

easy matter. "We found the timber industry considerably depressed from various causes. One principal source of complaint was voiced by the holders of licences, who said that their licences could not be used in the nature of security with the banks and similar financial institutions. This was on the very simple technical ground that, while it has always been the custom to renew the licences from year to year, the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works was nevertheless under no legal obligation to grant such renewal. Now, under the present Act, any licence holders so desiring can have their licences renewable for 16 successive years, but, in order to get this renewal, instead of paying a royalty of 50 cents per thousand, they must pay a royalty of 60 cents per thousand. What this means to the revenue of the Province is that, taking the average cut per acre east of the Cascade Range at 8,000 feet, an increase of 10 cents per thousand will amount to over \$50 per acre on royalties; while west of the Cascades, where the cut per acre may be estimated at 15,000 feet, the increase in royalties will mean about \$96 per acre.

Moreover," continued Mr. McBride, "the dual system of holding timber lands by leases and licences is abolished, and now all timber lands hereafter acquired will be held on licences renewable for 21 successive years, but subject to such royalties as may from time to time be imposed. The licence fee east of the Cascades is \$115 per year for each licence; west of the Cascades it is \$140 per year. The area included in one licence must not be greater than one square mile. A

#### VERY IMPORTANT PROVISION

and one which I think should be given the widest publicity, is that no timber can be cut from lands covered by licences made renewable under this amendment, or under licences hereafter granted, until the land is surveyed; and the Chief Commissioner can require land included in a licence to be surveyed at any time."

When questioned regarding statements that have appeared to the effect that the Land Act as amended, places the operative millmen at the mercy of the speculative holder, who can withhold the raw material from the millmen until the latter chooses to pay his price, the Premier replied that nothing could be

#### WIDER OF THE TRUTH

"Why," said the Hon. Mr. McBride, "the speculator's chance under the present amended Act is far less than it was before. Under the old system there was practically no limit to the amount of timber land which could be taken up, cases being known of as much as 75,000 acres being applied for. One of the principal beneficial results we claim to obtain by the present amended Act is that its effect will be to get better values for the Province out of our timber areas, by disposing of

them in small parcels, smaller in size to the timber berths of Ontario and New Brunswick. No one can now take up more than 640 acres on a licence. Undoubtedly the timber values of the Province will, as a consequence, be more closely looked into in the future, and the competition much keener.

"I make the statement plainly," continued Mr. McBride, "that if the acquisition of our Crown timber lands were to continue in the next five years, in the same fashion that leases have been taken up in the past five years, we should have practically no timber lands anywhere near our transportation routes. The enormous areas I have just spoken of have been taken up all along our waterways and inlets, and there would soon be nothing left.

As to the charge, therefore, that the amendment to the Act was framed in the interests of timber speculators, I think I have made it pretty plain that such an allegation is

#### ABSOLUTELY FOUNDATIONLESS.

As an instance of what a section even of the Opposition thought of the amendment, I may point out that both Mr. T. W. Paterson and Mr. Wells had many good things to say about the Act on the floor of the House, and the former gentleman in particular took pains to impress upon the House that this legislation was a move in the right direction. As Mr. Paterson is one of the most prominent timber men on the Coast, it may be presumed that he knew what he was talking about. It would almost be fair, perhaps, to remark here that it is a pity Mr. J. A. Macdonald and his friends should, in order to make a little political capital, go out of their way to contradict statements which have been made in good faith by their colleague, Mr. Paterson."

The

#### SCHOOL ACT,

which was amended at the last session of the Legislature, was then mentioned, and in reply to a question as to the changes made, Hon. Mr. McBride said that, as stated in the columns of this paper, it had been acknowledged for a number of years past that sooner or later something must be done to relieve the tremendous and ever-increasing burden that is being borne in this connection by the Provincial Treasury. "The establishment of new school districts from year to year, the cost of new buildings and maintenance, as well as teachers' salaries, have been absorbing a very large proportion of the revenue of the country; and, were the present rate of increase to continue, in a very short while it would be far beyond the capacity of the Province to sustain," said the Premier. "It is well-known that, for some years past, people living in incorporated cities have had to subscribe very largely towards the maintenance of their schools; and, in the recent legislation dealing with the matter, the Government has simply asked the people living outside the cities to bear their fair share of the increased