

Oral History Interview

Clifford Ahlgren

with

Elwood R. Maunder

(7/2/64)

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This is Elwood Maunder speaking from the Quetico Wilderness Research Center on {AUTHOR QUERY} Lake Northern Minnesota. The date is July 2, 1964 and I'm here as the guest of the Center speaking today with Cliff Ahlgren who is the director of this institution. The purpose of this interview is to obtain from Mr. Ahlgren a good bit of his own personal history, his professional history, and as much as possible of the history of this rather unique institution, here in one of the great wilderness areas of the North American continent.

It is always understood, Cliff, in these interviews that the person being interviewed by the Forest History Society shall have the right to review the contents of the interview when they are copied on paper. We will send you this not perhaps for quite sometime because we have quite a large backlog of these to be completed. We will get our people to make copies and then you will have an opportunity to correct it. When it's put in final form it will be set up in such a way so that the use of this interview is something that over which you have some control. It is not as the interview you gave to the radio man here you gave sometime ago when it just goes out hangs around and is used any way he sees fit. In our case it will be something over which you will have some degree of control; in other words if some scholar wants to use this as a reference, we can if you wish require that your permission be given in writing, for example, for quotation

from this interview. Now first of all a little personal history, and if we could start by reviewing your life just briefly. Let me have your full name and your place of birth and your date of birth and all the vital statistics about your origin, if I may.

AHLGREN: I was born on April 22, 1922 at Toimi, Minnesota. It's a community about 35 miles north of Two Harbors on the shore of Lake Superior.

MAUNDER: How do you spell that?

AHLGREN: Toimi. It's actually a Finnish/Swedish community. Mostly Finnish people settled there since it seem to typify and characterize their homeland. They lived on small farms, and I was born and raised on a small farm, and we had a sawmill, forestry background as a youngster on the farm. Therefore my interest has always been in the field of conservation forestry and so forth.

MAUNDER: Did your mother and father come to this country from Finland?

AHLGREN: Yes they were immigrants from Finland.

MAUNDER: Were they farmers in the old country?

AHLGREN: Yes they were farmers, they actually lived on rather prosperous farms in that little country and because of the nature of the land in Scandinavia, when they immigrated to this country, they tried to seek similar areas. Minnesota seemed to be typical of such an area, so they came to this north land which is very beautiful in character and so forth but unfortunately it's a very poor farm land.

MAUNDER: What was their year of their coming, do you recall?

AHLGREN: I just can't recall at the moment.

MAUNDER: Before the turn of the century or after.

AHLGREN: It was quite a while back--at least fifty or sixty years ago.

MAUNDER: I see, in other words, it was after, it was before World War I but not before 1900.

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: I see, did they come out here to join other relatives who had preceded them?

AHLGREN: No, they just came here on their own. A lot of people in those countries at that time were apparently moving, they were adventurous in nature and so there were a lot of Scandinavian people who were immigrating to Canada and the United States.

MAUNDER: They were not encouraged to come out here and work?

AHLGREN: No, they just came for adventure, and then they settled down here in one of the areas.

MAUNDER: A lot of people were brought out here to work in the woods by immigration companies, and I wondered whether these had any influence on your coming.

AHLGREN: No, they didn't have any influence on that. Actually my father worked in the iron mines at first and then after a period of time in the mines they decided they wanted to farm. So then they moved further into the northern part of the state where they established this small farm, and that's where they raised their family.

MAUNDER: Did he work in the woods in the winter time?

AHLGREN: Yes. He worked in the woods and he had supplemented income from the small farm. Every one of the help and all the people who lived there had to work in the woods during the winter months.

MAUNDER: So you grew up in an atmosphere in which working in the woods was a regular feature of your life.

AHLGREN: That's right. Actually we learned a lot about the woods, we learned the older trees and so forth as youngsters. So when I went on into college, I think I had more of an advantage, an edge over some of the other fellows who had not had the opportunity of being raised in the woods in learning some of the older trees and shrubs and know something of the wildlife and so forth. I think it was a very good time to enter an institution of learning that we had having been raised in an environment of trees and wildlife.

MAUNDER: Were you naturally inclined in this direction or was your whole life given a certain push in the direction by the action or interest of some other person, your father, or some other person as a boy growing up.

AHLGREN: No. I went through grade school and high school following our own mode of life. After the war, with the benefit of the GI bill, a lot of fellows including myself thought this might be a very nice opportunity to take advantage of learning a little more about some of

the background we were born and raised. So with that in mind we sort of set our own course. I was one of the boys from the area who was fortunate enough to get into school. I think that was a very useful thing actually because there were a lot of these fellows. Boys and girls born and raised out in the area like this just didn't have any opportunities and this created opportunities for them, and I'm just one of those people.

MAUNDER: In other words, the war and your military service was a means of your actually getting more education.

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: What, where did you attend school up here? In your local community?

AHLGREN: Yes, we had the regular grade schools like any other community, right there in the area, high school was at Two Harbors some distance away on the shores of Lake Superior.

MAUNDER: Then you actually graduated from that high school.

AHLGREN: That's right, I graduated in 1941--the first year of the War--and very shortly after that as all the other youngsters of that age we were quite adventurous and so we went to war.

MAUNDER: What did you do, enlist?

AHLGREN: Yes, I enlisted.

MAUNDER: In what branch?

AHLGREN: I was in the Navy.

MAUNDER: When did you enlist?

AHLGREN: In 1942.

MAUNDER: What branch of the Navy were you with?

AHLGREN: The Coast Guard and Navy were together at that time, and we were placed in the Coast Guard branch. We had our training up there with the rest of the people at Manhattan Beach in New York, and then we were placed in various stations. Some of the fellows went guard duty on shore, others went on ships, different types of ships and so forth.

MAUNDER: And where were you stationed?

AHLGREN: I was stationed in Miami right along the coastline.

MAUNDER: Were you on beach patrol?

AHLGREN: On Beach patrol and then small boat patrol in the harbors.

MAUNDER: All throughout the war down in that one area.

AHLGREN: Yes.

MAUNDER: And what was your rank in the service?

AHLGREN: I was seaman.

MAUNDER: Did you progress beyond the rank of seaman during the service years?

AHLGREN: No, that's as far as we progressed.

MAUNDER: I see.

AHLGREN: Actually we had opportunities there too, but the lists were very long. Several of us were qualified for

officer candidate school for further training, but then the war ended so we didn't go.

MAUNDER: Well, after you were mustered out, which was when 1945 or 6?

AHLGREN: It was 1945.

MAUNDER: What did you do, did you immediately go back to school that year?

all Yes, I went to school that fall. I started the first quarter of the university in the fall of 1945, and graduated in 1948.

MAUNDER: Did you enter as a freshman with intent of going through to forestry school?

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: At what point would you say you had made up your mind to make forestry your field? How much farther back in your life did you make that decision?

AHLGREN: Oh, a few years back, I used to talk to the U.S. Forest Service rangers in the area when they would occasionally come through. That was a couple of years before the war. It appeared to be sort of an interesting career.

MAUNDER: You had made no previous plans for entering school at the university or elsewhere however before your service.

AHLGREN: Yes, because of the war scare there was a need for technicians of one kind or another and I entered an industrial institute for one year.

MAUNDER: What did you take in special training there?

AHLGREN: It was in machine shop, in tool and die work. I worked as a sort of apprentice to a tool and die maker for about six months after I got through there, before I enlisted.

MAUNDER: Where was that?

AHLGREN: In Minneapolis, Honeywell. They were approaching us for supplies for one thing or another.

MAUNDER: And that experience has paid off in your work up here.

AHLGREN: Oh yes. It's very exacting work and very rewarding. To me, it was very interesting, I enjoyed it very much.

