

*Conservation of Natural Resources*

For many years we have been inclined to think of resources in this country as being inexhaustible; and for that very reason it took us a great many years to believe that there was any necessity in this country to introduce plans for the conservation of any of those great resources. Not long ago in the house a statement was made to the effect that we need not be greatly concerned about the raw materials that we were shipping out in large quantities.

I quote at this time the words used on June 3 by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), because it seems to me that they do draw our attention to a point of view which should be given careful consideration by the house. These are his words as they are reported at page 2855 of *Hansard*:

Fortunately we have an abundance of raw materials. I do not know of any material produced in this country that is in poorer supply today than when we first began export of the commodity. We all know that instead of a lower production of metals we have a higher production of metals. We all know that we have been able, by exploring and prospecting this rich country of ours, to become a very large scale exporter of iron ore which we formerly imported in almost our total requirements. We know, as we export that iron ore, that we are not depleting this country for future generations, because we have the commodity in abundance.

And shortly before that, in the same speech, the minister said:

Canada is immensely fortunate in that it is rich in those commodities the world needs and which the world is able to pay for, no matter what market conditions prevail in the have-not countries of the world.

Those words indicate that there is not yet in the minds of the government the belief that we need to conserve our resources in the face of the most unusual demands that we have been met with. In effect we are told that no matter what the demands by other countries may be, Canadians need not worry about expanding the export of raw materials because of their almost limitless quantity here in Canada.

It is true that our resources are enormous. Every hon. member of this house is aware of the extent to which exploration has expanded the knowledge of our available resources within these past few years. Nevertheless I suggest that it is wise for us at the same time to realize why it is that so many people from other countries have been pushing forward exploration and development of materials in this country. There is always the urge on the part of venture capital to seek new opportunities. That desire to find new places for investment undoubtedly would have produced extensive activities along that line in any event. However, there are other reasons why a great deal of this activity is being pressed forward. One of the main

[Mr. Drew.]

reasons for activity in some particular lines of raw materials is that the use of raw materials in other countries in recent years has exhausted or come within a measurable distance of exhausting their own supply. For that reason new and increasing demands are being imposed upon Canada.

We can quite properly say that no nation with a population similar to ours possesses even comparable resources. Even without the qualification as to population it may be said that few countries with any population have as great resources as we possess. Probably the only countries in the world that have resources available for new development to the extent that we have here are Russia, the United States and Brazil. Even in the United States it may now be doubtful if they have resources available for new development on the scale that we have in Canada.

But there is a tremendous difference. Russia with her great resources has 200 million people and with a number of satellite nations dependent upon her for resources. The United States has approximately 160 million people. Brazil with great and still relatively undeveloped resources has more than 50 million people as compared with the 14 million living in Canada.

There is one very important reason why our position is different from that of any other country. We live next door to a nation of 160 million people who have attained the highest level of industrial production ever attained by any nation in the history of the world. They have attained a level of industrial production which has built up a very high level of prosperity that they will naturally seek to maintain in every way they can. It is in our interests as well as their own that they do maintain the standard of living they have been able to build up.

Our proximity to the United States places our resources in a very different position from those of Russia, Brazil and other countries with still undeveloped resources such as ours. For all practical purposes Russia is a self-contained unit except to the extent that under very rigid direction they may channel the movement of resources and trade within the total area of the Soviet empire.

Brazil is far from the great industrial centres of the northern hemisphere. Brazil is the natural base of supplies for a great many types of production for South America as a whole. Brazil has the markets of South America at her doors. Brazil has no other nation next door which is likely to feel the need for drawing supplies of raw materials