

The Forestry Commission of British Columbia

(By A. C. Flumerfelt)

The following excellent article dealing with the Forestry Commission of British Columbia was prepared by Mr. A. C. Flumerfelt, in the form of an address, and was to have been delivered by him, as representative of the British Columbia Government, before the Dominion Commission of Conservation at Quebec early in the present month. Owing to delay in the mountains, Mr. Flumerfelt was not able to deliver the address in person:

In early days on the Pacific coast of the Dominion the forest had little value. It was the farmer's enemy; it hindered the prospector on his hunt for gold; and the few thousand people whose settlements were scattered among the multitude of trees were hampered at every turn by the monstrous growth of wood. The commercial activity of the country was oppressed by it—the forest "encumbered land."

It is true that small sawmills had begun their work, but the local need for lumber was easily satisfied, the export trade was in its infancy, and insignificant cuttings along the waterfront—on the very fringe of the ceaseless forest—supplied the logger with all the timber he could sell.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the Legislature of this small isolated population should have put no value upon the standing timber that it owned, and that the timber should have been given away to every purchaser of land—thrown into the bargain along with the deer and the berry bushes and the scenery. In fact, even upon these attractive terms, it was by no means easy to dispose of timberland, for capital was scarce in those early days, and in any case it was not often available for a stumpage investment that, by the look of things, might possibly require half a century to mature.

Then came the great upheaval caused by the completion of the C. P. R.—by the linking up of the Pacific Coast country to the rest of Canada. Population flowed in, trade improved, and the choicest patches of the most accessible timber of British Columbia began to have a slight market value. Prompted by this, the Legislature of 1888 made the first attempt to grapple with the problem of selling forest property. It placed a price of fifty cents upon every thousand feet of lumber cut—a price that has remained unaltered ever since.

Capital, as I have said before, was very scarce out West, and the struggling sawmill owner needed all that he could get for the active development of his business. He could not easily afford to sink money in the purchase of timber lands. Hence that same Legislature of 1888 organized the system of leasing Crown timber; a system that gave the lumberman all the stumpage that he needed without obliging him to pay cash for it. Moreover, by granting these leases at the cheap rental of ten cents per acre to bona fide operators only, the establishment of new sawmills in the Province was given direct encouragement.

For seventeen years this leasing system continued to exist as the standard method of disposing of the provincial forests, but long before its abolition a most important change had been made in the idea behind it, which had been originally—as I have said—the encouragement of immediate sawmilling operations in the Province by grants of cheap crown stumpage. In reality, the first step towards the construction of the modern forest policy of the Provincial Government had been made. That step was simply the granting of leases at higher rates to non-operators; the throwing open of timber lands to the investor.

And now, let us summarize the situation as it existed in 1905, the year in which the leasing of timber was brought to an end; the year that saw the adoption of a new and truly remarkable policy by the Province of British Columbia. By that year, about one and a half million acres of the crown timber lands had passed by sale or by railway grant into private ownership and out of Government control; another million acres had been transferred to lessees. Probably thirty billion feet of standing timber had been alienated. Neither of the two forms of tenure secured to the people of the Province any satisfactory share in the future value of the stumpage they parted with, for any future increase in the value of these two and a half million acres would benefit the private lessee or purchaser and not the Government. As it was very evident that the value of British Columbia timber would rise greatly in the years to come, it was most desirable that some better method than lease or sale should be discovered for disposing of the crown forests.

To quote the words of our report: "The legislative problem was solved in a most ingenious manner." In this year, 1905, the Government threw open the timber lands of the whole Province. It invited private individuals to join it in a partnership in each and every square mile of the crown forests. There was no sale, no auction, even no lease. The incoming partners were asked to sink no capital. The investor was merely asked to register a formal application to become a partner with the Government in the timber on such-and-such a square mile of the Province—and the partnership was his!

Stated in these attractive terms, the procedure sounds like some wild story of a commercial fairyland, where timber lands and wealth are given for the asking; but the truth is that a number of sound and useful "strings" were attached to these British Columbian gifts—and that, in fact, the gift idea was entirely absent from the mind of the Provincial Government. The Government freely admitted in-

vestors to partnership in crown timber, it is true, but it did so on its own terms absolutely, and it frankly admitted that only the future rise in stumpage and lumber values would enable it to say what these terms should be.

