

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

feels that great progress was made in this regard even though success was not achieved, and that another conference at the United Nations will be held before long which will be able to build on the foundations established at Geneva and perhaps bring some success out of what was failure at this conference.

I hope that will be the case, but I would point out that the leader of the Canadian delegation when the minister was not there, namely our high commissioner in London, Mr. Drew, had this to say in a statement prepared for delivery in the committee of the conference on March 31, 1958. I am quoting from the records of the conference, and I may say this was before the final vote was taken:

If there should be no agreement, another conference would be very difficult to arrange. It has taken 28 years to bring this one together since the collapse of The Hague conference in 1930.

I was present at that collapse. It was the first international conference I had ever attended and I was much impressed by its collapse. Mr. Drew went on to say:

Remembering all the many claims which have already been made, and to which new claims are being added day by day, it needs no great stretch of the imagination to realize how soon we would find ourselves in a state of hopeless confusion. If for no other reason and there are many other excellent reasons we should do everything within our power to agree upon a workable code which will establish a regime of settled law.

We were not able to do that at Geneva. I hope the minister is right, notwithstanding these rather pessimistic observations of the high commissioner, when he says we can look forward before long to another conference at the United Nations which will probably bring this matter to a successful conclusion.

There is only one other matter I wish to bring to the attention of the minister. It arises out of a statement he made not very long ago—I think it was on August 2—and I am quoting from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*. It is a statement which he is reported to have made at Yorktown, Saskatchewan. This report reads as follows:

Hon. Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, said here he hopes to hold a conservation conference this fall. The minister made the remark unintentionally while addressing the fifth institute of the Saskatchewan council of public affairs, on the topic, "Our natural resources; who should own and control them".

According to the report he went on to say that he had not meant to make that announcement at this meeting, that it sort of slipped out but that this conference on conservation would be held. That is a very important statement. That conference, if and when it

[Mr. Pearson.]

is held, will be an extremely important conference dealing with a matter of vital significance to the development of Canada, namely the conservation of our natural resources. I think the committee would like to hear from the minister on the plans he has in that regard.

As we go on with our study of these estimates in detail, Mr. Chairman, there may be some individual questions that I shall wish to raise. Meanwhile I would appreciate it if the minister, when he comes to speak, would say something on the three or four questions I have ventured to mention now.

**Mr. Payne:** I should like briefly to congratulate the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources on taking a new and open-minded approach to the problems that face his department. I think a very significant fact has missed the eye of the Leader of the Opposition, namely that in the past 23 years the committee on mines, forests and waters has not been convened and has not had an opportunity to consider and discuss the operations, plans and estimates of the department now before the house.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** That was the fault of the opposition.

**Mr. Payne:** I would further point out that in the course of this committee's discussions, for the first time in a great many years those from the west coast—and, I am sure, from other parts of Canada—have had the privilege of bringing before the committee some of the specific, difficult and also different problems that face that area. We from the west owe a great debt of gratitude to the minister for the opportunity of bringing before the committee a few matters which affect his estimates at this time. I refer to the logging and lumbering industry in British Columbia. I should like to point out that this industry produces 17.1 per cent of Canada's total manufactured products. Speaking for those who come from the west coast, I may say that represents 54.1 per cent of all the earning power in the province from which we come.

After 23 years we feel that it has been a privilege to come before the committee on mines, forests and waters and bring to its attention some of the problems that face the lumbering industry in our part of the world. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition views any vision with a somewhat myopic eye, especially when one considers the fact that the opportunity to present such problems had been, under the former administration, so long denied to industries of such great strength and such great value to the economic welfare of this country.

I would also like to point out that the hon. member for Port Arthur, when he was