

PART II---FORESTRY WORK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

COMMITTEE ROOM No. 101,

WEDNESDAY, April 8, 1914.

The Select Standing Committee on Forests, Waterways and Water-powers met here at 10.30 a.m., the Chairman, Mr. Blain, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN: We have with us this morning Mr. H. R. MacMillan, Chief Forester of the Provincial Government of British Columbia. I have much pleasure in asking him to speak to us.

Mr. MACMILLAN: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the committee, I can assure you I am pleased to have this opportunity of saying a little about the work which is now being done in British Columbia for the conservation and business management of the forest resources of that province. I will start by giving a general idea of what we have discovered the forest resources of British Columbia to be. Although I was fairly well acquainted with timber conditions throughout Canada before going out there from the Dominion Government service two years ago, I have found that the forest possibilities of British Columbia have been very generally underestimated. There are south of the 65th parallel, roughly, about 250,000,000 acres of land, at least 80 per cent of this land is timbered; probably only 15 or 20 per cent of it is covered with timber which is now accessible and available to the present-day lumbermen. But there is no doubt but that there are at least some 350,000,000,000 feet of merchantable timber in the southern portion of the province, not including any territory more than 150 miles north of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway. This merchantable timber will, at the present rate of cutting, last probably 100 to 150 years, even allowing for quite a loss by forest fires. In addition to the timber land which grows merchantable timber, there are immense areas, included, of course, in the 250,000,000 acres I mentioned, which have been burned over during the last fifty or sixty years, and on which there is at present absolutely no merchantable timber, but it is all growing up with young timber, which, if protected from fire will, of course, be mature before there is any call upon it for industrial purposes.

In order to give you a general idea of the timber administration of the province, I shall call attention to the Forest Act, which I believe is the most complete piece of forest legislation now existing in Canada. It was drafted and introduced by the Hon. W. R. Ross, after he had made a study of forest conditions throughout Canada and the United States, and he took advantage of the experience of the older countries and included in the Forest Act practically everything that was necessary to give the proper constitution to a Forest Branch. The main features of the Forest Act are that it creates one branch of the Government service which is empowered and made responsible for the state of the forest resources of the province, the protection of the public timber from fire and trespass, the administration on most progressive principles of all timber lands which have already been alienated either by lease or license, and for the sale of such timber as now remains in the hands of the Crown. It is not generally known that in British Columbia probably a third of the mature timber still belongs to the Government.