In fact, the partnership arrangement could have been stated thus:

"Here," might have said the Government, "are immense forests that will be put to no use for many years to come. They produce no revenue; they are in constant danger of destruction by fire; and it is beyond our power, financially, to give them any efficient protection. Moreover, the Province needs revenue now, in its growing time and youth; therefore, we will place these forests in private management under our supreme control, and we shall frame regulations from time to time, in order to make sure that the timber is properly looked after. The revenue needed by the Province and that needed for the conservation of the forests we shall obtain by requiring investors to pay for their privileges—so much a year for their partnership rights and so much as royalty on any timber they may cut. As the 'market' or 'prospective' or 'speculative'—call it what you will—value of stumpage rises we will take our fair share of the 'unearned increment' by requiring a larger annual payment to be made to us. As the profits of lumbering operations increase we will take our fair share of these by requiring a larger royalty. To begin with, we shall require the same royalty that we have been obtaining for the last 17 years, namely, 50 cents a thousand feet, and we shall require an annual payment of about one and three-fifths cents per thousand."

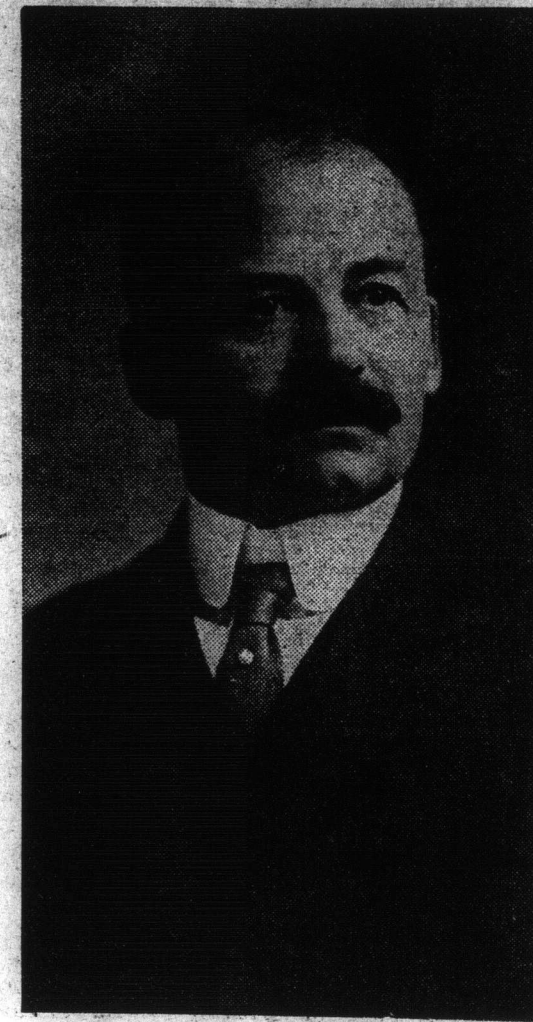
This, then, was the logic of the policy of 1905, and the result is a matter of common knowledge. Upon these extremely moderate and equitable terms, nine million acres of timberlands were taken up by investors within three years.

Now, it is evident that no ordinary situation had been created. Nine million acres of some of the choicest timber in the world represents a property of enormous magnitude, and the transfer of this from the government to a partnership, in which a very large number of private individuals were placed in active management, gave rise inevitably to a host of most complex problems.

For example, think for a moment of the difficulty of adjusting the claims of the government, the operator and the investor upon any point where they should happen to conflict. The government, in fact, had practically gone into the timber business on a vast scale, and it was faced by the triple duty of securing to the people of the province fair treatment for their forests and fair prices for the timber sold; of giving equitable treatment to the investor in crown stumpage; and of building up by wise assistance the active operations of the lumbering industry. Since 1905 this duty had become (as Stevenson has said of honesty in modern life) "as difficult as any art."

