

# Opening Remarks

by

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It is no accident that the papers in today's program can be grouped under the theme, "Provenance Studies." The "call" for papers was issued to members of the NC-51 Committee whose primary activity during the past five years has been the establishment of provenance tests on a somewhat grandiose scale.

You can expect an interesting series of papers and, I believe, anticipate an informative program as well. In fairness to the contributors to our program, I would ask that you attune your anticipations to what can be reasonably expected from provenance tests of five or less years duration.

The scope of the cooperative range-wide tests of exotic and native species on a broad regional basis is perhaps without parallel in American experience. That more has gone into the project than has come out in the beginning years is an understatement. Nevertheless, a sound basis has been established for future studies.

A record of the experiences, good and bad, gained in seed collections; in production and distribution of planting stock; and in establishment of test plantings would in itself be of value. I expect that some of these will be

forthcoming in the papers you are about to hear. I wonder if another group of similar size has the combined experience of today's speakers in the establishment of provenance tests. I recommend that you avail yourself of this vast experience in these sessions and elsewhere at this meeting.

The pro and con of provenance studies have been seriously debated and often bantered about. These were poignantly summed up by a recent, impromptu remark by Dr. Carl Heimburger, whom many here will acknowledge as the "Dean" of Canadian tree breeders. This he said in his often impetuous manner:

"You do not improve trees genetically by moving them about from one place to another **or do you?**"

Because of what had preceded, and the manner and the late hour in which it was uttered, hilarious laughter followed. All of us present, even while wiping away the tears, recognized the harsh indictment of the many seed source studies which, because of inadequate material, faulty design, or lack of follow-through, have or will come to naught, and the challenge to those who would begin a provenance test.