut the pulpwood and the pulp and paper mills that purchased it. The balance was maintained by a network of dealers who supplied wood to mills on both sides of the border. These men assessed the demand for privately cut pulpwood and contracted with individual farmers for its supply. By 1922, an active and well organized trade had been created. Between 1908 and 1922, dealers representing Canada's woodlot owners annually exported between 800,000 and 1,350,000 cords of logs to mills in the United States. In 1908, this was about two-thirds of the total amount of pulpwood cut each year in Canada. By 1922, however, this proportion had shrunk to about one quarter.<sup>16</sup>

This decrease in the proportion of logs exported compared to Canada's total pulpwood cut was the result of the general movement of paper mills to Canada from the United States. This movement itself resulted from a growing shortage in, and the increased cost of, American pulpwood. The paper mills that remained in the northeastern States were thus faced with a shortage of domestic wood, and increasingly found themselves relying upon the importation of pulpwood from Canada.<sup>17</sup>

Barnjum's involvement in the pulpwood trade dated from the years immediately after the turn of the century when he made considerable investments in timberlands in the state of Maine. Much of this land was held in partnership with other wealthy Bostonians. In principle, a group of investors would purchase

15 Thomas R. Roach, "Farm Woodlots and Pulpwood Exports from Eastern Canada, 1900-1930", in H.K. Steen, ed., *History of Sustained Yield Forestry* (Santa Cruz, CA, 1984), pp. 202-10.

16 Thomas R. Roach, "The Pulpwood Trade and the Settlers of New Ontario", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 22, 3 (Fall 1987), pp. 78-89; Guthrie, *Newsprint*, pp. 130-3; Canada, *Year Book, 1922-23* (Ottawa, 1924), p. 328; Canadian Pulpwood Association, *The Pulpwood Embargo* (Halifax, 1924). These ratios were later substantiated by the U.S. Tariff Commission. See: United States Tariff Commission, *Report to the United States Senate on Wood Pulp and Pulpwood* (Washington, 1938), Table 37, p. 121.

17 *Ibid.* Note that, in the period 1920-24, mills in the northeastern U.S. used imported wood for about one-third of their needs. United States Tariff Commission, *Report*, Table 119b, p. 253. Imported wood was more expensive than domestic wood. See: Royal S. Kellogg, *Newsprint Paper in North America* (New York, 1948), p. 64.

land on a township basis, and the proportion of the total held by each individual was notionally converted to a proportion of the area held. This method of dividing the investment was carried out because the land had never been surveyed. Thus the cost of harvesting and extracting the timber, as well as the profit made on the sale of the logs, would be divided among all members of the syndicate. Yet, as individuals, each investor felt free to claim that he "owned" large acreages, just as was Barnjum's practice.

In 1915 alone, Barnjum acquired lands valued at nearly a million dollars. By then, according to the letterhead on his correspondence, his purchases represented the "largest single pulpwood holdings in America".<sup>18</sup> Along with 35,000 acres in Maine's Dead River region and scattered holdings in other parts of the state, he owned 27,000 acres of the 85,000-acre Allagash Land Company interests containing an estimated million cords of northern Maine pulpwood.<sup>19</sup> These acquisitions involved Barnjum in the affairs of the Great Northern Paper Company, then consolidating its own pulpwood holdings in northern Maine. Barnjum and Great Northern held mutual interest in several townships of timberland, and Barnjum eventually acquired stock in Great Northern, which he considered the "premier corporation of the world".<sup>20</sup> In 1911 he had begun a lifelong friendship with the company's timberland manager, Fred A. Gilbert, who advised him on Maine land purchases and put him in touch with parties interested in selling lands.<sup>21</sup> Connections with the Allagash Land Company, Great Northern and Gilbert helped shape Barnjum's transboundary business loyalties and his conservation message.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, Barnjum had also bought into a consortium which had been granted a lease to the only significant remaining area of Crown forest in the province of Nova Scotia: an estimated 1,016 square miles of the high interior plateau of Cape Breton Island. The original members of the consortium had obtained the lease in 1899 with the proviso that they would construct a pulp or paper mill and export its products.<sup>22</sup> After Barnjum joined their ranks, the consortium lobbied the government of the province to

18 See for example, Barnjum to Gilbert, 13 November 1915, GFP, box 565, UMA.

19 Barnjum to Gilbert, 12 April and 7 May 1915, GFP, box 565, UMA; Barnjum to Gilbert, n.d., ca. October 1929, box 567, UMA; typescript, n.d., "Barnjum letters — 1930", box 570, UMA.

