

**HARD CHOICES:**

**A SEEDLING IS NOT A TREE**

BY LOUIS ALVIS

It is too late to argue about the forest. We need solutions now, not after the politicians and wealth interests have had their fill. The problems are immediate, the answers are available. If the doctor instructs us to take a medication we take it, even if it tastes bad. To find an answer you must openly define the problems. A multitude of perils assail Northwest forestry, but most fall under these categories:

— #1 The economy of the Pacific Northwest has relied on forest products since it was settled. That economic base is threatened. Towns and counties rely on taxes from forest revenue for a major part of their income. For many places it is the sole source of income for both government and population. In this country, the history of extractive industry is plain. The markets surge like tides. At high demand everyone in the industry is happy. At low demand, the workers take the brunt. The history of the logger in Oregon is filled with long periods of unemployment, boom and bust cycles, endless personal danger, and an attitude of helplessness from most timber corporations. Some companies have cared. Some have worked to sustain a consistent yield. Some have worked to assist communities hit by the vagaries of the lumber market. But most have not.

Pacific Lumber Corp. was attempting responsible business. Twelve to fifteen million dollars a year profit. They owned all their own woodlots, they maintained a zone of old growth in order to provide a permanent gene bank, and to better learn the complexities of forest ecosystems. They employed many workers, the harvest was sustainable well into the next century, perhaps indefinitely. They were better than average stewards of our natural resources. But corporate raiders bought them out, and fired the upper management. An address to the company by the new owners opened with, "This is the golden rule. I have the gold, I rule."

The new owners needed \$45 million a year for three years to bail out a failed California real estate scam. So they started in on that very same redwood growth that was Pacific's gene pool. Pacific Lumber is finished by the end of this program. A hundred years of future work and products destroyed.

The major timber corporations and their in-pocket politicians have had enough time at the feed trough. They have made untold millions

DRAWING BY LISA ALVIS



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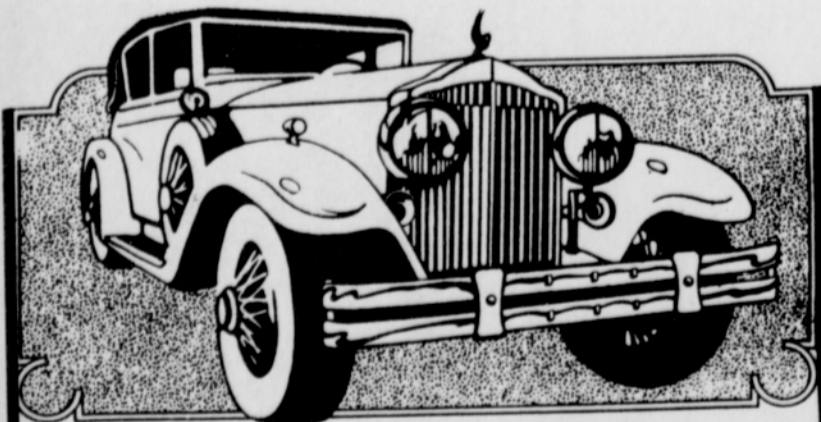


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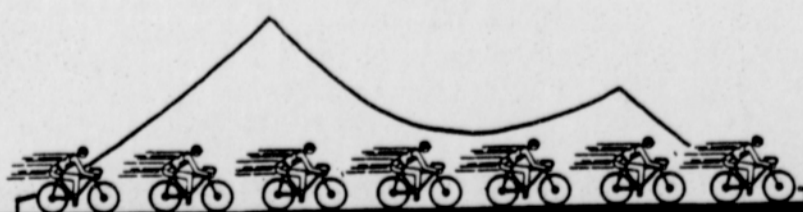
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