MAUNDER: You went from that back home and eventually into military service. Is that right?

AHLGREN: Yes.

MAUNDER: All right, at the University of Minnesota, you were enrolled in the fall of 1945 and there you came under the influence of various professors. Who do you think of when you look back on those years as being your real mentors, the men who influenced you the most?

AHLGREN: Well there were a lot of very fine people there. I think they were equally good, and I don't know that there were any one that would stand out above another-- they were all very fine instructors and I certainly gained a lot of knowledge and guidance from all of these people. But I believe the late Dr. Reese probably influenced me in botany more than anybody else because he was an extremely good teacher. I think that he was

more or instrumental in keeping the seed of mechanical gears functioning as time went on. I haven't forgotten that. It was very good. Another person who has been very helpful in the field and helped to maintain our interest was a person at the University of Minnesota, the very noted botanist of this region Dr. Lakela. She was a very fine teacher and one of these old-time scholars. She helped us a lot in advising on the display that we have made over here. I believe she was another person that I have a very close and fine relationship in botanical associations.

MAUNDER: Has that association been developed, however, since you graduated from the university?

AHLGREN: After I graduated.

MAUNDER: After you graduated. Did you have any courses from her?

AHLGREN: No, that was just an association afterwards. But it is just as essential to have an association afterwards as before, because once you get the interest in something it has to be maintained, and therefore it was a very unique association, I thought.

MAUNDER: What I'm trying to do here, of course, is to establish the direction of your professional life--how it took shape. What influences came to bear upon you as an individual that may have molded you and perhaps sent you into specific areas, special areas of the field?

AHLGREN: Well actually after graduating I worked with the Department of Natural Resources for a few months, as a

timber cruiser or making these surveys in the various colonies. There were a good many of us students who worked with this organization, other students went elsewhere. But then Frank, who was the dean of the school, asked me to come up to the Basswood Lake area here and see what might be done in starting a program of either research or forestry of some sort. The property had been acquired some years previously and there had been suggestions from several people in the past on what might be done. There were several projects that had been started, little projects of one sort or another through the suggestions of others. I think that Frank was more or less instrumental in talking and helping me get started here on examining the area and sort of finding out what might be done here in the way of setting up a center of forestry or whatever.

MAUNDER: Prior to your coming, there was no formal wilderness research center as such, then, is that right?

AHLGREN: No, there wasn't anything quite of that nature, and some of the problems were still in existence. Now John Stewart was a member of the faculty at the university and had worked with the problem. His tree disease study was in process when I came here. But aside from that study which was his own problem, there wasn't really any type of a foundation or bases on what might be done here. It was still in very early stages of development.

MAUNDER: I see. Mr. Hubachek merely owns the land on which he had some summer buildings to which he had invited a few scholars, research people, but there was not as yet in 1945 any real, '48 wasn't it, any really organized researched program or research center.

AHLGREN: That's right. I think the center more or less took shape from '48 till about '51 when they constructed the laboratory here. After working in the area and finding out what was here, the program more or less began to crystallize. It has been narrowed down to actually two major fields of work; one of them deals, of course, with the ecology of the area, what's happening to the changing forest. We have examined a lot of the land here and we have established permanent study areas-- these plots are read at intervals and so we are getting a catalog and calendar of events of what is happening on natural areas on these types of forestry associations, from the standpoint of old age or other catastrophes in nature such as disease, insect, wind, fire, and so forth.

From this has developed another problem which is very closely associated with this ecology study. It is a more detailed ecology study on the effects of forest fires on these forest lands. Now we have quite a number of plots in such conditions where wild fires were

actually examined in considerable detail to find out just what has happened from the standpoint of various inter-relationships that occur following a catastrophe like that. On the basis of these findings, we have established studies where tracts of land have actually been set aside and is examined prior to any disturbance, then they have been logged in part; in other words, some areas were logged and burned; other areas were logged and not burned; and then others were left intact, unlogged and unburned, so that you have a series of comparisons to make later on.

MAUNDER: And then what do you do--make periodic spot examinations of the changes that have taken place in the vegetation, soil, the insect population and all that sort of thing?

AHLGREN: That's right. On these permanent studies, these same plots are examined at intervals. We have placed a five-year interval between examinations where all of the information is recorded just like we did on the first original tallies; that means an inventory of the herbs, shrubs, and trees. It also means an examination of soil analysis where we feel such a thing would be necessary and also an observation of wildlife habitat conditions. For example, increases in bird population, increases in rabbit population and so forth. So you're getting a rather complete picture of the entire community of plants and animals living in an association in an area

which hasn't been too much intervened by man. So that is one of the projects we have underway and it has been boiled down to a study like that.

The other problem that we have worked with developed from a personal interest because the area is very suitable, at least we feel so, to this type of research project from the standpoint of climate. It deals with the physiology and breeding of pines in the area. The continuation of it has been urged by very competent people in the field, both American scientists and Canadians who seems to feel that the area is suitable for such a study. I believe I showed you this morning some of the areas where the work is being carried on. It involves the grafting of pine trees, native trees and introduced trees that are compatible with our native trees, so that eventually comparison could perhaps be made of these different combinations. We are hopeful that as time goes on a selection can be developed which will resist the natural inoculum or infection on some of these very unique pine sites so that the white pine can be re-established where it once grew. We feel that white pine is one of the most beautiful trees and probably one of the more valuable trees economically in the area. The area once supported a vast span of white pines, and perhaps with a little patience and research and help from various agencies and organizations we

might be able to get this tree back in production, not only for the economy of the country but the esthetics of the area. This is as you realize the unique {AUTHOR QUERY} country; if we lose the lone forest sentinels of the past, we will have lost a tremendous amount of the scenic beauty of the area. Therefore, this is a problem that involves breeding and could possibly be a very, very valuable contribution perhaps 50 years from today.

We may not be here to enjoy these trees but they may be the very products that others will use and enjoy in the future. We have to look at these things from a standpoint of many years ahead and not just at the present condition. So there are the two problems that we work with that have developed over the last 12-year period. It involves the ecological changes in forestlands and a tree-breeding program that may help to develop a suitable disease-resisting tree and perhaps even leave the insects and so forth and perhaps repopulate and restock some of these lands.

MAUNDER: Well, you're also making quite a catalog I noticed two of the flora of this area. You have a rather complete file of these plants.

AHLGREN: When I came first in 1948 we were quite bewildered as to what to do because there wasn't anything here--it was just a big tract of land, thousands of acres of land.

Therefore one of the first necessities in any type of work, whether scientific or to otherwise, is to find out as much as possible what is available to work with. It is essential to know what tools you have. In that connection most of the early work in the area, while the Center was evolving and developing, was of an inventory that involved a collection of plants in the region. We started this collection in the winter of 1948/49 and added on to it since. Now this collection contains about 6,000 plants and represents about 550 some odd different species in the area, so that the catalog could be considered quite adequate for reference purposes for students who are in the field of allergy. That is one tool which is vital to any biology student or any other student or any other investigator in the area, because the vegetation is what they work with.

MAUNDER: Let's just stop here a minute Cliff and go back a little bit. I'd like to find out a little bit about your wife Isabelle--where you met her--something about your first years together.

AHLGREN: She came here in 1953 and worked at the center and has been working here ever since.

MAUNDER: I see. In other words she just came as a visiting scientist.

AHLGREN: Oh no, she came here as--on invitation.

MAUNDER: Had you known her before she came?

AHLGREN: No. We met here and have worked here since.

MAUNDER: I see. When were you married then?

AHLGREN: We were married in 1953.

MAUNDER: I see. Didn't take you long to spot a good partner, did it?

