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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY THE

Hon. W. J. Bowser, K.C.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

IN REPLY TO THE

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BRITISH COLUMBIA BOARD OF TRADE

ON APRIL 17, 1914

VICTORIA, B. C.

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ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr. President and Members of the
Board of Trade of Victoria.

Gentlemen,—I believe it is the usual custom at the annual meeting of your body to invite a member of the Provincial Ministry to deliver an address. In former years I have read with interest the remarks of colleagues and others who have from time to time been invited on such occasions and this year I have much pleasure, at the request of the Honourable the Premier, in responding to the call. On behalf of the Ministry, and on my own behalf, I appreciate the honour and the privilege which the opportunity affords me, and beg to express my thanks.

Your esteemed Secretary was kind enough to send me an advance copy of your Annual Report, the contents of which, though taken as read by the meeting, I have had much pleasure in perusing. I may say that I congratulate your honourable body upon the activity which it has displayed in matters of public interest affecting more particularly the city of Victoria and the Island of Vancouver, although there is much of the proceedings that have an interest for the entire Province. What you are doing in this section of British Columbia similar bodies are doing for other portions of the Province and the sum total is having and must have in the future a most important effect upon the fortunes and destiny of our people as a whole. If I were to instance what you assisted in achieving in connection with the harbor improvements and the dry dock at Esquimalt I should demonstrate the great usefulness of the Board of Trade in this city and district; but your activities have taken a much wider range and I cannot recall for some years any question of vital concern affecting the material welfare of your citizens that has not had your serious attention, and the outcome of which has not been largely influenced by your actions and your advocacy.

NO PARTISAN POLITICS

Yours is not a political body, composed as it is of business men of widely converging views on political and economic questions, and therefore I am not here to talk politics in the partisan sense. As a member of a Government charged with the responsibility of the direction of Provincial affairs for the time being and for certain policies according to which direction in the main takes place, I cannot, however, discuss many matters that affect the economic interests of the business community without in a measure treading upon ground that is political in the wider sense of the term. Every act and deed of the Government is political, for which the Government must render an account to the people, and in political campaigns any or all of its deeds may become the subjects of heated controversy. You have asked me here today in my public capacity as a Minister of the Crown, presumably to discuss some of the things the Government is doing in relation to your economic requirements, in the way in which they affect your material well-being, and, therefore, if I refer to a few of these in more or less detail you will acquit me of any desire to "talk politics" or of deep-laid design in respect to your votes.

I note that your Annual Report, which may really be looked upon as your annual budget, and a very useful budget, too, embraces a number of important subjects, to a few of which only I shall have time to refer. Among others you give prominence to the extensive scheme of harbour improvements, to the proposed new graving dock at Esquimalt, to the establishment of the Yarrows at the latter place and to shipping and shipbuilding generally. All of these things may be considered as under one head—shipping, and shipping in the end involves shipbuilding—and you are to be congratulated not only upon recent accomplishments in this direction, but upon the prospects of the future. Throughout Canada there is a general awakening in regard to the great, the momentous, importance attached to the development of shipping and shipbuilding and what is being done in Victoria is in line with what is being done and contemplated in Vancouver, New Westminster, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, St. John and Halifax, not to speak of the enlargement and extension of the canal system. The present is essentially a new era in Canada in respect to the shipping industry and it has been greatly stimulated by the prospective completion and opening of the Panama Canal. It is safe to say that within ten years the Dominion Government will have spent $150,000,000 in improvement of present facilities and the encouragement of shipping.

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

In respect of shipbuilding I have always looked upon this Coast as having a great future. Nature has marked it out as a field for the greatest development and endowed it with all the elements which enter into its success. As a native of a maritime Province, I appreciate the economic importance of shipbuilding, which was largely lost to us with the change from wooden to iron ships, and if you will remember in my Budget Speech in 1910, when I had the honour of being Finance Minister, I laid special stress upon the possibilities of building up a great industry on the coast of British Columbia. The advent of the Yarrows in the field is an indication that we are already at the threshold of that particular future. Your president has pointed out that shipbuilding is one of those industries which may be developed without seriously disturbing those labor conditions which are effected by competition in other parts of the world, a competition which renders industrial development in the West somewhat difficult and slow. Our aim should not be to build up an industrial fabric on the basis of cheap labor; but rather to follow on the line of natural adaptabilities and resources and wait in other respects until labor conditions in other parts of the world have become levelled up and are more or less uniform with our own.

