

a few days ago that I was to appear before you, with a concise and carefully prepared statement of the policies of the Government of the province of British Columbia. For this reason I feel a considerable reluctance in addressing you. Your time is valuable, and you are here to listen to nothing but the well-considered and carefully-thought-over conclusions that experts would be prepared to submit on an occasion of this kind. But supplemented to what you must have heard from the gentlemen who represent the province of British Columbia in the national Parliament, with respect to the provincial work there, I am able to add a word or two. You will understand, gentlemen, if I do not mention everything, if I do not tell the story, completely, I have but the explanation to offer that time has not been given me in which to properly equip myself for the task.

In the very first place, we in the provincial parliament and government, in respect to natural resources, have tried honestly to consider that the trust that is given into our hands is in no sense a provincial and domestic affair; but that, really, truly, and substantially, it partakes of a great national Canadian asset, and that we must deal with it, always having in mind that it is not so much the possession of the province of British Columbia as it is the property of the whole Canadian people. We try to get away, as far as we can, from the local, from the provincial groove, and view the whole situation on the broad national plane. We regard ourselves as guardians of the provincial assets in trust for the whole people of Canada.

To take up for a moment or two the question of the forestry and timber resources of the province of British Columbia, let me say that some few years ago, when a great deal of the legislation and departmental regulations had been challenged, both in Western Canada and the United States, the Government of the day decided that before any attempt at drastic alteration of those laws and those rules was made, it might be considered wise to have the entire problem carefully investigated by an impartial commission, composed of expert men, persons with experience. We understood that there is always an outstanding objection to commissions, that possibly they may be an agency not for expedition but for delay. However, I am happy to state that the commissions with which the provincial government of British Columbia in the last eleven years has been associated—and there have been a number of them—have been productive of tangible results and of efficient legislation. This investigation of the timber commission to which I have referred, is no exception. We had three very able men on that commission. They journeyed over British Columbia and other provinces; they went to Washington and to Ottawa; they inquired abroad wherever they found conditions somewhat similar to those in British Columbia; and the net result of their investigation, collected on the spot, was submitted in a very comprehensive and elaborate report—one that has been said by experts to be almost the last word on timber conservation, especially on the Pacific sea-board. From that report we have been able to select material as a basis of, and to enact, legislation that I am sure the Canadian people would have no hesitation in endorsing, as wise in the interests of that great industry of Canada.

The policy that outlines our lumber legislation, and the regulations passed thereunder, through and through, is a policy that will make for conservation. We are trying to anticipate, as well as we can, what the years that we are approaching may mean to the people of this country; and having this in mind, it is the first study of the Government in respect to the lumbering business in British Columbia, that it shall be carried on with due regard for every economy; that there shall be little or no waste; that destruction from forest fires and other causes shall be eliminated as far as reasonable human agency will permit; and that, so far as it is consistent with the public interest, the Government officials and the lumber operators and loggers shall work along the line of co-operation so that advantage will be taken of every possible circumstance, first to conserve the forest wealth of British Columbia, and