AHLGREN: It's a very nice in many respects, because I have found out among my own colleagues--not only in Minnesota but elsewhere--that in this type work sometimes you are isolated a far distance from cities, roads, and so forth. It can become quite a trying thing for families to live unless you have mutual interest in doing things. Therefore a lot of our friends are the same way. They work together more or less as teams, where their interest doesn't seem to deviate too much and yet it is diverse enough that it doesn't get monotonous or drudgerous. We work where work is to be done, and we seem to have an understanding of the problem, and one works at one aspect and one works at the other aspect.

MAUNDER: Your wife's training was as a botanist.

AHLGREN: She is a trained botanist.

MAUNDER: And a product of what school?

AHLGREN: She got her undergraduate degree at {AUTHOR QUERY} University and her graduate degree at Indiana University.

MAUNDER: That's {AUTHOR QUERY} down in Greene Castle, Indiana?

AHLGREN: That's right, that's a very good school.

MAUNDER: Yes. And what was her maiden name?

AHLGREN: Fulton.

MAUNDER: F-U-L-T-O-N. She's from what area?

AHLGREN: Wisconsin, near Green Bay.

MAUNDER: I see, and now you have two youngsters.

AHLGREN: Yes, we have two, a boy and a girl.

MAUNDER: The boy is named?

AHLGREN: The boy is named Larry and he's 9 and the girl is named Molly and she's 7.

MAUNDER: Both were born here in Duluth?

AHLGREN: They were born in Duluth.

MAUNDER: You spend your summer months here gathering data, your winter months, the longer part of the year, in Duluth analyzing the data.

AHLGREN: That's right, we have our office in Duluth in the winter.

MAUNDER: I see. You come here then in May?

AHLGREN: When ice leaves about the middle of May, I come up here and when the children get out of school later on, then they come.

MAUNDER: I see, you go back then when school reconvenes in the fall.

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: Going back again to the days when you were in college, you were graduated and you had a short term of work after college working for the state before you became

actually involved up here. Did we get anything about that on tape?

AHLGREN: I think we covered it.

MAUNDER: We did cover that. It was Frank Kaufert who you say first brought you into contact with this situation, and the two of you came up here and sat down right outside this--what do you call this--the woodshed?

AHLGREN: He suggested that I come down here. Mr. Hubachek had written to the school, perhaps to several schools, to get somebody who might be interested in coming out here and sort of sizing up the area, and see what might be done. So I had my first interview with Hubachek in the fall of 1948 on a woodpile right in front of this building.

MAUNDER: I see.

AHLGREN: And that's where the first contact was made and that's where the first thoughts were passed on as to what might be done. Since then a lot of things have happened, and I don't believe either he or I ever realized that this would develop into a station or center. I think that was the remotest thought from our minds at that moment. Since then, in a short period of 14 or 15 years, a rather unique station has evolved and we feel that some contributions have been made. It is very young, of course, and it certainly needs to have more time to get at these problems that I have mentioned.

Nature evolves very slowly, and you can't hurry her up. You have to wait and very patiently to gather this information over periods of time, it isn't anything too exciting, it's just a lot of work. Eventually, however, over a period of time a rather unique picture can be put together on what happens on some of these forestlands that in turn can be used very advantageously to applying to results of something like this to management areas. Perhaps who knows, in the future with the population pressure building up the way it is, this area may become so heavily used that management will be necessary, we don't know.

This type of information that is being gathered may be very likely be used to further the policies of management and how they might best used for human use. For example, a lot of the devastation that is occurring on the balsam fir stands, which are very vast, have been gradually converting into a slow process of deterioration and blowdown and brambles. With heavy masses of lush vegetation on the ground, it is a slow process of recovery into a forestland. Now whether it becomes balsam fir stand, spruce stand, or an aspen birch stand, only time will tell. However, with a little investigation one can reconstruct some of these and perhaps project ahead in time and predict what may be foreseeable here and what might be done in either

managing it or changing it into a more useful forest site and stand. So that's the sort of thing that may be forthcoming in the future.

MAUNDER: This center sees as one of its principal functions the attack on that area of knowledge so that that management can be an enlightened management.

AHLGREN: Yes. Centers like this could serve a very useful purpose in getting together that type of information and being a source, sort of an index of what might be done in areas as a whole. I think it is very unique sort of an arrangement, if it could be just continued on. Like I mentioned, this is a long-term thing and long-term things are not very enlightening and very inviting to a good many people, because we have established such a mode and such speed in our everyday life that we have a very hard time to sit down and wait for something to happen. It's got to happen fast, and therefore you have to try to have one of the most useful, not useful, but perhaps important advocates in anybody's life, and one of the strongest tools is patience. You have to have patience to be able to solve these problems, and we try to develop that here.

MAUNDER: How does your work parallel that of other institutions? I'm thinking now of the University of Minnesota, School of Forestry, the Lake States Experiment Station, the other branches of government that are interested also in

these long-term problems that you've examined. They're not all working on quite the same way as you are, but I think their interests are pretty much on their lines, aren't they?

AHLGREN: Yes, they have been working on other aspects of the very thing that we're working on here. We are hopeful that problems or research studies can be established where all these institutions will work together and each institution would work on a certain phase of it. There are many aspects that must be worked on, and that eventually all of these will be put together into a solution or in the final analysis.

MAUNDER: There'll be a pooling of information then? A constant interchange of ideas and discussion between people of different disciplines working probably on related problems and insights drawn such exchange.

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: What was your first impression of Mr. Hubachek? Do you recall it? Did you first meet him right here in front of this building, or did you encounter him in Chicago, or did you meet him here?

AHLGREN: No. I met him here and I can't recall what my first impression was. It appeared to be such an impression of a very earnest individual who was rather very dedicated and anxious to make a contribution of some sort. I believe that it has been demonstrated over the last 15-16 years here.

MAUNDER: You felt yourself that this man was someone with whom you really associate yourself in this work with some measure of hope that it would really succeed because of his dedication.

AHLGREN: That's right. You have to have individuals who are dedicated and who are pretty earnest and sincere in what they're trying to do. Otherwise, I'm afraid that a lot of this sort of thing would just die on the vine. One can just bubble with enthusiasm for five minutes and it just dies down. This isn't exactly bubbling with overgushing enthusiasm, there was a certain amount of enthusiasm in there and the strength of it continued on all the way. I think it has been quite normal and has really developed very well.

MAUNDER: One of your continuing problems I suppose is in finding and recruiting that kind of dedicated person to work with you.

AHLGREN: Yes, it's sometimes quite a task to find people who will continue to work on problems that are directly of interest to them and to do the problem in the detail that must be done. It takes certain type of student who can do that. We have been very fortunate in finding students like that. They in turn gain very rich experience in doing this.

MAUNDER: How do you go about recruiting?

AHLGREN: We just interview them. We go various colleges and we write beforehand, or telephone. We have associates who

are in these schools who make arrangements to find students who would be capable and who would fit into this type program.

MAUNDER: How far do you range in your search?

AHLGREN: Mostly we go to University of Minnesota, and we've had some very good students from the U & B(?) rather than from our own city. We get others from the small liberal arts colleges where there are some very very good students, such as Carlson and McAllister and even had good students from Decall(?) one summer. We have exchange students from European countries; we have a student from Holland who spent six months with us as an exchange student, he was an extremely good fellow. We've had students from Canada who have spent some time helping to gather our information at the same time working on their own problems. It's been sort of change of talent, not only from our backyards but from outside.

MAUNDER: What has developed now here right next door to you. You have established an associated colleges of the Midwest camp--right?

AHLGREN: That's right. it's an entirely separate institution; it involves I think about ten or twelve colleges. They have their own facilities and their own programs and their own instructors. So it's an entirely separate unit from this center here. They have regular undergraduate program for students who spend five or six

weeks learning something about the area and getting a wilderness experience at the same time.

MAUNDER: Have you found that any of the students who have been coming to this summer session have been recruited for work in your area, or is it still something of too recent in origin to have produced any?

AHLGREN: Well, it's quite young yet, but we're hopeful that there might be some students who might be able to--who we might be able to use in some of our problems, but up to now we haven't had any. We have had some inquires from students on the type of work that we're doing, but we haven't had any students who've actually done any work for us from the institution as of yet.

MAUNDER: How many people do you count on your staff as professionals or semi-professionals in training?

AHLGREN: Our summer crew generally runs about four boys or three boys plus my wife and myself on our own projects. Then there are visiting people who work on their own problems. That adds on to the program, but it doesn't involve our program, it's independent problems.

MAUNDER: I see. There are almost always some such people and their families in residence here on the grounds.

AHLGREN: Yes, we don't have any family residences, but we've had quite a few of them over the course of the years I've been here.

MAUNDER: I see. What would you have to say about the changes that have taken place, if any, in your concept of this

center program since your first becoming associated with it? How did you see the thing when you first broke into it, how did you change these concepts of it as time has gone along?

AHLGREN: I think I have covered part of this previously but I'll just review it. When we first came here, we made inventories, we had a lot of little projects that had been suggested by other people in passing who were associates of Mr. Hubachek. It might have been some of his other friends who thought that this might be a desirable thing to work on to get something established here in the way of research work. After considerable pondering on the subject, our own thoughts began to crystallize on what this area might be used for, and we contacted and consulted others who are well known in these fields of work. For example, in the field of forest anthropology in this physiology work, we asked the advice of these people and what they thought about it and whether they thought about it and whether this was a suitable place and whether they would think it might be worthy to really establish something here. They seemed to agree, so it gave us more confidence in going ahead so the problem was started.

MAUNDER: Did you have an advisory committee then from the very beginning?

AHLGREN: We had a group of people from institutions from University of Minnesota, from Wisconsin, from Michigan,

and even had people from Canada who visited the area and made suggestions on what might be done. So we had some advisory people there. Fire research was established on the basis of some of these wild forest burns that developed here while the center was formed or being formed.

MAUNDER: That was in what year?

AHLGREN: In 1952 when we had a big fire south of {AUTHOR QUERY} on the basis of this 880 tract. That was a good example; to establish studies and to find out what is happening on forestlands following wild fires. On the basis of those results, I believe I mentioned, then it had further projected into a prescribed burning studies, where we can actually study the land prior to fire and then burning and then follow the sequence of events following the burn over a period of years. So that's the way this has evolved.

MAUNDER: Then the areas of research that has most commanded your interests are these that have to do with the ecological effects of fire and those which have to do with the finding of new fire or disease resistance strains, is that right?

AHLGREN: Yes, those are the two fields that we have concentrated on.

MAUNDER: What would you have to say about Mr. Hubachek's role in the formulating of programs of research? Has he stood

outside of this discussion or has he been an active participant in it? Or has he left it to the judgments of professionals like yourself and the advisory committee?

AHLGREN: He has been very helpful in getting the people together on these problems. He has participated in the discussions very actively, but not being trained in these fields, he would rely on the suggestions and advice of these people who were trained in the fields. For example, the advisory committees that he's had, he's always abided by their advice and suggestions but he has been very helpful in getting all these people together and in supporting it very vigorously. Without his support we wouldn't have made the progress that we have made.

MAUNDER: How do these advisory groups work? Do they have regular meetings? Do they meet here?

AHLGREN: We've had annual meetings once a year when we discuss the problems and decide on what's to be done in the next year.

MAUNDER: When does that meeting come?

AHLGREN: It depends on what the schedules are--sometimes it's in the summer, sometimes it's in the fall, depending on everybody's schedule how it can be arranged.

MAUNDER: You have the same problem we all have, trying to get busy people all together.

AHLGREN: That's right.

MAUNDER: Has this committee always functioned as you anticipated it should or have there been high and low periods in which it functioned well and sometimes not so well depending upon the membership?

AHLGREN: That's right, it depends on the schedules. Every person is a volunteer. They have full loads and full programs to contend with, and naturally their own programs are first in priority. If they can't devote time, they have to beg off the committee. So we've had some full participation at times and then at other times we haven't had it but it has done reasonably well.

MAUNDER: What have been your principal problems of administration. I presume you have a certain administrative responsibilities here.

AHLGREN: When we first started there weren't any problems with administratio. I imagine as anything evolves you have to have organization otherwise it becomes a bramble, and you can't work with a disorganized fashion. We've had to organize the things administratively. Even if it is on a very small level, it involves a lot of correspondence and a lot of people visit the station. We have to explain to them what we are doing and so forth and so it's a sort of public relations problem. I think that this is a very important one because very often people are misinformed, perhaps through some

conversation or a passing comment by some others. Therefore it is really important that one takes the time to pass the time of day sufficiently, that the actual objectives and the aims of the center are clearly understood and explained. It does involve a considerable amount of time.

MAUNDER: Don't you find though that these demands begin to impose quite a burden upon your time that would normally be spent on the basic research that you would like to do or...

AHLGREN: I suppose at times it is so. Other people will tell you there are a lot of committee meetings and a lot of things that have to be dealt with that sort of impose on your time, but then one has to make his own final judgment on whether the time involved in this particular public relations work is more valuable than the time involved in something else. I think that on several occasions, this public relations work time has paid off, because I have met any number of people who have been very much misinformed about the work we are doing in this organization and elsewhere in forest research. Therefore I think it is very important to stop immediately and just check on this, straighten out the record.

MAUNDER: What have you found to be the most common misunderstandings that you have been able to put right?

AHLGREN: One of the misunderstandings is the use of fire on forestlands. That has been a subject of considerable debate for a good long time, and our own literature demonstrates very clearly that there are good and bad points in using fire on forestlands. That is why we take the time to explain it to people who question the aim and approach that we're trying to do here. It isn't the idea that we're going out to set the woods on fire, it is the idea to find out what fire is doing to forestlands from the standpoint of rejuvenating the sites or from the standpoint of destroying them. Over a period of time we have found that there are certain types of forestlands that can be rejuvenated quite nicely and rather cheaply with this natural forest. There are other types of sites that fire should not be used, so that's one problem that I've spend considerable time in discussing. Another problem, of course, is {AUTHOR QUERY}. Sometimes people ask me why you do this in the wilderness. We do it in the wilderness because of the conditions available here. We also do it because it has been encouraged by, like I said before, people who are highly trained in this program or in this field of endeavor and who can realize and appreciate the natural-made conditions for perpetuating and carrying on some of these rather sensitive states of this work. For example, the grafting work seems to succeed very

favorably in this type of climate, but what we're actually doing is working on a natural-made greenhouse on this peninsula so that another problem which very often comes up and a lot of misunderstanding develops because it is not a wilderness problem directly. But it could become a wilderness problem later on in year after the final results have been achieved. So there's a lot of that sort of thing, and I'm sure that's just not here, very small in nature and very small in scope. Nevertheless the administrative problems have to be contended with, and I think it's very important that one handles them with that attitude. I think it takes a lot of good explaining once in a while.

MAUNDER: I think we could go on talking about problems of administration and public relations at quite some length, but I would like for you to just briefly here part with that subject for a few minutes and talk about the working staff of the center. I'd like you to tell us something about the men and women with whom you have worked here so that we can begin to see some of these people in little more flesh and blood terms and so this can become a part of the record of the history of the center. You have some very colorful and dynamic people here on the force--tell us a little bit about Little Eli and Joe Kurntz and others.