In these remarkable circumstances the government felt that the most careful and deliberate study of the situation was imperative. It placed a Reserve upon all the remaining timber lands of the Crown (that are variously estimated at one-quarter or one-third of the timber areas under provincial control, in the neighborhood, let us say, of four million acres) and it proceeded to appoint a Royal Commission of enquiry, composed of Mr. Fulton (who then held the portfolio of Lands), Mr. Good-

From the beginning, our work as Commissioners fell naturally into two divisions—study of forest conditions in the province; study of forest conditions elsewhere—abroad, and we endeavored by contrasting the impressions we obtained from these two sources to arrive at a sound judgment concerning the improvements we should recommend in the forest policy and administration of British Columbia. We found at once that in practical matters of forestry there was much for the



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province to learn. The older parts of Canada and many of the States of the Union, had passed through the crude and early stage of forest exploitation at which we ourselves had just arrived; ideas and methods now to us had been well tried and proven by other governments. Ontario, Quebec, the U. S. Forest Service, the voluntary Fire Associations of the western States—each of these could show us how to do something that we ought to do.

I should be afraid to venture an opinion concerning the number of books, pamphlets and reports on forest subjects that we received and digested. There was valuable material here and there; but on the whole we read the voluminous literature of the beginnings of forestry upon the continent of America with a feeling akin to disappointment. We were depressed by the smallness of the work that had been accomplished and by the greatness of what ought to have been done, by the absence of experiment and investigation; and by the meager amount of information concerning forest resources. There seemed to be so much academic discussion, so much good sentiment about conservation—and so little practical support given to aggressive work, so little ex-

penditure of hard cash. It was like the Scotchman's breakfast in the fishing story—a bottle and a half of the best alcohol with half a penny bun! We grew accustomed to State Boards of Forestry that were all-title-and-annual-report and no treasury.

The upshot of the matter was that we became convinced that conservation in British Columbia ought to be a very different and a very business-like affair. (That is what conservation means, at bottom—the application of ordinary business principles to natural resources.) It must be action and not mere talk, immediate action and expenditure of large sums of money. Hence our recommendation to the government that:

"Large appropriations must be made and a well-manned, specialized forest service brought into being, thoroughly equipped."

In this matter of conservation, gentlemen, the province occupies a position that, looking at the history and the sad experience of other forest countries may be described as unique. Fire has ravaged certain districts; man has wasted timber freely, but British Columbia can undertake the protection of the forests before and not after fire and waste have squandered the bulk of them.

We came to the broad conclusion that upon two conditions natural re-afforestation would take place in British Columbia.

"Firstly"—we said—"both the young growth and the old must be protected from fire; secondly, there must be exercised a firm control over the methods under which the present forest crop is being removed. In short, effective re-afforestation depends largely upon effective discouragement of waste." "And," we continued, "by protection from fire we do not mean the mere temporary employment here and there of men to fight conflagrations that have been allowed to spread. We have in mind the active prevention of fire by the systematic work of a well-knit organization such as that described in our report. This work would include, as a matter of urgency, the task of evolving for each locality a sound method of dealing with the reckless style of lumbering that leaves in every cut-over area a fire-trap of debris. That the young timber upon which our whole future as a lumber-producing country depends, should be left at the pleasure of any thoughtless workman, to grow up under the imminent menace of fire is so absurd commercially that an attempt at regulation is imperative."

A vexed question—this is of the disposal of debris; but one for experiment and not for discussion. The expenditure of a little public money on experiments will soon decide whether or not it will be commercially feasible in British Columbia as it has been in other forest regions, to put an end to the liberty of careless workmen "to leave debris in any manner that may suit their own convenience, without the least regard for the safety of the cut-over area or of the adjoining forests."

As for logging regulations, we felt that the time was opportune for the restriction of waste. The levying of royalty upon all waste should prove an effectual remedy.

Taking a comprehensive view of the whole subject, we felt that this great timber business of the Government of British Columbia should be placed upon the soundest financial footing. Hence our recommendation that its capital should be kept intact—that it should not be dissipated by treating it as current revenue. Royalties, we felt, were true forest

capital, and we urged most strongly that they should be returned to the source from which they were produced, in the form of protection for the growing crop. "No special circumstances," we continued, "that would justify departure from ordinary business principles have yet been proved to exist. General natural re-afforestation, though probable, is not an established fact in the province, and our uncertainty regarding it will not be removed until definite information has been obtained. We consider it essential that no surplus of royalty, capital should pass into general revenue." We recommended the establishment of a forest sinking fund.

