

The Address—Mr. Laing

shores. Our population has more than doubled since 1931 and the increase since 1941 has been estimated at 400,000.

We have tremendous wealth in forests, mines and fisheries and all three industries, spurred both by demand for their products and by technological advances, have enjoyed great growth. Our agriculture is both unique and important in its diversification. Soft open winters in the coastal areas are ideal for dairying and the overwintering of many seed crops. In our central and northern sections, altitude and latitude combine to produce disease-free seeds of great vitality which command a ready export market as yet not fully exploited.

In the Okanagan valley particularly, where irrigation water is the farmers' gold, but also in the Kootenays, we have established a tree fruit industry and a marketing service whose products, for quality and pack, have become the standard by which all others, imported and domestic, are judged.

Our agriculture is intensive. Hon. members who come from agricultural ridings will catch the importance of my words when I remind them that we have dairy farms in the province of British Columbia where the municipal tax alone is \$8 per acre, and in some places irrigation has now reached a cost of \$25 per acre; but, as if to make up for these costs, our production is exceedingly high. Local production figures have been recorded in recent years, as to potatoes, of over 1,000 bushels per acre; oats, 150 bushels per acre; and apples, 1,800 bushels per acre. Our provincial government has embarked upon a program of expansion of the industrial and communication services into our hinterlands. Ours is a province in which communication is arduous and costly. The recent announcement of the Prime Minister of his intention to recommend to parliament certain assistance in the extension of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway from Quesnel to Prince George has earned the gratitude of the people of the province of British Columbia.

Our people will rejoice that legislation is being introduced to facilitate, in co-operation with the provinces, the construction of a trans-Canada highway. Nothing so much as a broad highway connecting us will supplement those sentimental threads and economic cords that bind our provinces together.

British Columbia is a province of surpassing grandeur. Our northern park lands, our deep, rich valleys, our lakes and tumultuous waterways, our deeply indented seashores, which combine the qualities of the Mediterranean and the Norwegian fjords, are becoming the mecca of many thousands of tourists.

[Mr. Laing.]

Tourist visitors to the province of British Columbia from outside Canada are expected this year to exceed the total population within the province. If we had opposite us the great congested cities of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Detroit, it might well be that the tourist traffic in British Columbia would be our first industry.

We are beginning to see now that what we thought once was our great drawback is in reality one of our greatest assets. Ranges of snowclad mountains feed rushing waters through tortuous and narrow defiles to the sea, to give us the second greatest potential of electric energy in all the provinces of Canada. Vast established industries are looking toward us for sites where low-cost power and all-year shipping facilities provide ideal conditions for manufacturing.

Our blessings have come not unmixed. Indiscriminate development of water power could jeopardize our famous salmon industry, because the upper reaches of our rivers provide spawning grounds for the salmon which create this immense source of wealth. In this connection the superb contribution being made by the engineers and biologists under the direction of the international Pacific salmon fisheries commission should be duly noted and appreciated.

The influx of new citizens has created in all our major centres a demand for housing which, though per capita we have built more houses than any other area of Canada, still greatly outstrips the supply. The people of British Columbia will welcome the announcement that legislation is to be introduced to accelerate the building of new houses in our country.

Our windows look out upon the Pacific; we depend for our prosperity upon our export trade, and we share the concern of all Canadians, in common with the citizens of all western democracies, as to the implications of present currency difficulties. But, Mr. Speaker, we share also the pride of all Canadians in the predominant showing made by the representatives of Canada in the recent discussions concerning these problems. We also share the confidence of the people of Canada that these difficulties can and will be overcome, and we in British Columbia stand behind the policy of the government in seeking multilateral trade so that we can develop our trade in any part of the world with anyone who will trade with us.

The riding of Vancouver South comprises a narrow southern strip of the city of Vancouver running east and west, bounded on the east by the municipality of Burnaby and on the west by the Musqueam Indian reservation, inhabited still by a number of Indians