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Address by the Chief Forester to the Forestry Committee of the British Columbia Legislature, Nov. 9, 1939.

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Forest Service I should like to express our appreciation of the sincere interest of your Committee in the forest problems of British Columbia and to thank you for another opportunity of appearing before you.

I shall first review our activities of the past year under their appropriate headings:

Fire Protection

This year may be considered an average year for the Province as a whole but the fire hazard was unequally distributed. On the coast and in the central and northern interior our losses and fire-fighting expenditures were light but in the Kamloops and Nelson Forest Districts they were heavy. We had considerable trouble from incendiary payroll fires in these two latter districts. The net result was that we made no savings in our Forest Protection Fund and our deficit will stand at the end of this fiscal year much the same as at the end of the last--in the neighbourhood of \$450,000.

This again brings up the state of our finances. For many years the Forest Service has pointed out the inadequacy of our Forest Protection Fund. My predecessor, the late Mr. Caverhill, emphasized it and Dr. Carrothers in his economic survey of the situation in 1935 did likewise, also drawing our attention to the fact that the Government was not paying its full share. Here is exactly what he said:

"Indeed, an examination of the relative contributions of government and private enterprise indicates that at present the contribution of the Government has been relatively lower than its equitable interest would justify."

Last year by legislation you raised the industry's contribution to the Fund by 50% and the Government's by 4.17% over and above the \$480,000 formerly contributed--this in spite of the fact that the general public's responsibility for fires is increasing rather than diminishing.

Closures

During periods of extreme fire hazard the "Forest Act" permits us to close forest areas to logging operations and to travel by the public in the woods. Last summer we put into effect such a closure in this southern coast district for one week. There is no question that this closure saved us from heavy losses by fire and much fire-fighting expenditure. Every logging operator closed down his camp and thousands of men were out of work. On behalf of the Forest Service I wish to express our appreciation of the spirit in which both employers and employees accepted this interference with their daily activities. The same may be said of the majority of the traveling public; but there is a small number of those interested in resorts and tourist travel who think such a closure is unnecessary, or at least that somehow or other they should be exempted. We regret very much the inconvenience and loss caused these people but until they can point out an effective alternative people will simply have to stay out of the woods in hazardous periods until they become more careful with fire. Our lack of funds makes this all the more necessary. I fear considerable criticism from this source about future closures--but how can we justify closing down tight the biggest industry in British Columbia and at the same time permit people to wander through the woods fishing and sightseeing? Last year in the Vancouver Forest District careless campers, travellers, and smokers started just six times as many fires as did logging operators, although their fires did not cause so much damage.

Slash-burning and snag-falling

Of outstanding interest is our slash and snag-falling programme. You will remember that two years ago we secured amendments to the "Forest Act" to strengthen our Act in this respect and to provide a penalty of \$5.00 per acre in the event of failure to comply with its requirements. As a result in 1938 over 52,000 acres of slash were burned and this year somewhere between 40,000 and 45,000 acres--we haven't the exact figures yet for this past season. We have particular reason to be pleased with this year's record as burning was impossible during the first half of our burning season because of a request from the Air Force to abstain from burning on account of the smoke. Unfortunately we are compelled to grant an extension by reason of this delay to everyone who failed to burn this season. However, the majority of the industry did their utmost to comply with our requests when the ban against burning was lifted. These areas of 40,000 to 53,000 acres of annual slash burns can be compared with 8,000 acres burned in 1936 before we started this programme. Fortunately no material loss from escaped slash fires occurred either last year or this year--a record we can scarcely hope to maintain every year.

As important as the burning of slash, and more costly to the operator, is that of the falling of snags. Last year we did not insist on it on account of the bad fire season and because we preferred to concentrate on the disposal of the slash. This year, with very few exceptions, we are insisting on the falling of all snags. Final results cannot be determined until after the end of the year, but indications are that the industry is complying with this requirement in a satisfactory manner. We wish to express our appreciation of the co-operation of the industry in this work. The measures are just

and in the public interest--and I believe the majority of the industry now recognize them as such.

But we are not "out of the woods" yet, or should I say, "out of the barren lands." Many problems still remain, for instance, the question of leaving a source of seed--seed trees--and their subsequent protection from slash burns. The average logger will argue, particularly if he is on Crown-granted land, "This is my timber--my land. You tell me that I must leave seed trees. Some of them are worth money. Are you prepared to compensate me for them?"

Section 143 of the "Forest Act" quite evidently contains the principle that he has such an obligation in the public interest, but he argues that the public should at least share the cost. What is your answer to that --and, if you agree with him, where are our funds?