The rest of our conclusions, gentlemen, you will find in our official report. In many a practical matter of forest protection as I have already said, our young province has much to learn from older communities, though it is learning fast. But in the matter of forest policy we have no doubts and no humility. We challenge the governments of the continent to produce a method of administering a tremendous forest estate that in breadth of statesmanship is comparable with the policy conceived and elaborated by the Honorable Richard McBride and his government. To have put a stop to alienation of the public forests, and yet, without alienation to have raised the annual forest revenue to two and a half million dollars is an extraordinary achievement. Further than this, so well-thought-out has been this provincial policy, that without the least danger to the public interest the provincial government was able, only last year, to give increased stability to the lumbering industry by granting a perpetual title to those who had made investments in the nine million acres of licensed timber lands. It was possible, at one and the same stroke, to make this concession to the lumberman and to advance the public interest by it, for the direct effect of security of tenure was to enlist the hearty co-operation of investors in the conservation of the timber they owned jointly with the government.

The provincial policy, is based upon masterly principles:

1. No alienation of the people's forests.
2. Absolute reservation of a fair share of the 'unearned increment' on Crown timber.
3. Partnership between the government and the lumbermen in the profits of the lumbering industry.
4. The judicious holding in reserve of forest areas that can be thrown into the market should any stumpage-holding monopoly threaten the province.

Let me ask whether you think well of a government that in three short years has changed its annual expenditure in the war against forest fires from sixteen thousand to one hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars? Is there not a touch of the magnificent in this swift recognition of a duty?

And now, let me enlist your interest in the progress of conservation in the part of Canada from which I come. The protection and the wise control of the cutting of the two hundred and forty billion feet of timber in British Columbian forests is of vital importance to the entire west—for this timber builds the prairie farms. Nay, further, the conservation of half the merchantable timber of Canada is a matter that affects all of you.

Canada will not become the great wheat-producing country that we hope to see here, the growth of the farming population of millions in the vast region of the timberless prairie will be hampered and discouraged unless lumber is obtainable freely and cheaply for the building of the homes. Over-cutting in the United States will at no distant date exhaust that source of cheap supply; the east of Canada will need its lumber for itself. The proximity of coal was the vital factor that built up the iron industry, that backbone of Great Britain's commercial supremacy. The proximity of timber—British Columbia's timber—will be the vital factor that shall enable the granary of Canada to produce its wheat. The cheap lumber that will build the farms will be the British Columbian.

This makes our provincial forest policy one of the national questions of Canada.

A LESSON IN BANKING

The leading negroes of a Georgia town started a bank and invited persons of their race to become customers. One day a darkey, with shoes run down at the heels, a gallus over one shoulder and a cotton shirt, showed up at the bank.

"See here," he said, "I want mah ten dollars."

"Who is yuh?" asked the cashier.

"Mah name's Jim Johnson, an' I wants daten dollars."

"Yuh ain't got no money in dis here bank," said the cashier, after looking over the books.

"Yes, I has," insisted the visitor. "I put ten dollars in here six months er go."

"Why, man, yuh shure is foolish. De intrist done et dat up long er go."—Chicago Daily Sketch.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME

"It's three months since I saw you last," The one who met her plainly states. Says she: "Can that be possible? It's awful how time aviates."

—Harper's Weekly.

Interesting Topics of the Hour

An ingenious gentleman has invented a machine for measuring the mind. When you have to make an unpleasant announcement it is always best to do it briefly and bluntly. Why he did this thing is not explained. It may have been general misanthropy or something more individual. We are all of us aware of some dear friends whose mental capacity we should like to have tested accurately. But, except as an instrument for private vendettas, we cannot welcome this mind measure. Even for vendettas it seems to be a dubious weapon. How do you know it might not be used against you?

For the comfort of humanity we may hope that the mind-measuring machine will never be installed in each family circle. It is not good for us to know too much about ourselves. Consider one moment: if each of us knew exactly how silly she was we should all be mortally afraid to say anything or do anything. In fact, a precise knowledge of our own powers would be much the same as a universal stroke of paralysis. And if it would not be good to know too much about ourselves, it would be ruinous to know too much about other people. No doubt you suspect already that Carlyle was not wrong when he catalogued the inhabitants of these islands as "mostly fools." But if you had exact information as to how silly all your friends and relations were, your contempt for the human race would become so bitter that life would not be worth living.

Now, of course, you would like to hear something about the machine. Its test "depends upon the persistence of images and the power of the brain to distinguish the move-

ments of light caused by a revolving mirror.