AHLGREN: Well, in any type of an operation you have to have a staff of people doing various things. Research is only

one aspect of an operation. Like in any other station, you have to have maintenance people, you have to have supervisory people, and you have to have all types of people along the way to complete the whole picture of events in order to make any type of a station or operation successful. We have a year-round crew of older people who have been here since I came and who have retired, and others who have appeared on the scene. They are maintenance people who helped to keep the station intact, the carpenters and painters and just plain maintenance people on plantation for releasing and that sort a thing. There is also what we call a skeleton crew of labor around the area.

MAUNDER: How large was this working crew when you arrived?

AHLGREN: We had about 10 or 12 fellows here; there are still one or two of the old-timers who are still here. Then we have other people who serve purposes for helping to show people around and to help in guiding on the lake and fishing. That's where Little Eli was more a legend in the area; he spent his life here since 1936. Very fine, warm personality, and he was able to meet people and he was very pleasant. People appreciated and enjoyed him, and he was a very nice very fine person to have around.

MAUNDER: He was a local man?

AHLGREN: Yes, a local man from Ilia.

MAUNDER: What was his full name?

AHLGREN: Eli {AUTHOR QUERY} Rak or Rankinen.

MAUNDER: Finnish?

AHLGREN: Yes.

MAUNDER: And what did Eli do before coming here, what was he, a logger or...

AHLGREN: I don't know. Apparently he was working at some of the logging camps.

MAUNDER: I see, this is perhaps something Joe Kurntz could tell us.

AHLGREN: I think he was working at the logging camps like all the other fellows were once this place was established. Mr. Hubachek brought him here to clear the land and so forth.

MAUNDER: What do you remember Little Eli for, what events, what episodes in his career here do you recall most vividly?

AHLGREN: Oh, I don't know of anything striking except that he was a very likeable fellow and very pleasant and..

MAUNDER: Are there are stories you would like to relate about Little Eli that might give us some insight into his personality.

AHLGREN: I don't recall any here at the moment that might be related. There are very good descriptions of him that are written by {AUTHOR QUERY} in the {AUTHOR QUERY} countries and the social countries. I think that invariably you'll find very vivid descriptions of Eli and some of the other fellows who are first pioneers of

this place. I can't recall since my association with him was not quite that close, so I couldn't tell you of any incidents here or any experience he would have had that would be striking.

MAUNDER: Or maybe as intimate as Hub or Mr. Hubachek or Joe Kurntz.

AHLGREN: That's right, maybe Mr. Hubachek or Joe Kurntz could tell you.

MAUNDER: What can you tell me in further detail about your experience with Mr. Hubachek? Something that will help us to see this man and his role in all this a little more clearly.

AHLGREN: I don't know of anything else except what I have mentioned--he's a very earnest hard-working person.

MAUNDER: How does this demonstration of his hard-working nature reveal itself around the center, what does he specifically do?

AHLGREN: Well, he helps, of course, in organization a lot and in keeping the ship on course. Naturally he helps in getting supplies and everything that is needed for operation. He of course helps financially in getting the place going. It's through his efforts that the center has evolved.

MAUNDER: How much of his time does he spend up here in the summer time?

AHLGREN: I think he spends about a month in the summer here with his family.

MAUNDER: This is not in one straight line of time but visits...

AHLGREN: Yes, has...

MAUNDER: Flies back and forth from Chicago.

AHLGREN: When meetings are here he comes up and then he goes for he has a very busy schedule over there. He generally spends most part of August here with his family.

MAUNDER: But in the periods when he is not here you are in complete command of the situation and go ahead with what needs to be done.

AHLGREN: In our research aspects.

MAUNDER: Do you recall any interesting anecdotes in your relations with Mr. Hubachek.

AHLGREN: No nothing--it's just been a very fine relationship, I think. A lot has been accomplished.

MAUNDER: The man was obviously a phenomenal store of energy, a fine mind and a passion for action, he never liked to see anything stand still, he likes to see you go ahead fast doesn't he?

AHLGREN: Yes.

MAUNDER: What would you have to say Cliff about the center's relations with the local community in the area, the state of which it is a part?

AHLGREN: I think it's just fine, once people understand what the motives are and the objectives.

MAUNDER: The local community generally looks with high favor on the center and what it is doing, there's no sense of antagonism from the local community in other words.

AHLGREN: Not that I know of as far as our research is concerned. I have never heard of any antagonism of any kind directed to the research work that is being done here.

MAUNDER: And I presume that there are all kinds of evidences of interest of the state of Minnesota and the foreign service and the people of the provincial and national government agencies across the line, forest product industry groups, all of which have their own interests in what you are learning in your research.

AHLGREN: That's right, we work with them all. We have inquiries and we invite them here and I visit with them and we have a very nice mutual relationship. So there's no problem there at all.

MAUNDER: What would you have to say about the typical pattern of your daily work here at the center? What constitutes an average day for you, can you give us some kind of a picture of it from the time you get up in the morning to the time you hit the sack at night?

AHLGREN: You have your schedules, projects I've mentioned here. We work on the problems in the field. Those normal days. Sometimes the days are long, sometimes they are short; that depends on what's to be done. Generally speaking it's a normal work day like any other job. This happens to be research so we do research. I don't know how else to describe it. Occasionally we have periods of time when we work with cycles of nature,

where we work long hours but we consider that a normal day. There are times when the cycles are past where we shorten it up a bit, but it's a routine regular program.

MAUNDER: What do you consider now as the most important needs of the center. Every institution has its growing needs and particular problems--how do you see these at the present time?

AHLGREN: With the {AUTHOR QUERY} of the projects, financial support is of course necessary, and obtaining more research talent or getting some more assistance of student help later on as the problems arise.

MAUNDER: Wider public understanding of what you're doing.

AHLGREN: Yes, that could be.

MAUNDER: Of course, there's a controversy over the area in which you are resident in this research and its use, with diverse forces debating each other over this issue. You've been here in this area for a long time and have actually grown up in it since boyhood. How do you view this wilderness question and the various demands that are being made by groups of people with special interest standing in opposition to each other. Is there any daylight coming into the swamp on this thing, or are we still making just a big shout on the issue? Do you think we're involving in a middle position which can hopefully be some...

AHLGREN: Yes, a lot of good work on it has already been done; it's just the idea of appreciating what has been done.

I believe that the government has a real nice program underway on the usage of the area, which should be quite adequate to satisfy industry people as well as the recreation people. I think there's a lot of good policies established and they, of course, need to be reviewed periodically and corrected if necessary to help overcome some problems that may have risen along the way. But generally speaking their policies are really quite good and if they follow the policies that they have and if they are examined in that light, I believe that there isn't any problem to be concerned about.

One thing we must be concerned about eventually is the population pressure, that I mentioned already previously, and the land use in relation to this pressure. That's why some of these studies of ours may be of help in understanding this land and possible uses it might be put to as time goes on. However, this area, as you probably have realized, has been zoned into groups, into different areas. And this part we're in here is the canoe country portion which is not to be disturbed in any way. It's large enough in scope that I believe will serve as an actual laboratory for finding out what happens in unmanaged forests, and that would in turn be interpreted and applied to the managed portion. The multiple use zone, of course, is the {AUTHOR QUERY}

and it seems to me that there are very good policies there and has a {AUTHOR QUERY} for quite some years and doing very well. Every once in a while, slight mistakes might be made, but I don't believe anybody is perfect in their field of endeavor. A slight error can often be blown up out of proportion.

MAUNDER: People can be quite emotional about anything that involves the forest.

AHLGREN: So I think when you really evaluate the thing calmly and look at the entire picture, there really isn't any problem.