20 Barnjum to Gilbert, 15 January 1912 and Gilbert to Barnjum, 2 September 1912, GFP, box 565, UMA.

21 Gilbert to Barnjum, 3 November 1911, and Barnjum to Gilbert, 5 January 1915, GFP, box 565, UMA. The earliest copies of correspondence between the two men dates from 1910 and concerns the division of timberlands in Tomhegan Township, Maine. At this time, Barnjum's residence was in Lynnfield, Massachusetts.

22 Royal Commission on Pulpwood, "Evidence Taken at Hearings", Hugh J. Chisholm, President of Oxford Paper Co., RG 39, vol. 2, pp. 242-52, NAC. On its letterhead Barnjum's company was named as the "Cape Breton Pulp Company Ltd., 111 Devonshire Street, Boston, Mass".

have the “manufacturing clause” removed from their contract. In this they were successful. By 1913, when Barnjum, acting from his base in Boston, bought out his partners, the removal of bark from the logs, or “rossing”, was all that was needed to legalize their export. By 1923, even this restriction had been removed.<sup>23</sup>

In attempting to develop a secure market for his Cape Breton wood, Barnjum purchased a half share in the Macleod Pulp and Paper Company of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, and made sure it bought its logs from him. In addition, he used his contacts with Gilbert to sell wood to Great Northern. Nevertheless, he found the Cape Breton wood was expensive to cut, extract and ship. Thus, in 1917, at a time when the value of privately cut pulpwood imported to the U.S. from Canada had not quite peaked, he sold the lease to the Oxford Paper Company of Rumford, Maine. The Oxford Paper Company was controlled by the founder of the International Paper Company, Hugh J. Chisholm. As soon as the deal was consummated, Oxford hired Professor B.E. Fernow, Dean of Forestry at the University of Toronto, to conduct a timber cruise of the holdings. Fernow calculated that there were just under four million cords on only 900 square miles of the lease, considerably less than the 12 million cords on over 1,000 square miles promoted by Barnjum.<sup>24</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that Barnjum was not surprised by this discrepancy. Following the sale, he purchased a residence in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, adding it to the farm he already owned in Ringfield, Maine, and his homes in Lynnfield and Boston, Massachusetts. The purchase was timely since the threat of legal action through the United States’ court system resulting from the Cape Breton transactions made it convenient for him to have a permanent residence in Canada, apparently for the first time since he had left the country as a young man. For the rest of his life, Barnjum made a habit of keeping on the move. It was a useful proclivity as he had made bitter enemies of Chisholm and his compatriots in the International Paper Company.

Owing to the sale of his Cape Breton property, Barnjum was left with limited supplies of wood for the Macleod Paper Company of which he was now president. As the price of pulpwood and paper products soared in the last few months of the First World War and through the first years of peace, Barnjum cut most of the remaining wood he owned on the mainland of Nova Scotia.<sup>25</sup> By 1919-1920,

23 Canada, Royal Commission on Pulpwood, *Report of the Royal Commission on Pulpwood* (Ottawa, 1924), pp. 14-5.

24 Royal Commission on Pulpwood, “Evidence”, RG 39, vol. 2, p. 143, NAC; Royal Commission on Pulpwood, *Report*, pp. 15-6. Some six years previously, Fernow had carried out a survey of the forestry situation in Nova Scotia for the Commission of Conservation and one can assume that this is why Chisholm asked him to carry out this work. See B.E. Fernow, *Forest Conditions of Nova Scotia* (Ottawa, 1912).

25 Robson, “Barnjum”. Writing in 1923, Robson reported that “all cutting has been stopped on Mr. Barnjum’s holdings to allow for recuperation of the forest growth...”.



