

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

matter of the conservation conference. This was raised by the hon. member for Portage-Neepawa and the Leader of the Opposition and I believe one other hon. member. The conservation conference is not a new thing; it was announced formally for the first time by the Prime Minister in Winnipeg on February 12. I have mentioned it several times since. I think I dealt at some length in the committee with the purpose of this conservation conference. I would recommend that any interested member go through that section of the report which deals with that, because it would save me a great deal of time at this moment.

The conservation conference that I mentioned at Yorkton was a slip of the tongue. I was discussing the ownership of resources in Canada, and I mentioned the fact we were going to hold a conservation conference. I laid down what I thought were the purposes of that conference which were very close to what several members said here today. Regardless of how much we discuss the necessity for holding a conservation conference, the fact remains we have a tremendous amount of material in the department which has never been correlated, where the responsibilities of the federal government have never been clearly defined, where the responsibilities of the provinces have not been clearly defined, nor have the responsibilities of municipal and local conservation authorities, the research groups and so on. What I was hinting at in Yorkton was that I could not possibly arrange, within the physical limits of our department, of our time and strength, the holding of this conference this year. What I was thinking of doing, and did do some weeks ago within the department as a matter of fact, was to outline a letter to the various provincial governments asking the premiers if they would consider appointing one of their ministers responsible for the resources of their area to meet with me at some mutually convenient time and place, so that we could accelerate the movement towards holding this national conservation conference. This was the cause of my slip at Yorkton, and I must confess to the house I am sorry I made it. It came out inadvertently. I apologized at that time, in essence, to the group for having said it there.

I should like to speak at some length on this question of conservation, but I do not believe this is the proper time. The hon. member for Port Arthur, who has made a considerable study of all aspects of forestry, outlined the arguments of Mr. MacMillan on a monetary basis. If a certain industry produces so much, then the government should spend a pro rata amount on that industry. I do not think it is necessary for

me to discuss this point of view at great length today because after due consideration the fallacy of the argument, if carried to the nth degree, becomes apparent.

I should like to discuss this question of research which was raised by the hon. member for Port Arthur. There is no person who has been a stronger advocate over the years for research in all lines of forestry than I have been. I should like to tell the committee something which hon. members must have guessed and that is that when I came into the department this was one of the matters that was discussed. The department has produced for me a program of research running over four years, both in basic research and in forest products research. This program, which is now before me, will be examined from a policy point of view. I hope that I can accept what has been proposed in that program. I do know that it calls for more personnel because that has been the basic weakness of the work we have been trying to do.

It is all very fine to criticize the minister who holds this position for not having work done in research, but the research is limited by the number of topnotch people we can put on the task. The people in the department know full well what has to be done. We who sit in this house have to make up our minds that if we want more research we have to be prepared to vote more money for it, and that means supporting this type of thing in the house, not trying to follow a schizophrenic attitude of condemning us for spending too much and then saying we do not do enough work. I know other departments have this problem, but I have it particularly because in my department there is so much to be done it seems there is not enough manpower or money available to do all the jobs at once. I should like to assure the house that in this matter of research in forestry, the attitude of the department and the minister is, full speed ahead.

There were so many things mentioned by the hon. member for Port Arthur, with many of which I thoroughly agree, that if I took the time to discuss each of them we would not be finished for some time. He did raise the question of fiscal policy in relation to forest policy. I think that is the crux of this matter. It bears out what I just said a moment ago. If we are going to advocate policies of research, whether it is in agriculture or in forestry or in any other necessary line, we must be prepared to put that into relationship with the other programs of government and eventually we get back to the fiscal policies of the government. As a result I have asked,—this comes largely as a result