MAUNDER: In other words, what has been done by the government agencies responsible in this matter adds up very much in the plus column I gather from what you...in your estimate, and that there is no radical need for change in the administration of this responsibility.

AHLGREN: No, this policy has been enforced and carried on by highly trained people, and I think that people are quite qualified to speak on forest problems.

MAUNDER: Do you feel quite conscious of the growing demands that the population is going to be put upon them and the lands that they manage?

AHLGREN: Our studies deal with that precise aspect, and they are fully aware of it. And I'm sure that they are making very strong efforts in providing for such expansion.

MAUNDER: There seem to be others, many of them living up here in this area who take quite a different view. I think

Siegels is one, is he not, who takes the position that this ought to be not in the hands of Forest Service but in some special agency, new agency of government.

AHLGREN: It's probably a case where perhaps full understanding of existing conditions haven't been evaluated in their prospectus. There's a tendency sometimes to wander off a bit, but I would imagine that if we'd sit down and really evaluate this thing, we could probably see that the good points would outweigh the bad ones. I think that maybe the case with several others who may feel that the policies aren't strong enough, the policies should be reviewed and hatched or corrected to satisfy the majority of the people. But those policies are in the hands of very competent people, so I don't care as to what their decisions would be because I work with a lot of these fellows.

MAUNDER: Like Mr. Neff for example.

AHLGREN: Yes, and the rangers and the foresters who are very capable fellows who are highly trained and who are very competent in judgments. I think we should rely on their judgment and advice rather than some other person who may have received this information through some passing comment that may not be quite valid.

MAUNDER: Yes, I was going to ask you a little bit about relations with the people across the line in Canada. You have had in the past quite close relations have you not with the University of Toronto?

- AHLGREN: Yes, we have had very fine cooperation from the Canadians in using the land in the provincial park for study; we have close to a 1,000 acres of land in the Canadian side that we have for studying from the standpoint of fire.
- MAUNDER: I notice that Dean Sison has been a member of your advisory group.
- AHLGREN: Yes, he has been a member. Another fellow who has been even more active and helpful is Carl Atwood, one of the people from the school there.
- MAUNDER: Oh yes. Well I sometimes feel that the public gets a bit confused by this whole subject of the Quetico Superior and its ultimate use by the great variety of pronouncements and organizations which somehow or other use the Quetico Superior stamp. You've got a Quetico Superior Foundation and President's Quetico Superior Committee and Quetico Superior Institute. Of course, I realize that all these institutions are seeking to spread, to investigate aspects of the problem and speak to the public in regard to them, but sometimes I think the public gets a little confused by all of this. Do you have that same feeling at all, or do you feel that gradually that the whole subject is getting a broader and better public airing than it's had before?
- AHLGREN: There's considerable confusion, even amongst the people who have been supposedly informed about this. I would

imagine that as times go on that a clearer understanding will evolve--it's coming.

MAUNDER: What institution and what individuals do you see as most likely leaders in showing the way in this whole thing? In other words, are there any statesman on the horizon or in our midst now who is in your estimation are the people or the institutions who are going to do the most for us here?

AHLGREN: I don't know that there's any one institution that would stand out above another, but I think they're all trying to arrive at the same goal from a little different aspect. The Lakes State station has done a lot of work in the area from the standpoint of recreational use; the University of Minnesota has done a lot of work from the standpoint of recreational use and sociological studies, and the University of Toronto has done considerable work in that same respect. We have been cooperating with them in all these aspects, and I think that all of them have contributed to it quite well. I think that if we can get to mold this information or to get to work together as a unit where each institution would do certain aspects of it, that would strengthen the program very greatly and make even more of a significant contribution as time goes on.

MAUNDER: Is there any indication that they are willing or planning to sit down and talk about such a program?

AHLGREN: I think that is coming and it will perhaps be a necessity if the figures that have been produced on the use of the area are true. Whether they like it or not, we're going to have to get this thing into a very unique organized approach to be able to save the area, otherwise we'll lose the whole thing, because a lot of destruction goes on. Just the other day I went on to one area over here to look at some of these old Indian burial grounds which is really a historical monument, and we found that the entire area had been destroyed by canoeists. That's an example of a need for regulation right there.

MAUNDER: By destroyed...they're just coming and digging for relics?

AHLGREN: Digging or destroying the huts or stripping the bark off the trees, littering the area with garbage, sanitation problems--it was just horrible. That just drives the point home very deep that something must be done here in regulating the use of the area. When it begins to just mushroom with people, it's going to be a problem. That's one of the more menacing problems that we have, these canoeists themselves. It's not the axe, it's the person using an area that's going to be ultimately destroyed without some means of organized cooperation and regulation of the use of this land.

MAUNDER: In other words, it's not the man who's using the axe as you say but perhaps the man who points at the man with the axe as the devil in the whole thing.

AHLGREN: That's right. You don't have to go very far from this building to see that very type of activity here, but sometimes at these meetings issues blow up that aren't really issues, and I think that it might be very wise to sit down and define what is propaganda and what is fact. We are hopeful that these problems will take that type of a calm evaluation approach because that's the only way, I feel, that we can solve the problem. At least you have to start with an objective that has some meaning behind it.

MAUNDER: Institutes such as that which was held at the University of Minnesota and Maine. I noticed you were represented correctly on that panel...this was rather strong representation of the different points of view, those who are strongly in favor of the preservationist position and those who are strongly in support of the multiple use position. Do you look upon such institutes as being a good means of considering the problem, or do they tend to be shouting matches between different groups?

AHLGREN: A lot of good can come out of any type of an institute or any type of a meeting, because it gives people a chance to express themselves regardless of what the

meaning behind their expressions may be. It gives a cross-section of the thought going on amongst the various groups, and after this type of meeting then we can probably simmer down and get down to our normal calm logical evaluation of the problem. I think that any type of meeting to air out problems is of some value.

MAUNDER: The work of this center contributes something of real substance and importance to the understanding of wilderness land management, the problem that we've been discussing here at some length today. Do you feel that what you're learning and what you are passing out of your learning through the papers you read, through the talks that you give has any impact upon those who take extreme positions favoring another system of management? Now I know we've been through this off the tape but could you just for the benefit of the tape say a few things in response to that question. I think your reaction over at Grand Rapids is indicative of the fact that it does have an impact and a healthy one.

AHLGREN: Yes, I think that the Grand Rapids meeting was a good example of straightening some of the emotionalism or rather simmering down of this emotionalism to a more or less rational basis where things could be evaluated in a calm atmosphere and conclusions could then be drawn more intelligently. I believe that on the basis of our own studies and from our own observations here for the past

16 years and from actually talking with the natives and the people who have lived the area, we certainly share their opinions here, and I believe that this type of presenting of information, actual information, can do an awful lot in straightening out thinking or perhaps in orienting the thinking on politics or questions like the one that we talked about.

For example, there's a lot of second-rate or second-hand off-the-cuff type of comment which is blown into a rather large emotional stampede. This sort of thing will mushroom eventually to a point where it's a very difficult to stop it, it's like a wild fire once it gets started. Therefore, we feel very strongly that this sort of thing should be approached on a research fact basis, so that people can understand what is involved in the forest. For example, the multiple use policy is a very sound one, at least we feel so because it's based on years and years of research, management research, economic research. It takes into account both sides, and its multiple use policy does not favor the cutting of wood, it favors the aesthetic values as well--you can have both. You must have recreational aspect as well as industry aspects in this problem, and I'm sure that both are considered equally.