Barnjum had to switch from using his own wood in his mill to purchasing wood from farmers and other landowners to keep the mill operating. As a result of competing demands for wood, particularly from mills across the border, he found this to be a difficult and expensive proposition.<sup>26</sup> It was at this time that he distributed the first of his pamphlets supporting the conservation of Canada's forests and advocating a pulpwood embargo. Cannily, he had reasoned that if farmers could no longer sell their logs for export then the price he had to pay for wood delivered to his own mill at Liverpool would fall. At the same time, he became convinced that the value of his investments in Maine would increase.

Barnjum's pulpwood embargo became an issue throughout the Canadian forestry community, and his advocacy of it resonated with cross-border tensions that ran deeper than the surface issue itself. He was able to use these tensions to add credence to his message. Tapping nationalist sentiments, he maintained that Canada served as a "free storehouse for raw materials to be drawn upon at pleasure by the United States, and as a dumping-ground for the same raw materials after they have been converted by Americans into manufactured products at a large profit to themselves".<sup>27</sup> Frequently using the International Paper Company as an example, Barnjum underscored the mercenary nature of American industries either located in Canada or draining Canadian raw materials over the border. Ironically, the man who had once lobbied the government to remove restrictive regulations now argued that Canadians could regain control of their own destiny by implementing his embargo proposal as well as by raising the price of domestically manufactured wood products.

Barnjum's proposals did not fall on deaf ears. In the early 1920s, the embargo campaign attracted interest in Canada as a viable proposition. It also drew criticism from United States Senator Oscar Underwood of Alabama who retaliated by proposing that restrictions be placed on the import of Canadian paper products unless the provinces agreed to remove their manufacturing conditions and thus allow the export of logs cut on Crown Land.<sup>28</sup> Barnjum dismissed this challenge as a thinly veiled attack by the International Paper Company, and charged that the Company, aided by the American press, was

26 Frank J.D. Barnjum, *Forest Conditions in New Brunswick* (p.p., n.d.) as cited in the *Fredericton Gleaner*, 30 March 1920.

27 Untitled clipping from the *Montreal Star* (23 September 1923), "Barnjum — 1923", GFP, box 553, UMA; untitled clipping from the *Montreal Star* (12 December 1929), "Barnjum", GFP, box 567, UMA; *Report on Canadian Forest Conditions by Frank J.D. Barnjum of the Forestry Commission of the Imperial Conference, London, 1930*, (Montreal, 1930), p. 10; "Extracts from First Aid and Prevention in the Home and Government", n.d., Barnjum — clippings and pamphlets, GFP, box 570, UMA.

28 Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, *Government Restrictions Upon the Use of Pulpwood Cut From the Crown Lands of Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick* (Montreal, 15 May 1920). For more details about U.S. opposition to Barnjum's proposals, see Harvey H. Black, "Pulpwood Policy for Canada", *Canadian Annual Review*, 24 (1923-5), pp. 718-32.

intent on driving Canadian newsprint makers from the field as part of an effort to control the industry.<sup>29</sup> Canadian manufacturers, anticipating that International Paper had plans to start a price war, and affronted by Underwood's ultimatum, embraced Barnjum's basic thesis that the export of logs to America reduced an already scarce resource and that the high price of logs was symptomatic of a wood shortage in Canada. His proposed embargo, which would place private wood suppliers at the mercy of Canadian mill owners by forcing them to depend entirely on the domestic market, also proved popular among most mill owners. Angus MacLean, president and manager of the Bathurst Company Ltd. and a leading opponent of Barnjum and his ideas, admitted to the Royal Commission on Pulpwood, for example, that the embargo would "cut the price [of Canadian pulpwood] in half".<sup>30</sup>

