

British Columbia's Timber Commission.

Final Report Urges Creation of Forestry Department and other Reforms.

The final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Timber and Forestry of the province of British Columbia is a work that has been awaited with much interest, presenting, as it does, the results of the deliberations of that body, after much sifting of the immense mass of evidence accumulated by it during its sessions. Many questions of consequence to the people of British Columbia, and generally to that part of the Canadian public which is interested in forestry, have been taken up, and the decisions and recommendations are of considerable moment. The policy recommended is one whose result, if put into practice, will be watched closely by forest economists generally, and would seem to be likely to produce results considerably more favourable to the province than those attained under the present system.

The chief interest of the report centres in the recommendations, which are here quoted in full as follows:

(1) That a complete cruise of all Crown grant timber lands should be made by the government; that in future the Department of Forests should co-operate with the assessors, and that an annual return should be made of the valuation of all such timber lands;

(2) That as far as possible timber leaseholds should be placed, upon renewal, on a parity with licensed timber lands; and that they should be subject to the same forest regulations;

(3) That the rate of rental and of royalty upon special license should at no time be fixed in advance for more than one calendar year;

(4) That the Land Act be amended so as to empower the government to grant the right of cutting sawmill timber to pulp lessees; and that a new form of license be provided for this purpose in the manner prescribed by your commissioners;

(5) That the same form of license as that provided for pulp lessees be issued to holders of tanbark leases who may desire to cut mill timber upon their leaseholds;

(6) That the present reserve upon unalienated timberland be continued indefinitely; and that when special circumstances necessitate the opening of any portion of this reserve for immediate operations, licenses to cut timber thereon should be put up to public competition, on a stumpage basis;

(7) That licenses to cut timber upon fractional areas adjoining, or surrounding, leased or licensed timber lands, should be put up to public competition and that a 'fractional area' be defined with great care in the wording of the 'Land Act';

(8) That the record of every cruise and survey made by the government in timbered areas should be accompanied by a report concerning the suitability of the land for agriculture; that the power to compel licensees to cut and remove timber from good land be retained; and that at the time of renewal the same provision be inserted in every timber lease;

(9) That the issue of hand-loggers' licenses be discontinued;

(10) That no divided interest in a special timber license be recognized;

(11) That for the convenience of holders one day be fixed in each month for the renewal of all licenses expiring in that month;

(12) That royalty be collected upon all merchantable timber not removed from Crown lands in the course of logging operations;

(13) That operators be required to dispose of debris;

(14) That the protection of forests from fire be undertaken by the government through the agency of a permanent forest organization along the lines of the Northwest Mounted Police; and that it be compulsory for all able-bodied citizens to assist in this work when called upon;

(15) That the cost of fire protection be shared between government and stumpage holders in the manner proposed by your commissioners;

(16) That the provincial government should co-operate with the Dominion Railway Commission; that a vigilant patrol of all railway lines and inspection of locomotives should be established; and that all railway construction should be supervised by provincial forestry officials;

(17) That special licensees should be instructed to proceed with the survey of their holdings; and that all such surveys should be completed not later than the 31st day of December, 1915;

(18) That all operators should be required to make periodical returns concerning their operations to the forestry officials in their districts; and that the collection of information should be undertaken upon much wider lines than hitherto;

(19) That the government should at