

Representative POLLOCK. I gather from your statement then that something will be done about this in short order.

Mr. CLIFF. I think that is a fair summation. We are anxious to get on with the job, too.

Representative POLLOCK. All right, sir. Now, let's address our attention to another area. I am told that the industry people in Alaska, and one firm has been operating roughly 15 years and I think the other 8 or 9 years now, have experienced something like a 40-percent fall down from the figure of 891 million board feet, or to say it another way, I think their general feeling is that there is perhaps an overestimate of the available lumber. Maybe there is a 60-percent recovery, or about 535 million board feet. Now, I know there is some difference of opinion.

My figures may not be correct, but I think they are very close. I think the Treasury Department said there were 3.3 billion board feet of commercial timber in Alaska. I think the Forest Service said there was 0.9 billion or 900 million board feet. Mr. McCracken from the Western Forest Industries Association, of Portland, Oreg., said there was a 1.65 billion, and industry seems to say there is 0.5 billion. Now, these are wide, wide variances, and I would like to know what you believe to be the actual figure and how much confidence the Forest Service itself would put in that figure.

Mr. CLIFF. We have confidence in our present estimate of allowable cut of the Chugach and Tongass Forests. They have been carefully studied and we are convinced that timber support is there, and within the period of time that we are planning that it will be commercially operable.

Representative POLLOCK. Do you think it is presently commercially operable?

Mr. CLIFF. We think so, although industry can speak for itself, and they have problems. Alaska isn't any easy place to log, and in selecting the areas for logging where they can get their logs out at a cost they can afford to pay, they haven't felt they could go as far back from the water as we figured when we made the timber sales and made the cut calculations.

Representative POLLOCK. Some of this could not be done unless you use your balloon logging, and I was glad to see the statement that you made on page 7 that balloon logging and fertilization are still in the experimental stages.

Mr. CLIFF. Yes. The question of the other differences, as I testified earlier, the timber in southeastern Alaska we classify in two categories—that which is (1) accessible, and that which is (2) presently commercially inaccessible. About two-thirds of the commercial type timber in the southeastern Alaska is now commercially accessible by our way of looking at it.

Representative POLLOCK. Would you repeat that statement?

Mr. CLIFF. Two-thirds is accessible and one-third of the total volume is inaccessible. Now, some day if methods of logging that are economical can reach back into these inaccessible areas, then the allowable cut could be increased by as much as 471 million feet, but until this condition exists, it might just as well be on the moon because it isn't accessible. It can't be included in allowable cut calculations, and all