The reverse of this situation would be true in Maine, where Barnjum's holdings in the Allagash Land Company were languishing.<sup>31</sup> The removal of Canadian pulpwood from the United States market would have increased the value of his lands in that state. In a confidential letter to Fred Gilbert written early in 1920, Barnjum boasted that "there will be no wood going out of Canada inside of two years. Hence \$50.00 for Maine lands". He advised Great Northern to "buy all the wood and stumpage as long as you can and save your lands just as long as you possibly can. Watch the fun".<sup>32</sup> Repeatedly, Barnjum pointed out to his associates that while most northeastern United States mills, and particularly those belonging to International Paper, relied upon imported Canadian wood, Great Northern was the "only absolutely independent paper company on this continent with an assured supply of wood on its own lands".<sup>33</sup> It was Barnjum's expectation that Maine timberland (including his own holdings) would provide Great Northern with all the wood it required in the future if there was a shortage of Canadian wood exports to the United States. Besides creating a financial windfall for Barnjum, the embargo would have rewarded his American friends and punished his enemies, especially those associated with the Oxford and International Paper companies. Barnjum's remarkable achievement was that he was able to create a

29 "Extracts from First Aid and Prevention in the Home and Government", GFP, box 570, UMA.

30 Royal Commission on Pulpwood, *Evidence*, RG 39, vol. 5, p. 470, NAC.

31 Garret Schenck, Great Northern Paper, to Fred A. Gilbert, 11 January, 20 April, and 16 June 1921, GFP, box 559, UMA. In fact the Allagash holdings continued to languish till the last years of his life; see Barnjum to Gilbert, 26 December 1929, GFP, box 567, UMA.

32 Barnjum to Gilbert, 5 January and 9 February 1920, GFP, box 572, UMA. Barnjum also published his views in American trade journals; see "Pulpwood to be Scarcer", *Paper Trade Journal*, 49 (9 December 1920), p. 111. For an opinion from industry as to the effect of the high cost of wood on the cost of producing paper, especially at a time when paper values were falling, see: "News Print Price in Canada is Big Factor of Interest", *Ibid.* (16 June 1921), p. 172.

33 Barnjum to W.B. Kendall (Bowdoinham, Maine), 25 May 1928, "Barnjum 1928", GFP, box 558, UMA.

cause that benefited his own interests as well as those of his friends on both sides of the border.

During the years 1920-1923, the embargo idea found favour in the financial community of Toronto and, for a short period, with the leadership of the Canadian Forestry Association.<sup>34</sup> To support the cause, Barnjum produced an impressive flow of pamphlets and letters to editors, issuing many of them as numbered "bulletins". In addition, he approached Canada's federal government, then under the leadership of Liberal Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King. Despite his long sojourn in the United States, Barnjum considered himself an established member of the Liberal party and, on this basis, expected to get a sympathetic hearing in the halls of power. Moreover, a close associate, Dr. Lovett, had just been elected as the Member of Parliament for the Nova Scotia riding of Digby-Annapolis. The Liberals had come to power late in 1921 but their position was that of a minority government, with the balance of power in the hands of the members of the Progressive Party. As a result, during 1922 the new Prime Minister and his Cabinet were loath to take initiatives which might prove controversial.<sup>35</sup> Thus, not until the budget speech of 1923 was the House informed that "the question of forest conservation has of late commanded ever increasing interest".<sup>36</sup> Even then, the government adopted an extremely cautious approach. Aware that acceptance of Barnjum's policy proposals would bring objections from private landowners, Prime Minister King chose to create a Royal Commission to study the matter.

But the promise of a Royal Commission failed to put the issue to rest. The financial communities in Montreal and Toronto, convinced of the potential profitability of an embargo, remained insistent on the matter, especially as the price of paper dropped. Business columnists, writing in Toronto's *Saturday Night Magazine* and the *Financial Post*, argued that an embargo on the export of logs would increase sales of Canadian paper in the United States, hurt competing companies in New York and New England, and lower the price of wood for Canadian companies.<sup>37</sup> In mid June of 1923, the government, in Barnjum's words, "capitulated", and King's Minister of Finance, W.S. Fielding, introduced a resolution in the House of Commons to enable the Governor General in Council to prohibit the export of privately cut pulpwood from

34 Frank J.D. Barnjum, "An Embargo on Pulpwood Proposed", *Illustrated Canadian Forestry Magazine*, 17, 3 (1921), p. 155. Later, the Association was to change its mind on the issue and decline to allow Barnjum to address its annual meeting.