In this connection, my remarks will apply to the recommendation as to the encouragement of local industries about which so much has been said recently. Industry after all is a matter of natural growth dependent upon the increase of population and the development of markets within easy reach and you can not very well force it beyond certain limits or faster than your limits expand. It is well, too, not to despise the day of small things. We are apt to strive for too much at once. Nearly all the industries of this Province and everywhere else, as a matter of fact, have been started in a small way and have grown up with the country, so to speak. Great oaks from little acorns grow and we should welcome and encourage the shop with five or ten employees as the possible nucleus of the shop with one hundred or one thousand or ten thousand employees.

SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS

My opinion is that in British Columbia we are making very substantial, almost rapid progress in our industries, and we may be sure that capital, which is always looking for profitable investments, will seize upon any favorable opening as soon as it presents itself. Take the iron industry for instance. A great many people

wonder why, with our immense accessible deposits of iron ore and many other national advantages for the manufacture of iron and steel, we have no blast furnaces. I am told that it is not altogether the price of labor or the lack of material that accounts for this, but that it is the price of fuel, or in other words the cost of producing coke, which is three or four times that on the Atlantic side. I am also told, however, that the electrolitic system of smelting, by the use of water power, is being rapidly developed in certain countries in Europe, and that by the new processes it is possible here to establish a small and paying industry with comparatively limited capital. Thorough investigation along these lines should be well worthy the serious attention of our Boards of Trade.

And here let me say that I think Victoria is, perhaps, not making enough of her natural advantages, a wonderful asset she has within her own doors. Her climate, her beauty of location, and her splendid scenic environments are assets of immense value. The world should know more of what you have here as your own. This is true of many parts of British Columbia; but particularly true of Victoria. Southern California was built up by its tourist and residential attractions being advertised. If you get a large population of necessarily well to do people in this way, industries to meet the requirements of the population will follow as a matter of course. The Government has realized the attractions of British Columbia as a whole and has mapped out and is well on with a programme of parks and highways which when completed will bring great numbers to British Columbia. It is endeavoring, in other words, to capitalize its great wealth of scenery, and although the initial expense is large it is bound to be repaid many fold in the future. Switzerland, it is estimated, gets $300,000,000 a year from its tourist trade, and it is not only a great tourist resort, but it is becoming a great industrial country. Just to illustrate how profitable our assets in this way may become, last year the Province obtained a revenue, on account of its game and fishing licences, for outside sportsmen, of several thousand dollars, and that without depleting our stock of game. By a policy of conservation our big game, which was rapidly on the decrease, is now rapidly increasing.

TOWN PLANNING

And these observations naturally link up with what may be said in regard to the sanitation of cities and a town-planning scheme. I read with a great deal of interest the report of your President's address the other evening before the Real Estate

Exchange. The whole question is now attracting general attention in America, where most of the cities are still not too old to rectify and stem the evil of slums. It is a live question in my own city, Vancouver. I should say make it a part of a policy of publicity to attract desirable residents. Make your city as beautiful as possible and keep it clean. I might even suggest that attention should be paid to back yards and to tumble-down fences that here and there disfigure your otherwise beautiful streets.

In respect to the proper housing and taking care of immigrants whose influx in large numbers is anticipated in your report as the result of travel by way of Panama, I trust that the Dominion Government will exercise such supervision that the authorities of the Coast cities will not find their care a burden. You are right in looking forward to a possibility, but I am of the the opinion that most of the class you fear will find their way to the cities south of the line and what the United States reject, I feel certain, will not be allowed to enter Canada by its western gateways. We know that in eastern cities a fruitful cause of slums is this very immigration of foreigners from Southern Europe, and your representations to the Dominion Government should be as strong as possible to regulate their admission on this coast so that the very minimum of evil may result.

