

Conservation of Natural Resources

best kind of export trade we can have is the export trade that earns the most dollars for the volume of exports and at the same time creates the largest domestic employment so that the purchasing power of our industrial communities may advance the opportunities and prosperity of the whole of Canada.

We have lost our markets for many lines of agricultural production. We hope that they will return, but in the meantime the loss of those markets emphasizes the need for greater domestic markets. It emphasizes the need for increasing population in this country which can feed and support a population so far beyond that which we have today. The outstanding fact in this country at this time is that with virtually every raw material that is needed for expansion and production of all kinds, Canada lacks the most important natural resource of all, it lacks people. It lacks them in the number required to create internal markets which will cushion our economy against external disturbances. We particularly lack employment in sufficient quantity for those highly skilled occupations which attract the best brains from our universities and technical schools.

By the highest possible use of our materials for the development of industrial production in Canada we will make the most effective contribution we can to the maintenance of the human resources of this country which are so much more valuable than anything else we possess. I repeat that of all the resources, other than human, steel is the most important of the metal resources we possess. Of course it is not as important as food and the other basic requirements for our actual living, but for the purpose of creating employment it is the most important resource of all. With an adequate quantity of steel available, all other production can be expanded. With our resources of iron ore we have in Canada the brightest possibility of expansion we have ever had.

Because of the great abundance of all resources, we have taken those resources for granted. We have talked constantly about our limitless resources and have used that expression with some measure of justification. But in recent years as never before we have seen the depletion of resource capital throughout the world and we should now revise our ideas on this subject. There is no suggestion of criticism of this government alone. All Canadians, growing up surrounded by such an abundance of resources, have been inclined to dismiss from their minds the possibility that they could ever be used up. Nevertheless we know

now that a number of countries are bankrupt in resources at this time. That kind of bankruptcy has not only reduced the status of nations in the past and in recent years but has destroyed civilizations in the past. Great opportunities are before us. With demands coming from all parts of the world for raw materials or the things made from raw materials, the decision for us to make with respect to what goes out of Canada is whether it shall go out in the form of raw materials or do we do everything possible to see that it goes out in the form of finished products?

Distant though the possibility of exhaustion may seem, there is every reason for us to remember that we are not immune from the dangers which have done so much to injure other countries when adequate measures of conservation were not introduced. It is with that thought in mind, and in the hope that, no matter who may have been responsible at any time in the past, we will now think particularly of the future, that I am presenting an amendment which I hope will be regarded as a positive proposal rather than as criticism of this or any other government. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Peel (Mr. Graydon):

That all the words after "that" to the end of the question be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"whereas the natural resources of Canada are a heritage that should be developed and conserved for the purpose of providing the greatest possible measure of opportunity and security for all Canadians, this house is of the opinion that immediate consideration should be given to a national policy under a system of free enterprise and in close association and collaboration with the provinces that will:

- (a) promote and develop all the country's natural resources for the benefit of the people of every part of Canada;
- (b) protect and conserve our forest, mineral and other resources from undue depletion or exhaustion;
- (c) expand the use of our resources for industrial production in Canada and thus create greater opportunities for employment and advancement of Canadians."

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, with a great deal of what the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) said in the course of his speech I think all members of the house will find themselves in agreement. I think everyone here is conscious of the desirability of doing everything possible both by conserving our resources and by planning for their efficient use within Canada so that the citizens of Canada now and hereafter will enjoy the maximum benefits from the great heritage which is ours. Indeed, it is only within the last few years that many Canadians have begun to realize that this country is as richly endowed as it really is.