



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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RESOURCE POLICY IN CANADA

An Address by the Hon. Jean Lesage, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, to the Empire Club of Canada, Toronto. December 13, 1956.

In recent years Canadians have become far more conscious of Canada's natural resources than ever before in our history. This is largely because the tremendous post-war world demand for the products of land and sea, forest and mine has created in Canada one of the greatest surges of economic growth that the world has seen. The causes of the unprecedented demand for our resources are found in a rapidly growing world population and in a per capita demand constantly stimulated by technological developments. World demand in the post-war period has been intensified even more because it was not fully satisfied for a decade and a half owing first to the depression and then to war. Today there is every indication that this demand will continue to grow for many years.

The effect on Canada has been profound. It has fostered an economic expansion which impresses us for its variety and extent and for the development of natural resources which it has induced. Our forest industries, important in several regions for many decades, have expanded so far as to increase the utilization of our forests by sixty per cent since the 1930's. We have seen forest products become important for many segments of Canada's chemical industry, as for example in the manufacture of synthetics. Another industry many decades old, metal mining, has expanded markedly in twenty years, both as to the regions where mining is taking place and as to the variety of minerals produced. As a whole the volume of mineral production in Canada last year was nearly two and one-half times as great as it was in the years 1935-1939. The oil industry, unimportant before the Second World War, is now one of this country's greatest industrial enterprises. The discovery and exploitation since 1946 of the great oil fields of the prairie provinces has multiplied our production of petroleum seventeen times over. As consumption of petroleum products has risen so also have our demands for the other sources of energy required for Canada's economic growth. The development of our water-power resources