

APPENDIX No. 4

or fourteen months, of presiding over the provincial Department of Mines, and can therefore claim to have watched very closely the growth of our province as a mineral section of the Dominion. The mineral wealth of the province of British Columbia is a national possession, and I think I may say to you this morning without the slightest hesitancy, that we in that part of the Dominion are in possession of one of the richest mineral zones, if not the richest, in the world. The great difficulty in British Columbia is this: that but a small fraction of the mineral wealth of that country has been exploited to date. It is easy to account for a condition of this kind. It is because, owing to the immensity of the country and lack of transportation facilities in the more remote districts, it has been impossible to date to prosecute the exploration and the prospecting there that may have been undertaken, and successfully, too, east of the Rockies and in certain states of the Union. But where railways have been projected and have been built, I challenge fair criticism on this point: the province of British Columbia has been able to disclose profitable and promising mining operations. It is not fair to condemn a country, or a mining section of it, simply because there has been a failure here and there; and if there is any enterprise in the world that to my mind is so apt now and then to lend itself to speculation that may be unfair to the very industry involved, it is the mining industry.

I think I can safely say to you to-day that never before in the history of the country have we been able to claim so much assurance for our mineral wealth as we can do at this very moment. Districts that because of the panic and the break of the nineties had been practically abandoned for years, are now, by reason of the prosecution of legitimate mining, taking on new life, and they are responding in a very substantial way to the efforts of men who had the courage and pluck to stay by their properties and work them as legitimate operators would be expected to do. I am glad to be able to tell you that the official reports to the department from the Boundary, the Similkameen and other of our mining sections, including the Coast zone as far north as the Alaskan boundary at Observatory inlet, annually show conclusively that we are coming now into an era when the mining history of British Columbia will disclose new records from year to year. In the few observations I am making, I do not want to be misunderstood in my references. I want you to feel, gentlemen, that while I say as much as I have done for the province of British Columbia, I am not here to claim that it is any better than any other province. I am just as much an Ontario man, or a Nova Scotian for that matter, as any man in this room, and because I said what I did just now relative to the mining and other resources of British Columbia, I do not wish you to feel that I am trying to put that western province in a place of its own. I am simply trying to tell you what we as brother Canadians are trying to do out there, and we have every confidence that you, with all the experience and advantage you have in the East, are doing your part for your respective provinces.

But with regard to our mines, we have devised mining laws and have carefully adhered to the principle underlying all of them for many years past. We have found that our early laws relating to placer and lode mines, for the most part framed by the first pioneers of the country, and later on improved by men who followed their development closely, were well considered and designed to serve practical and profitable uses; and so, gentlemen, we have clung closely to the principles that were behind all the early legislation in the province of British Columbia. A very generous compliment has been given the province by no less an authority than the United States Senate of having, shall I say, almost the best mining laws in the world. A commission was appointed not many years ago by the American Senate to investigate mining laws with a view of applying the best to the new possession of the Philippines, and the net result of that inquiry was the official statement that the mining laws of British Columbia ranked very high in mining legislation of the world. Possibly it may have been that there were conditions in the Philippines very much like those we