I shall deal with the foreign export of lumber later on, and there is but one more recommendation in your report to which I feel it necessary to refer, and that is a system of distribution of products as between and through wholesale and retail as to reduce their cost to the consumer. This being a matter of trade and commerce it is not one coming within the powers of the Provincial Government to deal, but it is one, of course, like all the others you have alluded to, in which the members of the local Government feel the deepest concern. The question of the high cost of living is almost universally a burning one and we have had yet no very authoritative pronouncement as to its cause or cure. The Dominion Government, as you are aware, has appointed a very competent commission to enquire into the subject, and we may expect some of the members here at an early date. The recent decision of the Railway Commission to reduce freight rates in the West will no doubt have an appreciable effect in this direction, and that, together with the movement now becoming popular of getting back to the land will be a partial solution of the question. It is generally admitted that throughout America the land must produce more in order that the rapidly growing population may have their requirements more cheaply supplied. In my opinion, however, we can never get back to the old basis of

cheap living. Conditions must readjust themselves to the new standard of living and to the higher rates of wages, and it after all makes not so much difference what the cost of living is if the earning capacity of the whole people is in a corresponding ratio. Still, if there is any artificial means by which the necessities of life are kept above a legitimate or normal price limit, it is the duty of the Dominion Government to apply a remedy and I feel certain that that Government will act effectively in that direction if it be disclosed as the result of investigation that such a condition of things exists.

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

I am glad that mention is made of the action taken by a committee of the Board of Trade on municipal matters, inasmuch as it gives me a suitable opportunity to refer to the legislation of last session which followed upon the report of the Royal Commission on municipal government. Your committee made several useful recommendations which I was pleased to be able to adopt. As you are aware, municipal government in British Columbia has been a plant of slow growth. Owing to the physical character of the country conditions are not at all like what they are in other parts of Canada, in which municipal administration has had, perhaps, the most perfect development. The municipalities in British Columbia, relatively speaking, formed a very small part of the Province and naturally municipal government did not in the past receive the attention it deserved. However, of late municipal expansion has been much more rapid, and conditions arose which demanded a thorough revision of the municipal code. There never had been that care and supervision exercised in respect of their creation and conduct of affairs that there should have been. A municipality comes into existence by authority of the Government, so to speak, and although as a form of Government it is closer to and more essentially a part of the people than any other, it is one for which in the final analysis the Government must become responsible. If a municipality commits an illegal act involving serious consequences it comes to the Legislature for validating or relieving powers. If a municipality gets into financial difficulties and is unable to meet its obligations, it is a situation which reflects upon every other municipality and upon the Province as a whole. In the money markets the credit of a municipality is bound up with the general credit. In its own interests, the Province is therefore almost bound to stand at the back of the municipalities. Although no actual cases have occurred where the Government has been seriously involved, experience has shown

that in many cases there has been laxity in financial management and administration. There has been no efficient supervision exercised in many instances, and there has been practically no uniformity in methods or policy. There is a tendency among municipalities everywhere to over-borrow and to perhaps spend too recklessly. This is not my dictum. It is a matter of complaint throughout America that municipal Government is not what it ought to be—unsatisfactory in results, and hence the general wide spread agitation for government by commission, boards of control and reforms generally.

ANSWERS CRITICISM

As the result of numerous representations and of observations of actual conditions the Government appointed a commission composed of gentlemen well qualified for the duties involved to investigate the whole subject, and with the report of that commission as a basis I drafted a bill designed, I think, to make municipal government in British Columbia as efficient as exists in any other part of this continent. The printed report of the commission was generally distributed and a year was allowed to lapse before action was taken. The legislation of last session was, therefore, not only the result of mature deliberation on my part as Attorney-General, but of the suggestions of those best qualified by experience in the Province to advise. I have pointed out the great responsibility of the Government in respect of municipal affairs and I endeavored as far as lay in the power of the legislature to make that responsibility effective. The new Municipal Act has been severely criticized as too autocratic and as designed to centralize power in the Government. In the case of trust companies and various corporations and public utilities the Government is expected to exercise the closest supervision and control and if things go wrong or there are serious mishaps the Government is severely blamed. A municipality is a public corporation whose functions are largely financial in character, affecting the public weal and particularly the people's pockets, and it is the duty of the Government acting for the people at large to see that their interests are safeguarded. If the authority taken for that purpose be not wide and strong enough that duty cannot be efficiently performed. I cannot go into all the details of that measure, because they are too numerous and it would take too long, but one of the chief features is the supervision of the creation of debt and the issue of civic debentures. You know that during the recent financial crisis the question of municipal indebtedness was a serious factor. The financiers of Great Britain became alarmed at its rapid growth