Camps

One of our most interesting activities this past year has been our camps. Three programmes were involved:

The single unemployed relief camps originated in the winter of 1936-37, when the Honourable Mr. Pearson placed several thousand men in our hands. Apparently the programme was a success, as we have had these camps the following two winters. The work was extended over into last summer and then finally closed out. During the winters the projects undertaken were concentrated in our park areas on the coast and last summer some camps were also established in the interior.

The other two camp programmes dealt with young men--the "Youth Training" and "National Forestry" Programmes. These programmes, originating in this Province five summers ago, are similar in nature to the C.C.C. camps

of the United States and have met with such public approval that the Dominion Government now participates in them and has extended them throughout the Dominion. This year we had a total of 860 young men. Much valuable work of a forestry and recreational nature has been accomplished. The young men have received great benefit and the public purse has received 100 cents on the dollar in return. Incidentally, they have meant a great saving to our Forest Protection Fund through eliminating expenditures from that fund for such improvements as trails.

A large measure of the success with which we have met in handling all these camps has been due to the splendid co-operation we have received from the Honourable Mr. Pearson's Department, and in particular from Mr. Griffith, Relief Administrator.

I cannot pass this opportunity--one that occurs but once a year--of mentioning our Minister's name, the Honourable A. Wells Gray, in connection with our work. I am deeply appreciative of the encouragement he gives us whenever we are in any way in need of support. I say with sincerity that the Government has extended to us every sympathy in our work.

Game Department

Speaking of co-operation, we desire to refer to the Game Department. We contact this Department at various points in our work. It is becoming increasingly apparent that we can be of assistance to each other and thereby improve our service to the public. For instance, last summer we offered to undertake with our camps all projects recommended by the Game Commissioners in the interests of the sportsmen. In future fire seasons when closures are necessary, I believe they intend to help us regulate travel in the woods. Such assistance will be invaluable when our men are busy fighting

fires. Game Commissioners Cunningham and Butler have indeed been very helpful to our Service this past year.

Tourists

From the subject of the Game Department one naturally goes to the tourist business. The Forest Service is extremely interested in the development of the tourist travel and I have the honour to represent the Service on the Provincial Tourist Council. Lay all the emphasis you like on our roads and our cities as tourist attractions--our American friends will always be able to compete in the matter of cities and roads--but we must develop our great outdoors, keep our country green with growing forests, develop our parks, promote the sport of skiing, make accessible our beautiful camping places, and help the Game Department make their wild-life resources available to the sportsman. In this work we can do much to promote the tourist business. The selling of our attractions rest, of course, with the Honourable Mr. Asselstine's Department.

Provincial Parks

A word about our Provincial Parks would not be out of place. The work of our winter and summer camps has brought these into prominence. If properly developed and managed they are bound to be an outstanding feature in the development of our tourist trade and in the recreational life of our own citizens. They offer useful work for our unemployed. We are advocating a strengthened park policy and hope that these parks will be definitely placed under the administration of the Forest Service. The recreational use of forest areas is definitely a phase of forestry.

1939 Production

So far I have made no reference to production and markets this year, not because they are of little importance but because popular attention

is already focussed on them to the neglect of the very serious task of perpetuating our great forest resource. Much time could be spent in discussing this year's forestry business and future prospects but I shall be brief.

To date our total scale of forest products exceeds last year's at this date by 30%. Production may be slowed down somewhat for a time until shipping facilities become organized but it is entirely likely that the year 1939 will be the greatest year on record in volume of production. Waterborne shipments of lumber as at the end of September exceeded the same period in our record year of 1936 by over 25%.

Last year the United Kingdom imported 75% of her softwood lumber from Russia and the Scandinavian countries. If these sources of supply are largely cut off, British Columbia should benefit greatly. The United Kingdom imports over 800,000 cords of pit props annually from the Scandinavian countries. Much of this business may now come to Canada. To what extent we can enter this market is now being determined. There may be a demand for our aeroplane spruce exceeding that of the last war. Our pulp and paper markets have greatly improved due to reduction in Scandinavian supplies and increasing consumption of newsprint on this continent. Though the war is the tragic cause of these increases, the fact remains that there is every possibility that 1940 may see another timber production record in British Columbia.

The Report to the Rowell Commission

My remaining remarks will now largely centre around a document published last year which has to date received comparatively little attention but which is deserving of the highest commendation. I speak of Part III of the Province's report to the Rowell Commission--that dealing with the natural resources of British Columbia. The evidence contained in this report is

quite apparently the work of experts, sifted down and finally submitted as the official opinion of the Government of British Columbia.

