

CITIZENS OPPOSED TO AERIAL PESTICIDE SPRAYING AGAINST BUDWORM  
FORM NATIONAL COALITION

Groups concerned with aerial forest spraying for Spruce Budworm met on Nov. 23 in Ottawa and formed the first national coalition against aerial spraying. Representatives from six provinces voted to co-operate in an information and strategy exchange program to focus national attention on the issue of aerial pesticide spraying.

In 1978, New Brunswick and Quebec will mount massive aerial Spruce Budworm spray programs and the governments of British Columbia and Newfoundland have expressed the desire to proceed in a similar fashion.

The Coalition's first resolution was to commend Vincent MacLean, Nova Scotia Minister of Lands and Forests for "an intelligent and courageous" decision not to spray insecticides to combat Budworm. Premier Gerald Regan announced the decision not to spray last February on the grounds that spraying was ineffective in controlling Budworm infestation, posed serious hazards to the Environment and human health, and was counter-productive to good forest management. The Cape Breton Island area, with the most severe infestation, experienced a 60% drop in egg mass counts in 1977. In contrast, the provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec where intensive aerial spraying took place had dramatic increases in egg mass counts.

Tree mortality in Cape Breton from Budworm attack was 50% less than predicted by the Nova Scotia Pulp and Paper Industry. The industry also incorrectly predicted the loss of 2,000 jobs if spraying was not carried out. The Nova Scotia Government has indicated that new jobs will be created, in addition to those in pulp operations, through labour-intensive silviculture programs. The Pulp and Paper Industry of Nova Scotia has not suffered any economic hardship from the decision not to spray.

The Coalition endorsed the efforts of the Concerned Parents Group in New Brunswick to force the spray company to comply with Federal laws which prohibit spraying of water supplies, farmlands and inhabited areas. Concerned Parents Group is currently involved in legal action after filing 32 charges of quasi-criminal violation of Federal laws by Forest Protection Ltd.

The Coalition Against Aerial Spraying expressed disappointment that Federal Forestry Officials had not consented to meet with them. "This is a national problem and it is shocking that the Federal Department most involved in the issue should refuse to meet with concerned citizens", said Elizabeth May of Cape Breton Landowners.

The Coalition announced an "International Anti-spray Coalition Conference" which was held in Halifax on December 8 and issues of Forest Management and health hazards of spraying were discussed. Also stressed by the Coalition was the need for studies of the effects of spraying programs on the population of Quebec and New Brunswick as well as pure research in the area of insect population dynamics and biological controls.

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