

Forestry Department

standing committee on mines, forests and waters, which I should like to read at the present time to emphasize its importance? It is found in the third report of the committee, paragraph 57, on page 1175 of the minutes of proceedings, and reads as follows:

Your committee strongly recommends consideration of steps which would widen the scope of the forestry branch, increasing its status in such a way that a deputy minister would be in direct charge. The fact that such a status, comparable to that of a department, does not exist now reflects a lack of appreciation of the importance of the forest industries to Canada in the past, now, and in the future.

I hope that the opposition, through reconsideration of the debate at the resolution stage and as a result of the debate on second reading, will accept the representations and the evidence put before the standing committee and will find its way clear to rally behind the government in setting up a new department of forestry. To help them make that decision, I am going to remind them of a speech delivered some years ago in the house by Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent, then prime minister of Canada, in which he moved second reading of the bill setting up the new Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. In his presentation he was moved by the situation to utter the following words, as found on page 698 of *Hansard* for December 8, 1953:

But there has not been for a long time any special occasion offered to discuss these vast areas of Canada which compose the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. It has been said that Great Britain acquired her empire in a state of absence of mind. Apparently we have administered these vast territories of the north in an almost continuing state of absence of mind.

I would not want it said, Mr. Speaker, that this government ever relegated our most important export industry to a position where it was dealt with in a continuing state of absence of mind. One of the main reasons for setting up a new department is that the new minister will be able to devote his full time to Canada's forest industry. At his level he will be able to deal with the ministers of the provincial governments. Since the provinces have complete constitutional rights in the management of their forest resources, to make the research efforts of the federal government fully effective there must be the highest degree of friendly co-operation between the two levels of government.

At the present time, there is a high degree of collaboration in the fields of agriculture, mining and fishing at the ministerial level, between the federal government and the provincial governments. The feeling of this government is that the forest industry, in the interests of the Canadian people, deserves the same attention. One of the principal

responsibilities of the new department will be in the field of extension services. It is almost an elementary fact of life that a minister of the crown carries more weight in getting across the message of the importance of research than anyone at the official level.

If one examines the history of the setting up of new departments in Canada the truth of this argument can be demonstrated. The old department of mines and resources of a generation ago had the administration of mines, immigration, mapping and surveys, Indian affairs, national parks, forest resources, water resources, and so on. As Mr. St. Laurent said in the same speech to which I referred before, at page 696, it was not possible that very much of the attention of the department could be given specifically to northern affairs.

This same argument applies to forestry. After 1945 the department of mines and resources was replaced by, first, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, as that warranted the attention of a full time minister; the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, as that warranted the attention of a full time minister; and the department of resources and development. Then a little later, in 1953, the department of resources and development evolved into the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. This latter change was made, as Mr. St. Laurent said, because it was obvious that northern affairs could only get a part, and perhaps a very small part, of the attention of the minister of the department.

One of the many responsibilities of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources is the forestry branch. It is the opinion of the government, and I submit the opinion of the standing committee on mines, forests and waters, that this evolution I have just described should continue; that is, that another segment of the once all-embracing functions of the department of mines and resources should be set up as a special department.

Another matter raised by the hon. member for Laurier was the suggestion that the forest products division of the Department of Trade and Commerce should be put into the new departments of forestry. He asked whether any thought had been given to bringing this division into the new department. I can say now that the answer to that question is in the affirmative. I should like to refer the house once more to the section of the standing committee report quoted by the Prime Minister, page 1177, the latter half of the paragraph, which says: