

*Supply—External Affairs*

to inspect that island. Fourth, the investigations made it quite clear that they were men of very great eminence in Germany. When I say "eminence" I mean eminent as militarists, as naval experts rather than as foresters, only one of them, I believe, could be described as a man who had any really high reputation in connection with forestry. The number of these men was very considerable. It was announced in a Montreal daily newspaper that they had arrived. The work they did is well known. The declaration made by the president of the Consolidated Paper company the other day as to the outstanding option removed any doubt, of course, which there might be in the mind of any person as to the possibility of the acquisition of this island by foreigners. I have never thought it was a very serious matter under normal conditions that a piece of territory in a province might be sold to people who were not British subjects. I learned, however, that there might be great importance attached to it. I suppose it is known to very few members of the committee that under the constitution of the state of Washington no foreigner can under any circumstances own a single piece of land in that state.

Mr. DUPUIS: Even companies?

Mr. BENNETT: No.

Mr. DUPUIS: In the United States?

Mr. BENNETT: Neither directly nor indirectly, in the state of Washington.

Mr. POWER: California has a somewhat similar law.

Mr. BENNETT: Theirs is somewhat modified.

Mr. POWER: I think it applies to Japanese only.

Mr. BENNETT: Although I learned this professionally, I suppose there is no reason why I should not mention it. I was representing certain interests who wanted to acquire property in Washington. They were Canadians, and in consultation with the authorities I learned that the supreme court of Washington had decided that there was no means in the world by which a foreigner, a company or corporation or partnership or anything else, could acquire title to a piece of land in that state. In days gone by I did not attach much importance to this question of ownership, especially in view of the fact that companies are mainly the owners.

But now let us go a step further. Had this investigation been limited to the question of the number of cords of wood upon the island, the matter would have been

[Mr. Bennett.]

simple. Unfortunately that is not solely what the investigations were about, and if there is any interest on the part of this committee as to the names of the investigators I can give them. I can also give the committee some information as to their reputations in Germany, their high reputations for skill, but not as foresters or as woodsmen. They have very close and intimate associations with the government of Germany. When my correspondents—more than one—saw what took place the other day at the annual meeting, they said, "Now you see how wrong you were. You see how much importance really does attach to this." Now it is proposed to do what was done by aliens in another province. In British Columbia certain aliens acquired interests in a timber limit and in something else which we shall leave out for the moment. They organized a company; of course it was a Canadian company and they had Canadians to act for them. I wonder how many of us have forgotten what happened at the outbreak of the war. I wonder if all of us have forgotten that distinguished German who cut so wide a swath in Vancouver. I wonder if we realize just what we discovered after it was all over.

It is proposed that a company shall be organized, a Canadian company. Well, in this material age Canadians with an assurance of good faith lend themselves to these matters and then endorse the certificate in blank, and that is the end of it; the active management passes into the hands of people who are selected by somebody else, and the purposes are not made apparent.

I suggest to my right hon. friend the Prime Minister of this country that the Expropriation Act, chapter 64 of the revised statutes of Canada, should be utilized. In section 2, paragraph (g), a "public work" is defined as meaning "fortifications and other works of defence, and all other property, which now belong to Canada," etc. There is granted the power of expropriation, fortunately, which enables this government to file in the appropriate registry office a plan—that is all that is necessary—over the signature of the Minister of National Defence, and the property is ours; it is then in the crown in the right of the nation. It does not make any difference whether or not it is crown land in right of the province; it is ours, because the nation requires it for its national well-being. The statute also provides something which I regard as of very great importance. It is not essential that you acquire the whole of the property; only such interest in it need be acquired as may be necessary for the purposes for which it is being acquired.