

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

PART I.—BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CONSERVATION POLICY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

COMMITTEE ROOM No. 101,

THURSDAY, March 26, 1914.

The Select Standing Committee on Forests, Waterways and Water-powers met here at 10 o'clock, the Chairman, Mr. Blain, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN: I rejoice with the committee that we have with us this morning so distinguished a person as Sir Richard McBride to speak to us. I must offer him an apology for the very short notice he was given. We simply took advantage of a hurried visit he is paying to the Capital. I will say nothing more except to welcome Sir Richard McBride to the Capital, and to express our appreciation of his presence and his willingness to help us in this way.

SIR RICHARD MCBRIDE: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I had not the slightest idea when I arrived in Ottawa the other day that an opportunity would be afforded me of saying something to this very important committee of the House before I return to the West. You can understand, then, that I was greatly delighted to hear through one of your colleagues that you would be so considerate as to listen to some words of mine this morning, with the view, possibly, of making some use in your work here of the story that I might relate to you as to our work of conservation in the far western province.

As a fellow-Canadian, I cannot conceive of anything in the way of a citizen's duty that would be of more importance to the State than some measure of association with the task of advancing the conservation of the natural resources of the Dominion. As far as we have been able to understand the economic situation on the continent of North America, perhaps our neighbours south of the line have realized more quickly than we have done how essential it is for the general national well-being that no effort should be spared by the State to undertake and carry to completion so important a national work. The situation to the south of us in regard to conservation produced several political crises, because, in the opinion of many public men, the United States as a whole had not taken that keen interest in the subject that obtaining conditions justified, and definite action was stimulated by those periodical agitations. Hence, although the material interests of the United States went much further in the direction of waste than in Canada, public opinion and effort there in the direction of conservation was in advance of this country. We are now well on the high road with our neighbours. Watching closely the experience of older countries, as well as of our next-door neighbour, in the province of British Columbia, with a large and practically illimitable quantity of undeveloped natural resources to deal with, we have tried to take advantage of every experience that recent movements would provide; and I am in the fortunate position to-day of being able to tell you, very briefly, some of the things that we have attempted to do, and possibly successfully accomplished. I have not come here, as I should have done had I been notified