and the almost unlimited spending of money. They threatened to cut off the supply unless retrenchment was made and there was some reasonable guarantee that the money borrowed was necessary and was expended economically in the best interests of the municipalities. The supply was cut off temporarily and there was danger that necessary public improvements would be unable to be proceeded with. The temporary stoppage or partial stoppage of municipal work everywhere as a consequence was one of the causes of the financial depression. You see how important it is, therefore, that municipal credit should be maintained. So far from the supervision which the Government proposes to exercise over the financial affairs of municipalities hampering municipal operations it will be found in the end to be greatly to their advantage when they come to borrow money. The O.K.-ing of municipal bonds by the Government will materially facilitate borrowing for legitimate purposes. Financiers will require no better guarantee than the stamp of Government approval. The means by which the Government will exercise this supervision is the creation of a Municipal Department under the control and direction of the Attorney-General. There will be an inspector of municipalities who will have the power of holding a public enquiry into the business of a municipality, and whose findings shall, subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council, be binding. Another of his duties will be the standardization of municipal bookkeeping. Returns of a uniform character, intelligible to the citizens, will be made to the Department and a financial statement of each municipality published annually in pamphlet form. Provision is made for compulsory audits. It has been very difficult in the past to get complete or exact information from municipalities in this or any other Province and it is one of the things of which financial men, who are interested in municipal finances, have for a long time complained. These provisions will result in the finances of the municipality being placed on a sound basis and credit materially strengthened. The standard of permanent municipal officials will be raised, as only well qualified men will meet the requirements. Safety of municipal finance will be guaranteed.

COMMISSION GOVERNMENT

In respect of the commission form of government which has been the subject of so much discussion, it was not considered the wisest method to be permitted for adoption in this Province, at least for the present, but on the other hand under certain conditions, boards of control, such as exist in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton, may be created, the members

being elected from the city at large. So far from the powers of municipalities being restricted by the new Act, they have been greatly enlarged and it will be possible to undertake many things for the sanitation, better regulation and beautifying of municipalities that were not before possible. Mr. Shallcross will be able to carry out his scheme of town planning if he can induce a sufficient number of ratepayers to support him in the idea, and if so disposed under similar circumstances he can make a paradise of this city.

Throughout the new Act, which is a very complete code in 179 pages, while there are many radical departures, the provisions are very conservative. That is to say, nothing can be done rashly and without the consent of a large majority of the electors. In entering the field of public utilities there must be respect for vested interests, because while municipal ownership may be an ideal arrangement those who have invested money in large enterprises have rights also. It is popular to decry "vested interests," but, even apart from the moral aspect of the question, it is to capital we must look for our public requirements when we want money. Again, with reference to the referendum, that power has been abused because it has been exercised in matters the power over which belonged exclusively to the Province or some other authority than the council, and time and money have been wasted. Tax sales have been made valid after one year, thus avoiding a repetition of revival of claims, after years, through technicalities, which was the unfortunate experience of South Vancouver. These are but a few of the provisions of the new Act calculated to ensure careful and sound administration. There is nothing to curtail or restrict the rights of municipalities. On the other hand, there have been greatly increased powers given them. Among the increased powers given under the new Act are powers to regulate the measuring and weighing of all articles of food, fuel, and to impose penalties for light weight and short measurement; power to examine and licence moving picture operators; power to regulate and prohibit the erection of huts, shacks and tents which might be a detriment to the value of surrounding property; power to regulate second-hand stores and junk shops; power to compel manufacturers to install smoke abatement apparatus, and power to regulate and collect rent for areas and cellars under sidewalks.

The sole object of Government supervision in certain cases is to prevent mismanagement and waste of public money. We think that the new code will give British Columbia the best form of municipal government now in existence.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

I now come to our material sources of wealth so far as their economic development depends upon the administration of the Government. I speak with all honesty and seriousness when I say that the Government has made an earnest endeavor to proceed along lines of policy best calculated in its opinion to promote the interests of the public and to secure for the people a fair share of that wealth as it is produced.

I need not refer at length to the mining industry. It is now on a well-established basis, producing steadily and in a substantially increasing ratio year by year. Its problems have, as the result of years of experience, been largely solved, and the policy of our Premier, the Minister of Mines, has been to carefully and justly administer his Department with as little change of laws or regulations as possible, and the result has been satisfactory in the extreme. The revenue of the Province from mining during the current fiscal year, exclusive of the tax on coal lands, is estimated at $580,000, a figure likely to be considerably exceeded, which is a fair return from the industry involving so much capital, representing as it does over 25 per cent. of the dividends paid to mine operators.

In regard to agricultural industry, the development of which in now a subject of much discussion, I may say that the department under the direction of my predecessor, the late Capt, Tatlow, myself when Minister of Agriculture, and my successor, the Hon. Price Ellison, has done all that was reasonable or possible in the way of encouragement, assistance and educational propaganda, in fact, relatively more than is being done in any other part of America. Our policy is one based on the most modern methods. Speculation in farming lands has to some extent retarded production, but on the whole it has been satisfactory. Since 1901 population has trebled and production has quadrupled. In this connection let me say that in all large matters of policy affecting the welfare of the Province the Government has adopted a method which up to the present has invariably led to the most beneficial results, namely the appointment of royal commissions of investigation. Departmentally the Government cannot devote that time and attention to the various problems which arise to arrive at all the facts or to familiarize itself fully with all the conditions affecting these problems. We have had taxation, insurance, forestry, municipal and other commissions, and the legislation following has given entire satisfaction. We have just received the report of an agricultural commission which has completed a very exhaus-

tive enquiry. The Government has not yet had time to study that report and I cannot say what action will be taken; but as dealing with one of the most important industries, if not the most important industry, in the Province, the recommendations of the commission, as in all other cases, will have our most earnest consideration. The object of the Government as a whole is to adopt any advanced, if sound, policy which will enure to the advancement of our agricultural interests.

THE LAND POLICY

The land policy of the Government, which has been severely criticized in some quarters, is closely associated with agriculture and settlement. Last year, my colleague, the Hon. W. R. Ross, on a similar occasion, dealt very fully with that and I do not propose to go over the same ground. Besides, it has been widely discussed in the Legislature, in the Press and otherwise, so that I do not assume that I could make you wiser than you are now as to the position we take. I will say, however, that the Government under the aegis of the Land Department is performing a very valuable work in the matter of land development and settlement as well as in other directions, and I just wish to refer here to what are among the latest developments.

About the first of June 80,000 acres of agricultural land will be opened to pre-emptors in the Valley of the South Fork of the Fraser—land along the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad, and much of it bordering on the Fraser River. This is part of an area of 1,200 square miles covering a strip of six miles along the new transcontinental railway, just completed from ocean to ocean, and, as the timber which covers other portions is cut, more lands will be available for settlers. This is but one of a number of areas to be opened within the next few weeks in addition to the large area, totalling millions of acres now available for pre-emption, being opened by the Department of Lands. Not all of this is good land, but it includes many valuable tracts of arable country and very large areas of pastoral land, estimated at 21,500,000 acres. Tracts are being opened at the beginning of next month in the Kootenay District, some in close proximity to the cities of Cranbrook and Fernie. These are logged-off lands. Similar tracts, from which the loggers have cut the merchantable timber and made way for the agriculturist, are being opened in the Salmon River Valley of Vancouver Island, a valley in which, when the timber has all been cut and the plough can follow the axe, there will be 30,000 acres of farming land of the same character as the Comox Valley. Other areas for the settler are being opened on

Malaspina Peninsula, close to the settlement at Lund, on the Ucluelet Peninsula, where about 5,000 acres have been subdivided for settlement, and in other districts. Pamphlets describing the various tracts have been issued by the Department of Lands, giving full information regarding them, to assist settlers. Let me say here, in connection with the important question of land settlement that it has taken $2,225,000 in surveys to determine the land so far available for the purpose. Remember that up until 1907 the Government had practically no money to prosecute surveys or undertake anything else in a large way. In eight years 12,536,640 acres have been surveyed, and of all this land surveyed for settlement, settlement was not possible until railway communication and highways were afforded. The completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern Railways will give a large section of surveyed lands the desired facilities.