The persistence of colour sensation is closely related to a quality of mind called perseverance, and a scale has been drawn up showing the kind of character likely to be associated with different degrees of persistence. At the centre comes the average amount, corresponding with the practical-commonsense of the average man; a degree below are those who are ordinarily called geniuses, with witty, brilliant, and suggestive minds; a degree above are persons fond of abstract thinking. Two degrees below, frivolous people come in, and two above are those with fixed ideas, founded apparently on sentiment rather than reason. Outside these categories the mind is unstable, and persons with exceedingly low perseverance are liable to acute mania, while those with excessively high perseverance usually suffer from melancholia."

The first criticism to be made by people who dislike new words is that they wish "perseveration" could have been called something else. However, let us make the best of it and hope that we know what it means. Then we may begin to be surprised. Are witty and brilliant and suggestive minds less likely than others to be endowed with any quality of mind associated with persistence and perseverance? No doubt it would be consoling to dull people to think so. But, unfortunately, wit is sometimes allied with as much earnest persistence as the dullest dog. However, if it consoles anyone to believe that brilliance is generally flighty, there is no harm in that.

Of the sane effects of mind-measuring upon society at large something has already been

said. There remains for consideration its more deplorable results in family life. How is Mrs. X. to preserve a proper feeling of respect for Mr. X. when she knows perfectly well that Mr. X.'s perseverance is small even to imperceptibility? How are the little X.'s to regard their father as they ought? And when they discover that their mother's perseverance is strong to the verge of melancholia, surely they will have for that good and respectable woman a fearful horror.

This most important point of the opinion that one member of the family has of another was raised the other day with reference to authors and critics. In this manner: "Authors did not mind adverse criticism, and for this reason—they knew it was not true. They simply refused to believe it. It was only their wives and brothers who believed it—the critics on the hearth. What they said in effect was this: 'How can my husband—the man who chose me to be his wife—be clever?' or 'What! My relative have brains? Impossible!' But is this true? We will not discuss the matter of authors, a strange, difficult, and even in this scribbling age a rare species. But does it represent the usual attitude of the family circle when one of its members is attacked from outside?"

THE BANISHED PAST.

"That is quite a remarkable Rembrandt," said the connoisseur. "Sir!" rejoined Mrs. Cumrox. "Yes, Rembrandt, you know, the great painter." "Oh, I thought you said 'remnant'!"

The

WILDFLOWLING

Among the many the wildfowler's excitement is the arrival of northern fowls and their welcome is too plainly to the commencement of which only the close to an end.

To a certain pro whom the writer is always will be, the islands can produce comparison seems to be said the really marks the com fowling season. His confined chiefly to teal, mallard and fowls, wigeon or two, and lag goose.

Towards the clo not the arrival of a the advance guard, but the main flocks tober or November. September the pink in their V-shaped on wards one may "honk-honk" repeat to day if we live w routes of migratio species we now find added. Golden-eye dive in search of fo and others of the d and pochard, may b They are scattered fr tams to the sea—a be gathered into larg flocks of winter.

Wigeon arrive in numbers of the hom by their kindred fr and the brent gees our coastline, and the swan the whooper, e in firth and loch. V of the jack, where arrive of all our w wavering wings.

On the coast the waders have rett grounds; flocks of pl and wheel in mid-air lew utter their thrill ing the other denize approach. For the guardian of the shore the watch-dog of th sport for all, and th gun echoes at interv waves.

The use of decoys when the fowl are cated, is often att mastering the call shore gunner may bag. A few live plo ten bring a large flo the same time the traveling overhead m gunner is in hiding t or in a cask sunk in the captive birds p proves an irresistible in the air at a flock latter are traveling curious effect of br the gun, and the s used with effect.

Curlew are more coy with success, bu be used with advan scribable "wailing" species when settlin deadly towards dusk.

There are a few wildfowling which with advantage. In for example, care s have these swimmi custom of such fow Live decoys are, in sary, except when p which it is required of their species. T decoys sold for the but somewhat expen cheaper, but more place to place.

Assuming that himself so as to co water where a cre shallows has reveal droppings of ducks, latter settle everyd diate neighborhood, course, an element use of decoys will a minimum. The ob ducks is generally t lows, where food is pecially on the side which the prevailing greatest quantity of By the light of the m tinguished on the w the fowler who me this fact must choos In stalking divin