35 John Herd Thompson and Allan Seager, *Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto, 1985), pp. 50-5.

36 House of Commons, *Debates*, 159, 3 (11 May 1923), p. 2648.

37 "Use Embargo as a Club To Get Our Paper into the U.S.A.", *Financial Post*, 18 (25 January 1924), p. 7; "The Front Page", *Saturday Night*, 39, 1 (24 November 1923), p. 1.

Canada.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, while the bill was in Committee of the Whole, Fielding was the only cabinet minister to speak for it, and the only Liberal member, besides Lovett, to support it. Indeed, a string of Liberal members from farmer and settler ridings in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick strongly opposed it. Typical were the comments from C.G. (Chubby) Power who pointed out that "It is just as if the government were to say to some of my Progressive friends from the West: Every bushel of wheat you grow on your farms must be sold in Canada to Canadian millers". In contrast, the Conservatives, led by Arthur Meighen and Toronto corporate lawyer Sir Henry Drayton, enthusiastically supported the resolution.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the lack of enthusiasm from the government's back benches, the amendment to the Export Act was passed. Barnjum was naturally delighted, and expected the desired Order in Council establishing the embargo to be issued with dispatch. Unfortunately for him, the debate in the House had made it only too clear to the Prime Minister where the real interest of the majority of the Liberal members lay. On 28 June 1923, the Prime Minister issued a statement assuring his supporters that the government had no intention of banning the export of pulpwood cut by farmers. In August, the Royal Commission on Pulpwood was appointed.<sup>40</sup> Barnjum considered these delaying tactics a betrayal and immediately switched his party membership from the Liberals to the Conservatives, stating that he was "disgusted with the weaklings now in charge of the ship of state".<sup>41</sup>

The Royal Commission, which now commanded the attention of interested parties on both sides of the issue, travelled slowly across Canada, stopping in all major cities and many towns throughout the remainder of 1923 and early 1924. It started in Halifax where one of the first witnesses was Barnjum's adversary, Hugh Chisholm. Chisholm's testimony included some embarrassing details about Barnjum's dealings in the pulpwood trade, emphasizing his perfidy with respect to the Cape Breton pulpwood limits deal. Barnjum, fully aware that the well-known Liberal lawyer Amion Geoffrion had been retained by the Oxford Paper Company to interrogate him, refused to appear before the Commission at

38 Barnjum to Gilbert, 13 June 1923, GFP, box 533, UMA. Barnjum claimed he had helped frame the resolution.

39 House of Commons, *Debates*, 159, 5 (18 June 1923), p. 4012; (25 June 1923), pp. 4345-97.

40 *Ibid.* (26 June 1923), pp. 4547-8 and (29 June 1923), p. 4866; Royal Commission on Pulpwood, *Report*, p. 7; F.H. Byshe (Acting Secretary) to W.S. Fielding (Minister of Finance), 12 September 1923 and reply on the same day, Royal Commission on Pulpwood, RG 33, 13, NAC; Barnjum to Piche (Chief Forester, Quebec Department of Lands and Forests) with copy to Gilbert, 27 August 1923, GFP, box 552, UMA.

41 Barnjum to E.S. Carter (Editor of the *Saint John Telegraph Journal*), copy to Gilbert, 13 August 1923, GFP, box 533, UMA; Barnjum to Meighen, 13 August 1923, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 61 MG 27 I, NAC.

this time. Instead, he promised the Chairman of the Commission that he would attend the sitting in Digby, next door to his home in Annapolis Royal.<sup>42</sup> When the meeting was held, however, he failed to appear. Issuing press statements ridiculing the Commission as a waste of time while keeping one step ahead of the Commissioners all the way to Montreal, Barnjum avoided a public humiliation at the hands of his opponents. Ultimately he so irritated the Commissioners that in February 1924, the Chairman ordered the Secretary to issue a subpoena to force Barnjum to appear before the body. Getting wind of this action, Barnjum explained that he had urgent business in Maine and slipped across the border, spending the next few months at his residence in Kingfield.<sup>43</sup>