Therefore, we feel that what we can contribute here studying some of these natural forest developments, and this information can be used as a guide in projecting or in reexamining the youth programs on the tracts that have been set aside for the specific purposes in the past, and then either modifying the policy to suit the present needs either for recreational values for industry uses or for both so that there won't be any conflict really involved. I don't really quite see why all the crying because things seems to be really functioning quite well. It is just because of the misunderstanding of some judgments made by people under (on the) ground personnel, supervisor personnel and so forth which have caught the eye of some people who seem to feel that this was the wrong thing to do. We don't feel that just because there was a little error like this involved perhaps in a cutting program or in some other program that that should be the core of the problem. It is not the core of the problem, it is merely a point to be considered and to be corrected. So we're hopeful that the information that we gather here and try to explain on the basis of research, that this would be a rather sound basis for projecting future use of the area, possibly future management, that will become a necessity in the future and then in the possible evaluating or rewriting of the policies of the

areas. I believe that with a sound knowledge of what is happening in the changing forests, in the economy of the area and of the needs of the people could be very well put together through a sound research approach. I don't believe you can arrive at anything without some real sound information on which to base your first objective and then go on from there.

MAUNDER: Yes, it seems to me that there has been a great deal of panic raised over this relatively recent concern over the population explosion. Fifteen years ago you didn't hear anything very much about the population explosion. Within the last five or six years, it seems to me, population explosion has become almost a panic subject on the part of much wider group of people in society and this has been related to the recreating needs of the future and blown up into a great big issue.

AHLGREN: Yes, I think so. This again is an example of a study, very thorough study done by the U.S. Forest Service on the use of the area. Figures show that this area is going to be very heavily used, and therefore I believe that they have indicated that perhaps some means of regulations should be forthcoming in order to save the area from complete destruction. A lot of this explosion, of course, is due to the fact that people have a lot more money. There's an awful lot of people who now couldn't afford to do this a few years ago that

can afford to do it now; they're not only canoeing but they're camping.

There's a lot of that sort of thing going on in the forests, and therefore you have to have places for them to go. Therefore, it is very important that a very thorough examination is made of the entire land and of its use. There's a tendency to go to the appealing sites; for example, your pine sites. Well, our area is not a pine site not because of the slow evolution of the past catastrophes. So you have perhaps a lot of land that is idle now which would be very useful recreational-wise if it were put into use. So, I think that a lot of this should be examined very very carefully and a sound study made of what can be used and what can be available for use in relation to this so called population explosion as its forthcoming. We have plenty of land. All we have to do is use it and learn how to use it and how to manage it. I don't see any reason why it can't be done with a little help and cooperation from various groups of agencies including these conservation people who are so vitally interested in this problem. I would think that if they devoted their time a bit more in asking what can we do to help you and what can we do to help rectify this condition then I believe we're in tract here.

- MAUNDER: Rather than to bulldoze through some legislation for example that may not be the healthiest solution to the problem.
- AHLGREN: That's it, you can have an area that will be so large in size that will lose the entire wilderness but...
- MAUNDER: What do you mean when you say that, what is the threat that might bring about the loss of the entire wilderness, would you spell that out?
- AHLGREN: As I understand it, it appears that there's a tendency to extend the area into a true wilderness, which would mean that it would stop some of the other industries or operations from...
- MAUNDER: Cut off the livelihood of some of the people who are resident here in this area...
- AHLGREN: The danger in that, of course, is that the area is now economically distressed so it will put the area into worse situation. Perhaps one could demonstrate that this type of activity is going to take care of those people and would guarantee their livelihood equal to or better than what they have now because these people are trying to better their livelihood like anybody else is.
- MAUNDER: This is the argument that is offered to me by some of the people I know in Saint Paul for instance who maintain that a shift over to a single use policy would actually redound to the economic good of the local community, that it would create more jobs, a higher

standard of living for the natives of this area than that which they presently enjoy having a multiple use policy. What do you have to say about that, have there been any studies that would indicate to what extent jobs would be made available to people who are currently not employed?

AHLGREN: I don't know. I wouldn't know that. I mean, like I just mentioned, if they could show statistically that their approach in enlarging the area would create an economy and improve the economic status of these people equal to what we have today to what they're doing or to improve even better than these people are trying to improve themselves, then there's logic to it. But unless that's been demonstrated and shown, I think that we should be very careful in how we approach changing policies and programs at the present.

MAUNDER: To begin with, let's look at the kind of business that it would be for people. Most of the people who come up here as canoeists, come up here to live on their own ability and as reclusively as possible, to get away from the world, They don't require any services of the local population, do they?

AHLGREN: I don't know whether they do because we haven't paid too much attention to that. I have heard that there is a lot of youth from the local youths and others seem to indicate that there isn't. So I don't know, I couldn't

tell you, but it would certainly be a very good study to find out just how much...

MAUNDER: The average party actually brings into the area and leaves there.

AHLGREN: That's right, it would be highly desirable to find out. I think on the other side, I was shown some statistics and figures that show how many people were employed, what products were produced, and how much money was left in the area, and so forth. I don't know economic studies that have been made and how people contribute what and how many dollars are left in the area. That'll be a very worthwhile thing to find out because we feel that you should have in the area both you have to have recreation and use for that but you also have the livelihood of the people who are in the forest which means timber-cutting...

MAUNDER: In other words, the more diversified...

AHLGREN: That's right, that's what the present policies have shown, and it seems that if you examine the policy that it's really quite a fair one. I mean it's quite a fair policy. So unless improvements could be made on that, it ought to be revised very carefully and with extreme logic.

MAUNDER: Don't you think Cliff that there is some danger that we have reached a position with regard to the current legislation that's before the Congress where people have

fixed their stand so firmly that they're almost in that position of having to say when confronted with new factual evidence, "look I've already made up my mind, don't confuse me with facts." I know that this is not the position of reasonable men, but don't people get into this bind. They're committed to a given program.

AHLGREN: I imagine that's happened to perhaps a good many people, even some very good people at times. But I still believe that if the facts had been presented in a clear logical way to people who are more or less bound in such a frame of mind that they would be unbound. Surely any rational person who has seen the true picture on the problem that is under consideration and has seen the pros and cons of the problem would be able to draw a conclusion which would be the right one. In other words, it would be a sound one.

There's a danger of that sort of thing that goes on because of the misinformation that is passed or fragments of information. Very often there's a tendency to present only one aspect of a problem, and that dangles in the minds of these people and helps to make up their minds. Well, we should present the entire problem, it should be presented very clearly. We feel that any one of our problems, wherever we go out and present a paper, this paper is based on research facts

to the fullest so that if any question should arise, we could stand on the facts. If the facts on the paper are insufficient, they can come and see us, because that's the only way we feel that you can certainly speak soundly. You don't have to remember what you have said because you have spoken the truth.

MAUNDER: Now there's certainly lots of evidence to support the fact that this view of things have gained tremendous ground within the profession of forestry and probably also in certain other professional groups such as the botanists and the soil experts, people like this but...and this is perhaps the first and most important step in eventually passing that understanding on to other groups of people in society. Do you feel that this is indeed the case that the scientific community is drawn more in this direction or do you feel there is a strong body of scientists who take the other view?

AHLGREN: I think that most of the people who do problems or who investigate these problems and who are very familiar with them and understand this. Relationships are occurring continually in forest tracts through various causes of natural catastrophe or man-made catastrophe. Investigations would present the facts as they have related them, and the chances are that a good many times these facts would tend to favor a policy that you could do one of two things, to leave nature to take its course

and have a slow evolving thing going on over period of time and eventually develop into a forest land which is compatible to recreational use or some other use.

They could take the other road by saying we don't have the time to have this slow evolving thing going on we can correct and help nature in these ways. We know this because we have studied these facts, we can use this forest here to save so many years of time and we could blanket this area with a stand of timber and make it useable for future generations. Granted that a plantation is not a wilderness, it has been created by man fifty or seventy-five years from today, a traveler or a voyager going through--how would he know, how is he to judge whether this 75-year old stand of pine was made by the acts of God or by the hand of man? The point of the whole thing is that because of the need for the use of this land area, we have to make that choice. You can take one of two roads.

