

Supply—Northern Affairs

A few of the previous speakers in the debate have emphasized conservation. I do not want to be critical of their statements or what they are trying to put over. Generally it is agreeable, but I should like to point out to them that for 70 or 80 years we have had concern in Canada for conservation. We had very large conservation meetings even before the first world war. One of the largest was in Ottawa in 1911. There has been amongst enlightened people in Canada a continuous concern with conservation. I think one of the difficulties is that maybe we have too many conferences on conservation, too much general discussion on it, and not enough particularized work.

I want to bring to the minister's attention some statements by one who first began service with the dominion government, in the forestry service, away back in the first decade of this century. He is now one of Canada's better known millionaires. I refer to H. R. MacMillan, at one time a forestry officer with the Canadian government. Last year Mr. MacMillan, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the forestry profession in Canada, gave a speech at the University of Toronto. He made a number of very interesting points that are exceptionally apt for political consideration. He began with this theme with which I agree most heartily; that our tremendous concern with agriculture over the centuries since Canada got under way has made us lose sight of the fact that equally or even more important aspects of our economy and our industry have been neglected.

I believe, and I think this is implicit in what Mr. MacMillan said, that the agricultural interests have been able to apply better and more effective political pressure. Mr. MacMillan said:

Because our people are not well informed, they lack of sense of responsibility towards the present and the next forest crops. This must be the reason why the forest industry alone of the great national basic industries receives no subsidies (it seeks none), and is starved of the reinvestment necessary to maintain its productivity, although yearly the forest crop, as compared with annual production from either agriculture or mining, pays out the most wages, produces a greater total buying power, contributes vastly more to a favourable trade balance, supports the greatest export trade, and begets directly and indirectly the largest tax revenue. Our national government spends each year approximately—

I should like the minister to note this:

"On forest administration and research \$6,000,000.
On mining administration and research and subsidy, \$25,000,000.
On agricultural administration and research and subsidy, \$80,000,000."

Then he went on to say:

The national and provincial governments together receive a \$230 million annual revenue from agriculture, on which they spend \$150 million; from forests they receive \$275 million—

In other words, \$45 million more.

—of which they spend a combined total of \$45 million on administration and investment in the next crop. Such lack of foresight is equivalent to eating the seed corn.

This pattern of expenditure appears to depart by a wide margin from a policy of giving attention proportionate to the public interests concerned.

That is what I am hoping from this particular minister in the leadership that he is able to give, to try to redress this balance. No matter what your economic outlook, you realize that when you have an industry there has to be a fall-back for investment in order to keep the expansion going, and especially with a renewable resource in order to keep that resource coming in the years ahead. I suggest that these figures supplied by Mr. MacMillan indicates that this has not been done.

It has already been mentioned that there is a constitutional problem. The minister, from his evidence before the committee, is very much aware of this. He knows he cannot dictate to the provinces. But I suggest that almost every province in Canada is aware of the fact that the federal government takes in a tremendous amount from the forest industry in taxation and in comparison gives very little back. I think every province is anxious to get more back. The question is, what are you going to do?

Something else I should like to bring to the attention of the minister is some evidence that was given before the committee on land use in the other place. If you look at the annual report on forest research for the year ending March, 1957 you will find that one of the leading officers in silviculture research is Mr. W. G. E. Brown. Mr. W. G. E. Brown is no longer with the government. He has joined Spartan Air Services Limited in his capacity as survey specialist. He is considered by many people to be the top expert in this field in the country. I should just like to bring to the minister's attention what this specialist gave as his reason for getting out of the government service, because this is where I hope this minister is going to give leadership. Mr. Brown said:

I was associated on forest and soil surveys, and land use surveys from 1947 to 1951 with Mr. Hills of the Ontario department of lands and forests; from 1951 to 1956, I was chief soil and site officer for the federal forestry branch, covering all of Canada. In both cases I resigned chiefly because of the difficulties encountered between departments in the federal government, between dominion and provincial government agencies, and between industry—