

Columbia in exactly the same way that the forests of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were mined years ago; mining our forests in the same way the wheat fields of the prairies were mined thirty or forty years ago. Wood products are a crop reaped from lands that are not suitable for other agricultural purposes. In order to ensure a continuous yield, agricultural lands must be fertilized. In the same way our forest lands must be protected. If there is to be a sustained yield that protection must be in the form of dollars and cents expended to prevent unnecessary wastage of the young crop by fire, disease and insect pests, and also for purposes of reforestation. I do suggest in all seriousness that under the present policy the dominion government is killing by starvation the goose which lays this golden egg.

The important thing to the citizens of British Columbia is the perpetuation of the forest industries, for the whole provincial economy is based on these industries to such an extent that the population of the province could not be supported without them. The industries recognize the value of the forests from the point of view of water and soil conservation, fishing and hunting, and the tourist trade; but the greatest value to the public lies in the cropping of the forests and the conversion of wood into marketable products. Therefore the maintenance of the forest crop at maximum sustained capacity and the development of wood-using industries, hold the key to the future of British Columbia.

The operators have subscribed to a policy of joint action by the provincial government, the industries themselves and the public, of measures to assure continuous crops on all forest lands, and to attain this objective by practical measures which will maintain maximum production and employment during the period of transition to a sustained forest economy. The attainment of this objective means for the industry a further increase in present operating costs; for the crown, increased expenditures out of forest revenues, to build up the forest capital; and for the public, the enjoyment of somewhat less net revenue than previously derived from its forest capital. But this should not be regarded as a solely provincial matter. As I have already pointed out, the dominion government derives more money from the forest industries of British Columbia than does the provincial government. The whole national economy of this country would be affected by any serious dislocation of this industry. But this federal government is doing practically nothing to ensure that the production of wood products can be assured in the years to come. It is

[Mr. Pearkes.]

not unreasonable to say that heretofore the federal government has not assumed its fair share of its responsibilities in this respect.

The first and most important step in a programme such as has been suggested is to keep fire out of the woods. The great economic loss in connection with our forests in the past has been and still is the destruction of young growth by repeated fires. Unless this loss can be stopped, there is grave danger that proper regeneration will be found economically impossible. The final result will be that one day there will be no crop to harvest.

Much criticism has been given by uninformed persons and has been directed against the methods used in the logging operations of to-day. But the evidence of expert foresters indicates that the practice of clear-cutting is more conducive to proper regeneration than any of the methods which are usually referred to as those of selective logging. Danger from erosion has been shown to be practically non-existent if the fire can be kept out of cut-over land. Evidence has shown that the leaving of seed trees is neither efficient nor economical. The practice known as block-logging to those operators who have sufficient timber and sufficient capital so to log, has much merit. But the only certain way to ensure regeneration of our forests is to keep the fires out of the young growth. If fire can be kept from destroying seeds and young growth the regeneration of land now cut over or to be cut over in the future presents no great problem. In a period of ten years—and I am taking the period 1934 to 1943, because those figures were available—fires have destroyed from 350,000 to 400,000 acres of valuable young forest growth in the coast district of British Columbia. We have an annual average net loss of over 16 million board feet. These fires, contrary to popular opinion, usually occur years after the loggers have actually left that particular area. It is not the loggers who are responsible for the majority of fires which occur.

The chief forester of British Columbia has estimated that the cost of forest protection should be \$1,500,000 annually for the whole province. That may presumably be to protect the 126 million acres estimated by him to be worthy of protection. Those 126 million acres which the forester considers worthy of protection include hundreds of thousands of acres of productive forest land on Indian reserves, which are administered directly by this federal government. In round figures, as nearly as I can ascertain, 118 million acres