I would be inclined to say that the majority of people take the road that economics would dictate, economic and professional experience would dictate. It's basic in nature and yet a lot of this basic information pooled together can be applied information which can be used. I think we have demonstrated that in our fire studies to a limited extent now.

I spent three months in Europe on this very problem, and we learned from those people who had spent years and years of basic work in just studying the factors of the use of fire on forest lands and as a silvicultural tool. Since 1939 this tool has been used on forest lands over the majority of a good many of these sites in Finland and Sweden--very economically and very practically. In other words, it has become a tool which is a standard, it isn't feared any more because these people learned how to harness this natural forest and they are using it to great advantage. There again, these pioneers who had the vision to see this were looked upon as very kookie. One of the fathers of this program was almost committed for his part of carrying this fire into forest lands and I learned this when I was there. So you can find out that these problems aren't only here on this little bit of an island in northern Minnesota, they're world-wide, and they have to be solved in a calm rational way and generally speaking there are enough people. I would imagine on both sides on any question, so that when the emotionalism dies then we get down to this calm evaluation. That's the way progress goes forward but it's one of those things.

MAUNDER: First comes the heat then comes the light. Well, they've been through this fire controversy now for how

many years in this country...the light burning controversy out west and fire controversy in the south and what about this book that was written by Schiff and published at Harvard, you've read that, on the fire question.

AHLGREN: Yes, he gathered together a lot of very good information. All that type of information again is very useful for future references and this fire problem is, of course, not solved by any means yet, it is not the cure-all of treating everything. It will be part of the program, and I believe that it will become a very useful part as time goes on. There are other people, we are not the only ones who are working with this, there are good many other agencies who have worked on the same line. We're trying to pool all this information together so that it will eventually become a reality in management of forestlands. As some of the other fellows mentioned at meetings, it could very likely become a tool in the management of some of these wilderness lands as far as the natural part of the area and it may very likely become a tool in rejuvenating some of these sites. How it will be...

MAUNDER: A true wilderness supporter is inclined to say yes fire is a tool, a natural tool, nature itself has used it in the past through lightning fires but not the hand of man.

AHLGREN: Yes, that's right. On the other hand, there again you have to take the choice: would you like to do it this way or would you like to wait, it's entirely up to the people who are involved. I would think there again that any logical thinker in the organization would certainly stop and think about it and think about it real hard and then perhaps go out and examine some of these areas and think about it some more. I think that they would arrive at a reasonable conclusion on the thing and maybe the thing to do is to rejuvenate it for the future users.

MAUNDER: You remarked somewhere earlier about the very great importance of the coming together of people of different groups and different organizations who are all working on different aspects of this problem and exchanging information and coordinating their research efforts. What signs do you see already that this is beginning to develop?

AHLGREN: Well, I think we had a session with some of the forestry people here not too long ago. They are very deeply concerned about the area and naturally they are because they are federal lands and it's their responsibility to manage the land. I believe they are more than willing to do cooperative work in conjunction with the area. The University of Minnesota is another institution that is, I believe, concerned from the standpoint of some

research in the region. We have had students who have had already contributions in that respect. These have been limited attempts but perhaps with the pressure mounting, these organizations will become very closely affiliated and that problems could be developed or designed where each group can contribute to it.

MAUNDER: Dealing with those particular problems which it is most or well equipped or geographically situated to do it to examine...

AHLGREN: And also taking into account the pressing problems of the present...

MAUNDER: You mean some priority...

AHLGREN: I think that that's forthcoming, it should be.

MAUNDER: What role can a group like ours play in all this. Are we in a position to do you any good as collectors of historical data?

AHLGREN: Yes, I would think that in that category all of the literature that has been accumulated over a period of time not only in this area but all areas so that evaluations could be made. I would think that a sound evaluation would be, or evaluation would be more sound if several areas could be compared. For example, take areas in Maine and you might be able to examine very carefully and in detail just exactly how had they arrived at their present policies and what problems developed along the way and how is it functioning now and a lot of that sort of information.

An organization like yours could be a sort of clearing house in getting all the stuff together. There's a lot of this material that I am sure is already available and it would all be gotten into one group and this could be assigned, for example as a problem for an institution to work out have students working on it in making a critical review in all of these policies and management policies and recreational policies and land-use policies and everything else that has been programmed in these various areas. You could very probably be able to see and get an idea and a skeleton outline on what we are to work on here in this area here. There may be an example in Maine there was similar to what we have over here but they've already worked a lot on it and they probably found out a lot of solutions that could be very applicable to perhaps solutions over here so that that sort of information should be all together, so that it's nothing more than a review of the problem...

MAUNDER: Have you read Solberg's book New Laws for New Forests?

AHLGREN: No, I haven't seen it...

MAUNDER: It is a very thoughtful study of what's transpired in certain counties and particularly in Wisconsin where they have zoning...

AHLGREN: Yes, but that's again a tool with which to work and that I think I would be very helpful and could certainly add

as a very substantial basis on which to launch out on some of these problem areas or problems in the area.

MAUNDER: Well, we'll certainly take that to heart. We are always glad for suggestions from people who know of our work and who feel that there's an area of research. That we could direct some of the energies of young graduate students into which we could direct our own staff energies to seek out source materials with regard to this material so that the study can be done by graduate students in that area. What if any is the relationship between the Quetico Superior Foundation and this research center, is there one or not?

AHLGREN: No, the Quetico Superior Foundation has no relationship whatever; ours is the Wilderness Research Foundation and it's a non-profit organization which sponsors this research work, it's affiliated with the University of Minnesota, School of Forestry, so...

MAUNDER: Quetico Superior Foundation is something else again, it was one of the co-sponsors of the institute down in Minnesota and the...

AHLGREN: That's right, it's an entirely different organization.

MAUNDER: I notice its makeup is, it has Henry McKnight, Mel Blood, James Wyman, Elizabeth Winston, F.P. Epperson, Jr. Russell Fridley and a number of other people but also includes Charles N. Kelly; now he's rather closely related to you is he not through this...is he Hubachek's partner?

AHLGREN: Yes, he's the chairman of this Quetico Superior committee that was organized some years ago in working out, the president's committee on these policies and Mr. Kelly was on that program to explain the purpose of that committee and what they have accomplished to date. I think that the accomplishments are really quite admirable.

MAUNDER: I know a few of the people of that committee and Arthur W. Greeley I know, I have a great deal of respect for him.

AHLGREN: Yes, Arthur was on that, he's a recent transfer there, he hasn't been in there too long but he's on there now and there are several others and there's Oberholtzer, I think...

MAUNDER: Ernest Oberholtzer?

AHLGREN: Yes, I think he's one of the members.

MAUNDER: Yes, he's one of the members.

AHLGREN: He's one of the early pioneers of the program.

MAUNDER: Has there been any change in the relationship between the similar concern for this problem over across the line in Ontario. There used to be quite a close relationship between the people in Ontario and the people over there in regards to this wilderness development. Has that been waning at all in recent years, have they gone their own way more definitely...

AHLGREN: No, I think they are going right along with the program, they have large areas on their side, they have parks, I

don't know how they manage those parks, I think they have policies in there, I believe some of the larger parks which are multiple use in nature I think I won't swear to it so...

MAUNDER: And don't they have a much stricter enforcement of laws and rules...

AHLGREN: I believe they do...

MAUNDER: I don't believe they put with some of the nonsense that we have put up with in our areas...

AHLGREN: I'm not too familiar with them but I think they have rather rigid rules of use of these areas.