

Conservation of Natural Resources

Canadian user of petroleum in any worse position than United States users of petroleum.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Howe: Had they followed the suggestion of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) and not exported anything they needed at home we certainly would not have had any petroleum. That is only one example. We have had periods of coal shortage when there was not enough coal to go around. The United States have always divided their supply of coal fairly with Canada. The Canadian user of coal has never been placed in any worse position than the United States user of coal. That is again the opposite to the suggestion of the United States looking after themselves first.

In the case of sugar, it was in short supply during the last war. The United Kingdom controlled all the empire sources of sugar, but the United Kingdom made sure that Canada got the sugar needed and that Canada fared just as well as her own people or the people in any other part of the empire. That was true of manganese. Our sole source of manganese at that time was South Africa, and there again the United Kingdom made sure that Canada had the manganese we needed. Tin we get partly from empire sources and partly from other sources. There again those responsible for the distribution of tin were not Canadians; nevertheless they made sure that Canada got her full share of tin when tin was in short supply.

Now we in turn have been trying to do our share in looking after the metal requirements of the free world. We had a very heavy responsibility in the matter of nickel. Before the second world war we supplied 90 per cent of all the nickel used in the world, and today I suppose we supply about 85 per cent. True, we have been depleting our resources of nickel. In the last war we had only one source of supply. Today we have many. Why? Because in an effort to keep up with the enlarged requirements—and we are mining more nickel than at any previous time in our history—we have opened up other sources of nickel. We are building a railroad into Lynn Lake where there is a very important deposit. I am told there are other discoveries in that vicinity which promise to make northern Manitoba as large a source of nickel as Sudbury. Plans are under way to open up a nickel deposit in British Columbia. We all know that Falconbridge, also operating in the Sudbury area, is bringing in three new properties at the present time. Are we really depleting our

nickel resources? True, we are mining great quantities of nickel; but the fact that we are using great quantities of nickel has stimulated exploration and from exploration has come development with the result that Canada is far richer in known deposits of nickel today than it was when the great demand of the second world war came upon that industry.

The same is true of other metals. Copper, in this country, has been a by-product metal. It has always been mined as a by-product of nickel or as a by-product of gold. There again the present great demand for copper has turned our prospectors to exploration for new deposits of copper. The result is that we have located a tremendous body of lower grade copper ore in the Gaspé peninsula. An enormous development of copper, for copper alone, is to be undertaken in that area. We also know of other deposits of copper which can be brought in as demand requires.

The production of zinc has been stepped up by about 35 per cent since the preparedness program began, and we know now it can be stepped up to almost any known requirement. Again, exploration has stepped ahead as demand has been stepped up.

I might mention the rarer metals as well. For example, in the last war there was a strong requirement for tungsten. There was a known deposit of tungsten in the country and, as private enterprise was not prepared to develop it, the government stepped in and opened the Emerald tungsten project. A mill was set up there and, in the course of several months, we provided sufficient tungsten to turn a shortage situation into a situation of oversupply. When the war ended the government thought it had a high cost tungsten deposit on hand and as there was also lead and zinc on the property which might be developed it seemed good business to sell the property to private enterprise. When the Korean situation came along the government bought back that property at exactly what it had sold it for. Further exploration has indicated that the tungsten deposit being worked during the last war was underlain by a much richer deposit, and today the government has a mine of rich tungsten ore that will stand up and be competitive in peacetime as well as in wartime. We are able to supply friendly nations with tungsten, and that at this time is a very great contribution indeed. I suggest in mining that tungsten we are not depleting the resources or Canada. When the present supply is used up we know that we have several other deposits of tungsten, and we are sure we can