Equal in importance to some of the direct, almost startling, statements contained therein are certain deductions that must be drawn if one studies the whole evidence. Every member of the Legislature must have received a copy of this report and I hope if anyone has not yet found time to study it he will do so at the first opportunity. Let us review some of the outstanding statements contained in Part III of the report, and I would ask that any member of the Committee correct me who feels I have placed any unwarranted interpretation on them. Here are some of its outstanding statements:

On Page 27 you will find figures giving the total acreage of the Province and the acreage of arable land. When worked out, the total of the arable land is barely 2% of the whole area of the Province. On the following page you will find this statement:

"It can be seen that a comparatively small portion of the total area of the Province is suitable for agricultural purposes, for various reasons. Even of the fertile land much is unsuitable because of lack of moisture."

Turning now to Page 51 of the report, you will find the following:

"In many instances agriculture arose as a subsidiary to mining or forest industries. When a mine closed or when a forest area was cut over these agricultural communities remained, now deprived of the market which had been the reason for their existence. These communities have been in the past, and still are, a problem for the Government of this Province."

And also:

"The fact is that in many cases the farmer is a farmer in name only, and a farmstead provides a place of abode and a certain amount of employment, but not a complete livelihood."

A few months ago a prominent citizen living along the C.N.R. came

into my office and I asked him how times were in his locality. "Not so good," he replied. I told him I could understand that--I knew his district well. Most of the more accessible supplies of pole timber had been cut out, the market was poor and the market for ties was likewise reduced and would remain permanently that way. The sale of forest products in that district, as in hundreds of others, had meant much in the livelihood of the citizens. After you deduct their income from forest products, trapping and road work, to what extent are many of your farming communities self-supporting?

You will remember the case of Duncan cited in my evidence before this Committee last year, when it was stated that we estimated 60% of the population of the district of Duncan was dependent upon the production, manufacture and transportation of forest products.

Some figures came to me last week dealing with the production of forest products in the district of Lumby. We estimate that the total value of forest products produced annually during the last few years in the Lumby district is about \$400,000, and wages paid out yearly about \$225,000--an average annual cash income of \$185 for every man, woman and child in the district. Just think of it!

Let us take the North Thompson Valley north of Kamloops. The average annual value of forest products in this agricultural district is about \$190,000, including a total of about \$90,000 paid in wages. Just think what this means to the farmers in that district. Surely we must perpetuate this forest crop.

A year or so ago the Department of Agriculture made a preliminary soil survey of the east coast of Vancouver Island from the Malahat to Campbell River. (Here is a copy of their map showing a comparatively narrow strip of

land suitable for agriculture). They reported that 40% of these areas shown as second and third-class agricultural land are unsuitable for farming. I'll leave it to the several members of this Committee, who accompanied me on an examination of this district last fall, to give their views on the future of the bulk of these cut-over areas and the character and cost of clearing the agricultural portion.

I draw two main deductions from the report on agriculture to the Rowell Commission when combined with our knowledge of other pertinent facts:

- (1) That the future of many of our agricultural communities will be jeopardized if we fail to perpetuate our forest crop.
- (2) That it is quite obvious that the continued prosperity of British Columbia must largely come from the assets of the non-arable 98% of the Province. These assets are chiefly the mines and the forests.

The Mines

Let us read what the Rowell Report has to say about mining.

"It is based on a wasting asset, and consequently does not develop permanent communities and cannot be looked upon as a permanent source of support for this community."
(Page 47).

And again,

"Nothing is known positively concerning the quantity or value of mining reserves in this Province, but one thing is certain: that the ore once mined is not replaceable, and that ultimately this source of income will disappear."
(Page 48).

And again,

"While it is likely that the mining industry will constitute a source of income for this Province for some time to come, it is essentially a speculative source."

And let me read from the evidence given last year before the Mines Committee by Dr. Walker, Deputy Minister of Mines. Said Dr. Walker:

"Out of the metal mines operating today in British Columbia only two or three may be expected to be in operation 25 years hence."

I submit that, according to the foregoing, this resource is not one that we can rely upon with any surety to expand and take the place of a reduction in any of our other primary sources of wealth.

We come now to our greatest resource--our forests--and in dealing with them we wish to refer to them not only as a source of supply for our industries; but to their influence on the fish and game life of this Province; to their recreational value, and their value in our tourist business.

