

The address of Hon. E. J. Davis, Commissioner of Crown Lands, in connection with the Budget debate of the legislative session of 1904, enabled the Commissioner to present to the House and to the country, in an interesting and instructive manner, much valuable information regarding the timber wealth of the Province. For years Conservative speakers and the Conservative press have, for purely partizan purposes, sought to minimize Ontario's proud position as regards forest wealth, and Mr. Davis availed himself of the opportunity to combat this unpatriotic policy with facts and figures which cannot fail to interest every true student of Provincial affairs. Mr. Davis is a man not given to extravagance of utterance and his statements while splendidly optimistic, are at the same time most conservative and entirely borne out by the statistics gathered by the staff of the department which the Commissioner so ably directs. In his speech Mr. Davis incidentally deals with some of the oft reiterated charges of the Opposition touching the finances of the Province, presenting his arguments with the incisiveness of a practical business man, with a thorough grasp of affairs. Mr. Davis' entire address, which was delivered on February 18, is worthy of careful perusal. He said:

I would like to say a few words in reply to the questions asked by my Hon. friend from Ottawa, who has just taken his seat. I must compliment him on the fairness of his speech and especially so on the fair way he dealt with the difficulties surrounding the Crown Lands Department in connection with the volunteer land grants. I need not say that I do not agree entirely with the matter of the speech. That could not be expected, particularly having regard to his exposition of the Province's finances. But I do agree with some features of his address. I agree

with him that it is very desirable that the surveys of our newer districts should be pushed forward as rapidly as possible. I may explain in a word that we were very seriously handicapped in the conduct of our surveys last year. As Hon. gentlemen know, this House did not conclude its business until the end of June, and only just before the close did they approve of the large grant for the purpose of surveys. We could not send out our men in advance of that grant, although we had our instructions ready. Then the parties had to go further north last year than ever before; it took longer to get in and out, and the time was more limited than usual. We undertook to survey about 60 Townships. Some of these were not completed, although a certain amount of progress was made, and our hope is that, if the House is good enough to vote the money this year, we will get our men out earlier, they will complete the townships uncompleted (this will not take so very long) and will then undertake a number of townships for the coming year.

My Hon. friend was quite right in saying that there have been a great many difficulties in connection with locating the veterans. We have tried to overcome these difficulties and I quite agree with him that we are all anxious that these volunteers should be located as speedily as possible and under the most favorable circumstances. A vote was taken last session and the session before for the purpose of land guides and the agents of the department in every section of New Ontario were notified that veterans desiring a guide who was familiar with the country to direct them in their examination of lots, should be provided with a man qualified to do the work, and reasonable charges made in connection with that should be paid out of the grant which the House had been good