

Foresters demand textbooks be purged of 'slanted' items

Special to The Globe and Mail Feb 25/84 Ron Kobylnyk, B.C.'s director of pesticide control, reluctantly

A Grade 8 science textbook introduced in British Columbia last fall is being challenged by foresters who say two chapters contain "slanted, negative, and jaded" information from "educators who may not even be aware of their bias against the practices of foresters and forest managers."

Letters of complaint have been sent to the Ministry of Education from senior managers in the Ministry of Forests and Lands, the Canadian Forestry Service, and the Ministry of Environment and Parks.

The contentious chapters review the history and problems of forest insect and vegetation management, the uses of forests, and Canadian forest management techniques.

Some foresters are sensitive about what they perceive as a growing amount of "bad pesticide press." They say the word "biocide" should be banned in connection with textbook discussions of forest spraying.

agrees that all pesticides are, in fact, biocides. "Pesticides have the ability to disrupt certain life functions and invariably have slight or pronounced effects on other (non-target) organisms," he said.

The province's chief forester John Cuthbert maintains that students should be told: "In forestry, all materials used are really quite selective and non-biocidal. . . . As a result of proper application, crop trees and most other forms of non-target animal and plant species are healthy and unaffected."

On another item, foresters said that students should not be taught that "woodpeckers will be more common in an older (old-growth) forest, since they need (a few) trees with softer, decaying wood in which they can drill holes for their nests."

Even though the textbook statement is widely accepted as true, foresters prefer that students should only learn about replanted forests.