

NEED OF IMPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION METHODS

RECOMMENDATIONS BY COMMITTEE ON FORESTS

Commission of Conservation urges Additional Laws to Protect Timber Resources from Fire and Otherwise to Conserve Great Natural Assets for Future

An urgent appeal for more progressive methods of conserving the forest resources of the Dominion and recommendations for improvements in forest legislation are contained in the 1919 report of the Committee on Forests, Commission of Conservation, a summary of which is reproduced below, as follows:—

1. It is most gratifying to be able to again report that, notwithstanding war conditions, the year shows notable progress toward better forest conservation. The extended report of the committee discusses these matters in considerable detail. This summary will accordingly refer only very briefly to the more important developments of the year, but will emphasize particularly the respects in which further improvements are most urgently demanded.

2. The Government of New Brunswick is to be congratulated upon its progressive and far-sighted forest legislation and upon the later developments, in organization, timber sales policy, forest survey, land classification, and forest research. No province of Canada has a more progressive forest policy than New Brunswick. All this, however, is made imperative by the rapid exhaustion of virgin timber supplies and the urgent necessity for producing new forest crops to support the economic structure of the province.

3. In Nova Scotia the Provincial Government is alive to the desirability of appointing a provincial forester, to have charge of forest fire protection, carry on an educational campaign along forestry lines, and to act as provincial fire inspector for the Dominion Railway Commission. The financial difficulties are obvious, since the Crown land revenue is exceedingly limited. It is suggested that the co-operation of the Agricultural College at Truro might be enlisted in consideration of forestry lectures before the agricultural students, thus helping to meet the salary of the provincial forester. Further, it is believed that a thorough reorganization of the fire-ranger system, under a provincial forester, would improve the efficiency of forest fire protection to a degree which would readily secure the support of a majority of the timber owners, for a slight increase in the fire tax. If this could be done the problem would be solved.

4. Forest protection in Quebec has made steady improvement under the four co-operative associations and, outside their territory, under the provincial forest service. Legislation is under consideration to enforce the adequate patrol of licensed timber berths within association boundaries, the holders of which are not association members. The enactment of such legislation is highly desirable.

ONTARIO AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

5. Ontario has by far the largest fire-ranger organization in Canada, comprising well upward of 1,000 men during the height of the fire season. The extension of the merit system of appointment to this organization is highly desirable, following the precedent already set by British Columbia, New Brunswick, and the Dominion Forestry Branch. From the viewpoint of perpetuating the forests of the province through wise use, the one step now most imperatively required is the transfer to the Provincial Forestry Branch of supervision over cutting operations on all Crown lands. Technical forest organizations are now in full charge of cutting operations on Crown lands in Brit-

ish Columbia, Quebec and New Brunswick, and in the Dominion forest reserves, exclusive of licensed lands. Leaving technical work of this kind in non-technical hands means simply that the forests are administered for immediate revenue only, and the question of providing for the future does not, and in the very nature of the case cannot, receive anything like adequate attention, if any at all. It is unthinkable that Ontario should much longer lag behind other provinces in a matter which so vitally affects the future interests of the people as a whole.

6. Developments of the year in British Columbia include the organization of a forest rangers' course for returned soldiers, under a co-operative arrangement; the establishment of a timber-testing laboratory at Vancouver, also a cooperative scheme; the decision to inaugurate an air patrol of coast forests, and a considerable amount of slash disposal on logging operations. The Sitka spruce forests of the province supplied a great amount of airplane timber.

7. As to Dominion lands in the west, the outstanding development of the year has been the adoption of the merit system of appointment, applicable to both the inside and outside services of the Dominion Forestry Branch. This abolition of the patronage system of appointment removes the greatest single obstacle to efficiency in the fire-ranger staff on Dominion Crown lands.

8. The Dominion Forestry Branch, a technical organization, still has no administrative control over cutting operations on licensed timber berths on Dominion Crown lands, although these berths comprise the great bulk of the merchantable timber in Dominion ownership. This backward situation is parallel to that which exists in Ontario, as contrasted with technical control of such cutting operations in British Columbia, Quebec, and New Brunswick, and also in forest reserves aside from licensed lands. This unprogressive administrative anomaly is a relic of former times, when the necessity for technical handling of technical subjects was less appreciated than now.