MUCH ARABLE ACREAGE

There is considerable land available for the settler today in various parts of the Province. While it is true that, owing to climatic and topographic factors, the proportion of agricultural land to the whole area of the Province is smaller than that of the Prairie Provinces, it is, nevertheless, true that the agricultural possibilities of British Columbia are generally underestimated, and that when all the tillable lands are under cultivation, and all the grazing lands are made use of for stock-raising, the agricultural industry will rank with the lumbering and mining industries—the two greatest in the Province—in importance. A great portion of these agricultural lands are, however, at the present time covered with a valuable growth of timber. In accordance with the highest practice of conservation these timbered agricultural lands are reserved from settlement until the timber crops can be removed. At the same time provision is made for the prompt removal of timber to prevent the locking up of such lands from settlement for an indefinite period. As timber leases or licenses lapse the lands are at once examined and if found available for agriculture they are opened for settlement.

The forest policy of British Columbia has attracted wide attention not only in other parts of Canada, but in other lands. In a country such as this, where timber resources are so enormous, so diversified, and of such paramount commercial importance, the development of a forest policy might have been expected to be slow. Within the short space of the past eight years, however, the present Government has pushed forward its plans so rapidly

in this direction that British Columbia at the present time is recognized on all sides as one of the most advanced countries in the world in forest policy and administration. Timber and increase in timber values has been made the property of the people and the mainstay of the public treasury, on a carefully adjusted method of profit-sharing which was equitable and advantageous to both the Province and the private interests concerned. The revenue from timber last year was about $3,000,000, or about one-fourth of the total Provincial receipts. Stable financial conditions have been assured to the lumbermen by the recent Royalty Act, so placing our great Provincial industry in a position of advantage compared with its competitors in the Western States, where forestry principles have not been thus applied to taxation of timber lands.

The Government's legislation has been supported by a vigorous efficiency in forest administration, no easy matter in handling the wide-spread forest areas of British Columbia. Efficiency in the work of protecting the forests from fire was another result that had been secured by sound organization, and the investigations that were being carried on under the Minister of Lands were showing that the great asset in the hands of the Government—the reserve of timber that had never yet been subject to license or sale—was greater, far greater, than had ever been supposed. Our total stand of timber is estimated at 300,000,000,000 feet.

FORESTRY PROGRAMME

With legislation and administration well and soundly provided for the next stage of the forestry programme which my colleague, the Hon. W. R. Ross, has in contemplation, is the encouragement of the lumbering industry by market extension and the commercial utilization of the many by-products now unused or unprofitable to market. This is a wide field of usefulness and profit, and is occupying the attention of mill operators everywhere. In some of the States of the Union the log-products are being made more profitable than the main output, and a thorough investigation of possibilities in this line will no doubt result in adding materially to the value of the present large output. One of the objects of a sound policy of conservation is to avoid all waste.

Another most important matter which will occupy the Minister's attention is the foreign export trade. Last year this amounted to 51,500,000 feet or less than one-tenth of the export from the Pacific Coast States. With our large timber industry, our vast timber resources and with equal opportunities in the

foreign markets this is a condition of things which should not exist. With equal opportunities, a fiair field and no favors it should not be said that our lumbermen cannot compete successfully with their neighbors just across the line. Considering what the Land Department has already accomplished it will not be surprising if we do not shortly see material results produced from the efforts of the Minister in this direction.

Another branch of the Government service in which a great change in administrative methods has taken place in the last few years to the resultant advantage of the Province is the Water Rights Branch. Only five years ago the important business ot granting and administering rights in the great natural asset—the waters—was treated as a side issue. It was at that time in charge of local Government Land Agents who had little time to study the technical side of the question, and their attitude had the practical effect of saying to the public "help yourselves." Yet such has been the progress during those years, both in perfecting the legislation and in providing the machinery through which that legislation should be made effective, that British Columbia has today a most practical and efficient water administration.