Barnjum's refusal to cooperate with the Commission was the turning point in his public career as an accepted conservationist. Even though he kept up a barrage of pamphlets and open letters, his credibility as a conservationist had been damaged. Undoubtedly, the public's attitude toward him was influenced by propaganda distributed by the Canadian Pulpwood Association, an organization founded in July 1924 by Ralph Bell, a competing pulpwood dealer based in Halifax, and Angus MacLean, the President of the largest pulp and paper company in New Brunswick.<sup>44</sup> Through an energetic advertising and public relations campaign, these men were able to attract the support of individual pulpwood dealers in Ontario and Quebec. The Association's membership was soon based in these provinces even though its postal address remained in Halifax. Like Barnjum, the Association published and distributed pamphlets. For an organization dedicated to capitalism and free-trade, it was surprisingly left-leaning in its rhetoric. In one broadsheet, *Fallacies in the Proposal of a Pulpwood Embargo*, Barnjum was portrayed as the dupe of Canadian "Pulp and paper companies out to increase profits at the settler's expense". In the same publication, Ralph Bell's article, entitled "The Medicine Man", lampooned Barnjum as a snake-oil salesman while another cartoon, asked, "Will the Story of Red Riding Hood be Re-enacted?" and depicted a wolf labelled "Canadian Pulp and Paper Monopoly".<sup>45</sup>

42 Evidence of Hugh J. Chisholm, President of Oxford Paper Co., Royal Commission on Pulpwood, "Evidence", RG 39, vol. 2, pp. 242-52, NAC; correspondence between Barnjum and Joseph Picard, Chairman, Royal Commission on Pulpwood, and Ernest Finlayson, Secretary to the Commission and Acting Director of Forestry, Royal Commission on Pulpwood, RG 33, 13, vol. 2, file E7, NAC.

43 *Ibid.* The subpoena was never served and sits in the file to this day.

44 Especially see: Canadian Pulpwood Association, *Fallacies in the Proposal of a Pulpwood Embargo* (Halifax, 1925) and Ralph P. Bell, *The Pulpwood Embargo, A Much Misrepresented Issue* (Halifax, 31 December 1923). Frank J.D. Barnjum, "Mr. Barnjum Replies to His Critics" (Annapolis Royal, mimeo, 14 March 1924); clipping, "Do Not Worry Mr. Barnjum", Windsor, *Border City Star* (4 October 1926), GFP, box 570, UMA.

45 Canadian Pulpwood Association, *Fallacies*, pp. 4, 8, 10-1.

Neither was Barnjum more successful in his attempt at a career in politics. In the 1925 Nova Scotia provincial general election, he contested and won the seat for Queen's County. But, even though he was able to change the government's attitude toward forestry, his time as an elected official was to be short. Within two years, frustrations with a financial deal intervened. Early in 1927, he assembled a group of investors to take over his holdings in the Macleod Pulp and Paper Company. To sweeten the deal, he approached his friend Edgar Rhodes, the Premier of Nova Scotia, for a concession to a hydro-electric dam site on the Liverpool River. To his disgust, Barnjum was informed that his rival, Ralph Bell, of the Canadian Pulpwood Association, had already made a proposal for a mill on the site and had successfully negotiated leases on enough Crown Land to provide the wood he required. Barnjum had been outwitted, and his resignation from his seat in the Legislative Assembly followed shortly.<sup>46</sup>

Now in his late sixties, Barnjum became interested in timber in British Columbia. In the next few years, he invested some \$250,000 in purchasing forested lands in that province. By 1932, he reported that he owned 2,000 square miles of forest which he claimed to have purchased before it was "too late". These holdings, he stated, were to form part of the "Barnjum Forest Trust", established to manage the land indefinitely as a demonstration of proper forestry techniques.<sup>47</sup> Unbeknownst to the public, however, the "Trust" was actually a limited company, cannily organized so that all its shares were held by his daughters, his only son, George, and other relatives, including his estranged wife. In the few months of his life remaining to him, Barnjum transferred practically all his assets to the Trust, receiving cash values much lower than their real worth. Thus, when he died in 1933, his estate was assessed only for the paper value of the shares Barnjum held in the Trust and the assets not transferred. His heirs thereby avoided paying death duties on the bulk of his fortune.<sup>48</sup>

By the time of his death, Barnjum had extended his activities beyond North America. He had joined the British Empire Forestry Association in 1926. And he was rewarded by the federal Tories for his efforts on their behalf when he was appointed to help form the Canadian delegation to the Forestry Committee at

46 Correspondence between Barnjum and Premier Rhodes, 6 July to 3 August 1927, E.N. Rhodes Papers, MG 2 W1615, PANS; clipping, *Montreal Standard* (26 June 1926), p. 26, "Barnjum 1926", GFP, box 556, UMA.

