

time to conserve or to induce development, with the possible exception of a reasonable system of mineral taxation. We in Alberta as a government, therefore, have control over only about 50 per cent of the mineral rights.

**Mr. Prudham:** That does not mean they were given away.

**Mr. Low:** Yes, it does mean they were given away. And I will point out to my hon. friend that his own party, through Hon. Charles Stewart as premier of Alberta, just after the first great war, sent word down here by way of a resolution passed by the legislative assembly of Alberta that they wanted this parliament in Ottawa to pass a bill enabling the legislature in Alberta to sell or to give to the Shell Oil Company the total oil rights of that province for \$5,000 cash. And if that does not mean giving it away I do not know what it does mean. I think the minister had better look up the history of the matter, and find out what his own party has done in the past.

**Mr. Prudham:** At least it was a British company.

**Mr. Low:** And that is not confined to his party. As the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell) said, it has been general policy. Many governments in the past have felt that perhaps the only inducement they could give for the development of resources would be to hand out large concessions. That time is now past, if it ever was necessary.

I say the policy I have outlined seems the only sensible one whereby we can both develop and conserve, so we will not deplete our resources in too big a hurry. I should like to illustrate the point by dealing for a moment or two with the matter of conservation of the soil. We in western Canada have had some rather sad experiences over the years in connection with soil depletion and erosion. I think there has been altogether too much wheat mining in certain areas of Canada. As a consequence fibre has been taken out of the soil, wind and water have eroded it, and this condition has gone on to a point where much of that soil is practically depleted of its fertility.

One of the great difficulties faced in introducing a policy of soil conservation is that most lands are owned by private individuals who hold the titles. No government can come along and say to a man who owns title to his property: "You have to do thus and so with that land". If that is done, then government is acting as a dictatorship. But if something is not done to educate the people as to proper methods of conservation, and to induce them to cultivate the soil

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properly and see to it that either the fibre is left in or it is put back in, there will be depletion of the soil. They should be educated to see to it that they leave a fringe of bush or timber around their tillable land, to prevent the sweep of the wind, in the event of their having bush or timberland on or near their property.

Unless something of that kind is done the depletion of the soil will take place, with the result that eventually the soils will not produce. But, as I have pointed out, so long as individuals own the land it is not easy to have this done. I am not suggesting that the government should take the land back; I do not believe it should. I do believe, however, that we should have an intensive policy of education and demonstration in all parts of the country to show the farmers how to take care of their soil, and the benefits that will flow from leaving a fringe of bush around tillable soil, not only to conserve the moisture and run-off but to prevent the wind sweep, which constitutes one of the very difficult factors with which we have to deal in western Canada.

We found it was wise to settle certain areas in Alberta under a leasing policy, rather than that of outright ownership. The idea was that the land would be cleared by the government and strips of timber would be left to serve as windbreaks. Then, after the clearing and the first stage of development were completed, the endeavour was to get those lands into the hands of young men, particularly returned soldiers, so they would have a chance to develop them, but under a contract which would make it necessary to preserve the windbreaks for all time.

That policy is working out well. I believe there were some unfortunate circumstances in connection with the selection of the area; but, speaking generally, the policy is satisfactory. In due course I think various procedures such as I have described will have been shown to be beneficial, and the people will have had a demonstration that will stay with them. I believe there is not enough being done by provincial governments or by this government to impress upon the people the necessity of preserving the fertility of the soil so as to prevent erosion, wastage and depletion.

I should like to say only a word about wildlife. The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan made reference to the fur-bearing animals. For a number of years I have been concerned with the conservation of wildlife in general. I think that in Canada some very wonderful demonstrations are being carried out. For instance, Ducks Unlimited is doing a wonderful job in certain areas of the