The Rowell Report contains many significant statements regarding this great resource--in fact some of them give cause for concern. Let me quote:

- (1) "Thus, it can be seen that insofar as the forest industries are concerned, and the revenues which accrue to the people of this Province and to the Government through the exploitation of these resources, this revenue is not a true income but is the result of the sale of capital resources which, in the nature of things, can be replaced only in part. Because of the necessity for the use of these resources for the support of the community and the necessity of keeping the cost of production at a competitive level so as to sell British Columbia forest products in world markets, it has not been possible for the industry to support an adequate programme of forest conservation and development. Much has been done, and in the recent session of the Legislature, legislation was enacted to extend the policy of conservation; but even this must be admitted to be inadequate for the preservation of the forests as a permanent resource for the support of this community. Consequently, when the income of the people of British Columbia and the revenues of the Government from our forest industries are considered, it must be kept in mind that the income and revenue results from the exploitation of a resource which has been supplied by nature, which nature cannot readily replenish, and which, in the not-distant future, is likely to produce a decreasing income and revenue."
(Page 37).

Again we quote:

- (2) "On the basis of the present cut the Douglas fir resources, which are now accessible, are likely to be exhausted in from twelve to fifteen years." (Page 37).
- (3) "Because of the circumstances above referred to, many of our cut-over forest areas are not reprcducing satisfactorily."...

"A recent examination of the Vancouver Forest District, which includes Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland and, in fact, includes the greater part of the really large timber areas of the Province, indicates that at least fifty per cent of the cut-over area is not reforesting properly." (Page 37).

- (4) "In British Columbia the exploitation of natural reserves of timber that have taken centuries to accumulate, by persons leasing the land with little or no interest in the possibility of another crop one hundred years later, offers an example of the results of an enterprise in which immediate profit is the main motive. Mill towns flourish suddenly and die away as the surrounding region is denuded, and ghost towns and rural slums are left to mark what was once a seemingly prosperous village or town." (Page 39).

In connection with this last quotation I should like to show you an interesting map of the East Kootenay. I first entered this district in 1912. It was a district of activity with logging camps and mills almost everywhere. More than 30 sizeable mills have cut their available timber and gone out of business. This year the last two large ones closed down. And finally I quote from Page 40.

- (5) "To preserve our forests as a source of income in the future so as to establish our forest industries on the basis of sustained yield would require a costly policy of conservation."

This last is a relative sort of statement--what constitutes a "costly policy of conservation"? This present year our appropriations are 37% of our estimated revenue. Every dollar of forest capital needed to perpetuate the resource but turned into current revenue for other purposes will be lost many times over to industry, employment and government revenues in the years to come. The forest industry of this Province can be safeguarded

within the limits of direct forest revenues.

This Rowell report contains the basic forestry facts. This is a forest Province. We are overcutting in the Coast district. We are turning capital into revenue. We are creating barren lands. Adequate provision has not yet been made for the preservation of our forests as a permanent resource. In a word, we are liquidating our greatest asset and leaving an impoverished heritage to our children. If these are not the conclusions to be drawn from this Report, will some member of this Committee please correct me.

With these facts before us I would leave with you a thought expressed in the words of Sherman Adams:

"The legitimate use of forest wealth presumes the application of capital sufficient to found a stable enterprise... For the perpetuation of such an industry public administration has a trust to fulfill."

And now with the war upon us, we must expect everything else to be subordinated to that one activity--but let us not use it as an excuse to evade our responsibilities in other directions. May I express our thoughts on this subject by quoting from a letter written on September 2nd by a leading conservationist on this Island, Mr. R. L. Haig-Brown of Campbell River:

"We know now that timber, fish, soil, game, fur and water resources offer us merely perpetual annual yields if exploited within certain limits. They are not inexhaustible supplies from which we can take as much as we want for as long as we want.

"This knowledge has not come easily. There has been a long hard fight to establish it and bring it before the public, a fight that is by no means over. War will bring well to the front the two worst enemies of conservation: profit and expediency...

"A good many of us who have spoken for conservation and proper use in the last few years may have to go away from here. For a while at least it seems likely that we shall become silent voices--military discipline does not always give much freedom

for the expression of opinions. Is it too much to ask of those who will have charge of the country during the next few years that they will not be stampeded by expediency or profit but will guard and administer the natural resources as we have learned they must be guarded and administered--with a proper regard to future crops? It seems to me that if men will set their hearts to that end now they will be able to resist the demands for ruthless exploitation that will so surely come.

"There is always talk in Canada of what to do for the soldier, how to pay him, how to hold his job for him, how to get him back into civil life after it is all over. Surely the fairest demand he can make is that his country shall be handed back to him when he returns in no worse shape than when he left."