ALBERTA NEEDS LEGISLATION.

9. A revision of the Prairie Fires Ordinance of Alberta is imperative in the interest of forest protection. The adoption of the permit system of regulating settlers' clearing fires is an essential feature of such revision. Legislation is also required, to provide means for compelling provincially chartered railways in Alberta to provide for the prevention and control of railway fires, through requirements similar to those imposed by the Dominion Railway Commission upon lines under its jurisdiction.

10. Authorities believe that among the peace-time uses of aircraft will be aerial fire patrol and aerial photography; the latter is believed to have possibilities in connection with surveying, the mapping in of forest types, etc. It is reported that the Dominion Government has under consideration the establishment of a national air service, to investigate and facilitate peace-time uses of aircraft, along these and other lines which would constitute distinctively public services. It is recommended that the possibilities in these directions be thoroughly investigated by the Dominion Government.

11. The Government is definitely pledged to the placing, at the forthcoming session of Parliament, of the lines formerly known as the Canadian Government Railways, under the jurisdiction of the Railway Commission. In the interest of forest fire protection along these lines, such action is urgently needed.

12. The Canadian Forestry Association is to be congratulated upon its energetic campaign for better methods of forest conservation throughout the Dominion.

13. The Dominion Government should be urged to require wood fuel to be sold only by the standard cord of 128 cubic feet, or fraction thereof, rather than by the load. The latter practice militates strongly against the more general use of wood fuel, besides constituting an injustice to the consumer.

14. The appropriations of the past year, by the Dominion Government, and the Governments of Ontario and Quebec, for the location, investigation, and eradication of the white pine blister rust, should by all means be continued. The protection of our forest resources urgently demands the appointment of a forest pathologist, with adequate facilities, in the Department of Agriculture, to study the fungous and other diseases of forest trees, in co-operation with the Chief of the Division of Forest Insects of the Entomological Branch.

15. A good start toward forest planting has been made in the province of Quebec, by some of the pulp and paper concerns, notably the Laurentide and Riordon companies. The Governments of Quebec and Ontario have under consideration the adoption of a planting policy on denuded Crown lands. It is to be hoped that such a policy may be made effective. Quebec has also under consideration the basis under which limit holders might acquire limited areas of denuded Crown lands for reforestation purposes. This is a matter of great importance, which should receive attention in Ontario as well.

16. The problem of slash disposal on logging operations is receiving renewed attention, and it is anticipated that experiments as to its practicability and cost will be made, during the coming year, by a number of operators in eastern Canada. From the viewpoint of reducing the heavy losses due to forest insects and fungi, the argument for slash disposal is even stronger than from that of fire protection, although the latter consideration alone has, in many cases on this continent, been considered sufficient to justify compulsory slash disposal on public lands.

17. The report on the forest resources

of British Columbia will be ready for distribution almost immediately. The similar report for Saskatchewan is rapidly nearing completion.

18. It is recommended that not less than \$16,000 be set aside from the funds of the Commission, for the continuation and extension of field work in forestry during the coming year. This should include the beginning of an investigation of the forest resources of Ontario, in co-operation with the Provincial Government, and the extension of the valuable investigative work, under the immediate direction of Dr. C. D. Howe, of the reproduction and growth of pulpwood species in eastern Canada, in co-operation with representative pulp and paper companies, and in collaboration with the several provincial forest services. It is of interest to note that both the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and the Canadian Lumbermen's Association have, by formal resolution, endorsed the forest research work of the Commission, as well as the investigation, by the Commission, of forest resources of the various provinces, and have urged that funds be made available for the adequate prosecution of these projects.

The report, in addition, contains an interesting section describing what has been done in the way of forest research:—

A greater amount of forest research has been done in Canada during the past year than ever before. In addition to the projects of the Commission of Conservation, the Dominion Forestry Branch has continued its forest survey on the Petawawa military reservation, Ontario, preliminary to studies of growth and reproduction. The Quebec forest service has also done work along these lines. The New Brunswick forest service has paid very considerable attention to growth and reproduction studies, partly in collaboration with this Commission, and it is expected that the scale of such work will be materially increased during the coming season.

Our own projects, in direct co-operation with the Laurentide and Riordon companies and with the Dominion Entomological Branch, have been con-

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