47 Luce, "The Obituary of the Barnjum Dream"; Frank J.D. Barnjum, *Saving the Big Timber* (Annapolis Royal, 1931) and "Forest Conditions, Advertising and Business", (Victoria, B.C. mimeo, 1 April 1932).

48 Estate of Frank J.D. Barnjum, Annapolis Royal, "Statement to the Court of Probate by Kenneth S. Smith, Solicitor to the Estate", 7 September 1935, and "Inventory and Valuation of the Property of Said Deceased", 20 September 1933, Register of Probate and Prothonotary, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. The trust was valued at \$50,000 and the probated value of the estate, excluding a "Certificate of Preferred Indebtness, MacLeod Pulp and Paper Co.", was just under \$100,000.

the Imperial Conference of 1930.<sup>49</sup> During the last three years of his life, Barnjum toured Europe, generally accompanied by his son. He died in the Continental Hotel, Paris, France, on 20 February 1933 at the age of 74.<sup>50</sup>

What was the legacy of this complex man? The Barnjum Forest Trust, incorporated as a limited company with himself, his wife and his children as shareholders, never fulfilled its published objectives. Because Barnjum neglected to write a will, when he died the assets he had not transferred to the Trust, as well as his own shares in the Trust, were divided amongst his surviving relatives. Control of the Trust thus remained with the original shareholders who had no hindrances placed upon them as to how to dispose of its assets. The reasons why Barnjum failed to write a will ensuring that his published wishes concerning the Trust would be carried out are not known. What is clear is that once the Trust was created, and Barnjum's assets transferred to it, he became a minority shareholder and could no longer control the management of it. It is therefore no surprise to find that by the mid-1940s, his children had sold off the assets of the Trust and folded the company.

On the positive side, Barnjum's efforts as a propagandist had kept the issue of conservation before the Canadian public during the 1920s. This was a crucial period for the movement as it struggled to recover from the *laissez-faire* attitudes engendered by the First World War. Writing in 1933, the year of Barnjum's death, James Dickson, the Honorary Secretary of the Ontario Branch of the Empire Forestry Association, listed Barnjum with other forestry notables as one of "a number of individuals [who] have done yeoman service" in educating the public to "all that forest conservation means".<sup>51</sup> From the public's point of view, his energetic campaign was pointed in a positive direction. "I am backing my plea for forest conservation with every dollar at my command, every moment of my time and every tree that I own", he wrote late in life when, in many a lesser man, the fires of ambition would have been drawn.<sup>52</sup> His transboundary business connections permitted him a broader view than that of some of his contemporaries, enabling him to state "I have seen what happened to the forests in the United States, and forest history is repeating itself in Canada only at a much more rapid rate". Preservation of the vast Canadian forest would sustain a crucial North American industry and, according to Barnjum, protect both nations from the

49 Frank J.D. Barnjum, *Startling Facts and Fallacies Regarding Canada's Forests* (Montreal, 1930); "Barnjum Represented Canada on Imperial Conference Committee", *Pulp and Paper Magazine*, 30, 20 (1930), p. 612; "Imperial Conference, 1930", *Empire Forestry Journal*, 9, 2 (1930), p. 274.

50 "Death of Noted Canadian Conservationist", *Canadian Lumberman*, 52, 5 (March 1933), p. 14; "Frank J.D. Barnjum", *Forestry Chronicle*, 9, 4 (December 1933), pp. 85-6.

51 James R. Dickson, "The Development of Public Opinion in Relation to Forest Reservation in Canada", *Empire Forestry Journal*, 12, 2 (1933), pp. 215-28.

52 "Where Are We Heading?" (typescript, 6 September 1932), "1932 Misc.", GFP, box 562, UMA.

