

financially, to give them any efficient protection. Moreover, the province needs revenue now, in its growing time and youth. Therefore, we will place these forests in private management but under our supreme control, and we shall frame regulations from time to time, in order to make sure that the timber is properly looked after. The revenue needed by the province and that needed for the conservation of the forest we shall obtain by requiring investors to pay for their privileges—so much a year for their partnership rights and so much as royalty on any timber they may cut. As the 'market' or 'prospective' or 'speculative'—call it what you will—value of stumpage rises we will take our fair share of the 'unearned increment' by requiring a larger annual payment to be made to us. As the profits of lumbering operations increase we will take our fair share of these by requiring a larger royalty. To begin with, we shall require the same royalty that we have been obtaining for the last seventeen years, namely, fifty cents a thousand feet, and we shall require an annual payment of about 1 3/5 cents per thousand."

This, then, was the logic of the policy of 1905, and the result is a matter of common knowledge. Upon these extremely moderate and equitable terms nine million acres of timber land were taken up by investors within three years. Now it is evident that no ordinary situation had been created. Nine million acres of some of the choicest timber in the world represents a property of enormous magnitude, and the transfer of this from the government to a partnership, in which a very large number of private individuals were placed in active management, gave rise inevitably to a host of most complex problems. For example, think for a moment of the difficulty of adjusting the claims of the government, the operator and the investor upon any point where they should happen to conflict. The government, in fact, had practically gone into the timber business on a vast scale and it was faced by the triple duty of securing to the people of the province fair treatment for their forests and fair prices for the timber sold; of giving equitable treatment to the investor in Crown stumpage; and of building up by wise assistance the active operations of the lumbering industry. Since 1905 this duty had become (as Stevenson has said of honesty in modern life) "as difficult as any art."

In these remarkable circumstances the government felt that the most careful and deliberate study of the situation was imperative. It placed a reserve upon all the remaining timberlands of the Crown (that are variously estimated at one-quarter or one-third of the timber areas under provincial control, in the neighborhood, let us say, of four million acres) and it proceeded to appoint a Royal Commission of enquiry, composed of Mr. Fulton who then held the portfolio of Crown lands, Mr. A. S. Goodeve and myself.

Part 2—From the beginning, our work as Commissioners fell naturally into two divisions—study of forest conditions in the province; study of forest conditions elsewhere—and we endeavored by contrasting impressions we obtained from these two sources to arrive at a sound judgment concerning the improvements we should recommend in the forest policy and administration of British Columbia. We found at once that in practical matters of forestry there was much for the province to learn. The older parts of Canada and many of the states of the United States had passed through the crude and early stage of forest exploitation at which we ourselves had just arrived; ideas and methods new to us had been well tried and proven by other governments. Ontario, Quebec, the United States Forest Service, the voluntary fire associations of the western states—each of these could show us how to do something that we ought to do.

I should be afraid to venture an opinion concerning the number of books, pamphlets and reports on forest subjects that we received and digested. There was valuable material here and there. But on the whole we read the voluminous literature of the beginnings of forestry upon the continent of America with a feeling akin to disappointment. We were depressed by the smallness of the work that had been accomplished and by the greatness of what ought to have been done; by the absence of experiment and investigation; and by the meagre amount of information concerning forest resources. There seemed to be so much academic discussion, so much good sentiment about conservation—and so little practical support given to aggressive work, so little expenditure of hard cash. It was like the Scotchman's breakfast in the fishing story—a bottle and a half of the best alcohol with a halfpenny bun. We grew accustomed to state boards of forestry that were all-title-and-annual-report, and no treasury.

The upshot of the matter was that we became convinced that conservation in British Columbia ought to be very different and a very business-like affair. That is what conservation means, at bottom—the application of ordinary business principles to natural resources. It must be action and not mere talk; immediate action and expenditure of large sums of money. Hence our recommendation to the government that—"Large appropriations must be made, a well-manned specialized forest service brought into being, thoroughly equipped."

Our province occupies a position that, looking at the history and the sad experience of forest countries, can be described as unique. Fire has ravaged certain districts; man has wasted freely; but British Columbia is in the extraordinary position of being able to undertake the conservation of the public forests before and not after fire and waste have squandered the bulk of them. We came to the broad conclusion that upon two conditions natural re-afforestation would take place in British Columbia.

"Firstly," we said, "both the young growth and the old must be protected from fire; secondly, there must be exercised a firm control over the methods under which the present forest crop is being removed. In short, effective re-afforestation depends largely upon effective discouragement of waste." "And," we continued, "by protection from fire we do not mean the mere temporary employment here and there of men to fight conflagrations that have been allowed to spread. We have in mind the active prevention of fire by the systematic work of a well-knit organization such as that described in our Report. This work would include, as a matter of urgency, the task of evolving for each locality a sound method of dealing with the reckless style of lumbering that leaves in every cut-over area a fire-trap of debris. That the young timber upon which our whole future as a lumber-producing country depends should be left, at the pleasure of any thoughtless workman, to grow up under the imminent menace of fire is so absurd commercially that an attempt at regulation is imperative."

A vexed question—this one of the disposal of debris; but one for experiment and not for discussion. The expenditure of a little public money on experiments will soon decide whether or no it will be commercially feasible in British Columbia as it has been in other forest regions to put an end to the liberty of careless workmen "to leave debris in any manner that may suit their own convenience, without the least regard for the safety of the cut-over area of the adjoining forests."

As for logging regulations we felt that the time was opportune for the restriction of waste. The levying of royalty upon all waste should prove an effectual remedy.