Speaking of water legislation, I may say that the Province holds a unique position, and one that will surely serve as a guide for other western commonwealths in this—that all the various Acts governing the use of water, whether they relate to irrigation, power, mining, the clearing of streams for logging purposes, the carriage or storage of water, or to other uses, have been gathered into one complete code and co-related. Nowhere is there such a comprehensive code governing the use of water. The principles of non-waste, of the building and maintaining of substantial structures, of recognition of fixed priorities, of due regard for the rights of the public and of other licensees apply alike to the miner, the agriculturist, the power man, the logger or to the conveyor.

The principle that beneficial use of water must be made by applicants within a reasonable time is now thoroughly established. I might go further and say that it is being made effective in actual practice. The change in policy. from the very lax administration of former times to one of rigid inspection and supervision is bound to be felt by some and complained of, but it is clearly in the interests of the greatest number to compel the man who cannot make use of a privilege within a reasonable time to step aside and let another who is ready and willing to carry on development take his place.

LIMITING WATER GRANTS

Another forward move which has been recently made is the limiting of the more important grants of water privileges to a term of years. This principle is being adopted in all the more progressive countries as a primary principle of conservation. The splendid progress which the Province of Ontario has made in the protection of its water powers has been due largely to the adoption of the lease system and to the careful drafting of the leases. Under this syestem, these natural assets will pass back automatically every fifty years into the hands of the Province to be made the subject of a new lease on terms which will be suitable to the then existing conditions.

Among other features incorporated in the revised Water Act, which will satisfy some of the demands that have been more and more insistently heard from the arid districts of the Province in recent years, may be mentioned the power of officers to compel water-users to construct substantial headgates, compulsory rotation in the use of water by irrigation licensees, broader powers of the District Engineers in supervising the distribution of water and the settling of water disputes, the possible appointment of water bailiffs in urgent cases (but only as a last resort and where it is understood that voluntary agreement among water-users is out of the question), a standardized and simplified procedure for the acquisition of new rights.

Besides providing for co-operation on a small scale, some seventy pages, or approximately one-half of the new Act is devoted to the formation and government of public irrigation corporations, otherwise known as "irrigation districts." These are bodies corporate having powers enabling the water-users who compose them not only to establish and operate joint water systems, but to levy taxes, expropriate lands, borrow money, and generally to exercise the powers of a municipality for water purposes. This part of the Act represents a great deal of careful study and investigation extending over about two years. It not only embodies the best of the principles of similar Acts in other states and countries, but it is specially adapted to meet the conditions in British Columbia. Numerous safeguards have been thrown about the formation and management of these proposed corporations and provision has been made for the rigid inspection and requisite approval of all important acts of the corporation by an impartial commission. These safeguards are calculated not only to protect the individual land-owners but to give capital which is essential to the success of such undertakings, the assurance that it is looking for.

SPEAKS OF FISHERIES

In conclusion, let me refer to one more industry in which, as commissioner, I take a special interest. I refer to fisheries. This industry has of late made substantial and rapid progress. The value of the product in British Columbia is nearly one-half of the whole of Canada and almost one-quarter of the entire product of the Pacific Coast. The Government of British Columbia is taking a very important hand in its development. In addition to concessions obtained from the Dominion Government in the control, and the Provincial hatchery at Seton Lake, it has entered upon a programme of investigation of fish life on this coast not heretofore undertaken. This will include a study of clam and oyster beds under the direction of experts. Our fishery wealth is the greatest on the American continent and it is only yet in the early stages of development. The policy of the Governments of British Columbia and of Canada, of whose joint possession it is a part, should and will be to conserve the fisheries to the utmost so that the most valuable of food products may forever remain undiminished in quantity and value.

We have four transcontinental lines of railway practically completed to our shores with the prospects of at least two American lines making this coast their terminii. The Panama Canal will be soon opened for traffic, with all it means for this Province. Our harbors are being improved to a degree unthought of a few years ago. Vast areas in the interior are being opened and made ready for settlement. The Peace River will be directly accessible in 1915 and that potential district will be tributary to our trade and commerce. In all this immense development Victoria is vitally interested and, as well as the whole of the Island of Vancouver, will share largely in the fruits of these accomplishments. We are all to be congratulated upon being permitted to live in this the day of great things and it is to be hoped that we shall, in the true sense, make the most of the opportunities now knocking at our doors.