“icy blast from the Arctic” as the forest was “just as important to the people of the United States as it was to Canadians”.<sup>53</sup> Although it can be argued that his message was oversimplified, he alerted the nation to its forestry problems and paved the way for more refined solutions. In addition, by convincing the government of Nova Scotia to appoint a Chief Forester, he had a direct hand in bringing about at least one important change in public policy in that province.

Barnjum’s agitation in support of an embargo also resulted in the creation by the federal government of the Royal Commission on Pulpwood which sat during 1923 and 1924. The Canadian Forestry Service was given the task of providing the Commission with a Secretary, and Ernest Finlayson, the Service’s Acting Director, nominated himself for this position. As Secretary, Finlayson was able to ensure not only that his own department provided all the background and research support for the Commissioners, but also that he wrote the final report himself. Scrutiny of this 290-page document reveals it to be a statement of Finlayson’s own ideas concerning what the future course of conservation and forestry in Canada ought to be. Finlayson followed these ideas during his tenure as Director of Forestry from 1923 to 1936. Thus, the Commission gave Canada’s Director of Forestry the opportunity to set down his ideas in a concrete fashion and have them published. More important, however, the Royal Commission on Pulpwood became a vehicle for the transformation of the Canadian Forestry Service from an operation concerned with the protection of federal lands on the prairies into a full-fledged organization that spoke for forestry and conservation across the nation.<sup>54</sup>

In retrospect, it is clear that Barnjum’s analysis and understanding of the pulpwood trade was not as complete as it might have been. His interests were in Nova Scotia and Maine. Within this geographical region, his knowledge was probably unsurpassed. Witness the ease with which he disposed of his holdings on the inland plateau of Cape Breton Island and the fact that he died a wealthy man. Unfortunately, it appears that he did not appreciate the complexities of the trade outside of Maine and Nova Scotia.

The Province and the State had many things in common. One important point was that practically all of the merchantable forest in Nova Scotia was privately owned with large areas held for speculation, just as in Maine. But Nova Scotia was not the greatest pulpwood exporting region of Canada. This was the Province of Quebec, from which over 68 per cent of Canada’s pulpwood exports originated. In Quebec, the largest suppliers of pulpwood were the established farmers and the new settlers of the north who together, through a network of pulpwood dealers, exported some 60 per cent of their annual cut.<sup>55</sup> The dealers,

53 *Report on Canadian Forest Conditions* (n.p., n.d.), p. 17, “Barnjum — clippings and pamphlets”, GFP, box 570, UMA.

54 Gillis and Roach, *Lost initiatives*, pp. 183, 201-4.

55 Royal Commission on Pulpwood, *Report*, pp. 48-9, 98-100.



whose livelihood was threatened by Barnjum's proposed embargo, allied themselves with the president of the Bathurst Company, Angus MacLean, and the Canadian Pulpwood Association. And the pulpwood dealers had close contact with several thousand farmers, all of whom were potential voters. Most of those farmers had Liberal Members of Parliament representing them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the embargo on pulpwood was never applied.

While this study has presented a critical appraisal of Barnjum, it must be remembered that all the major participants in the pulpwood embargo debate had business interests at stake. This was particularly true of Angus MacLean, who boasted that he ran his mill at Bathurst solely on wood purchased from local farmers and that he did not need an embargo to ensure his prosperity.<sup>56</sup> In fact, MacLean also had interests in mills in the Buffalo region of New York State, which he never publicly mentioned. These mills relied totally on imported wood. If Barnjum's embargo had been applied, MacLean would have been in just as much difficulty as the pulpwood dealers, settlers and farmers with whom he allied himself. As for Barnjum, tainted by obvious self-aggrandizement and discredited by his failure to answer charges stemming from evidence presented to the Royal Commission, he never achieved status in Canadian history as a major conservationist. But his insistent campaign for forest conservation and his complex transboundary perspective helped carry the conservation message at a critical period. Although he failed to manipulate Canada's forest products export policy to achieve his own ends, he did, in his inimitable way, play an important role in the story of the conservation movement in North America.

56 Canadian Pulpwood Association, *Fallacies*, p. 11.