

has proceeded so rapidly that the installed capacity of our hydro-electric plants has been more than doubled in two decades. The production of natural gas, already far greater than it was first a few years ago, will soon be much larger still. Now we are going ahead with Canada's first plant for the production of atomic power. Altogether it is with good reason that Canadians today have a keener appreciation than ever before of their natural wealth and a growing determination that their resources shall be wisely used.

The evil result of the unwise exploitation of some natural resources was headlined first during the Great Depression by drought and dust storms. It is all too easy to find other instances of the misuse of resources; we may point for example to the complete elimination of valuable forest areas such as the Ottawa Valley once contained. The consciousness of the need for the wise use of our resources has been intensified by our realization of the rapid rate at which we are now consuming them. To produce food for thirty million people, a population which this country might have before the present century is out, and at the same time, maintain our export trade, it will be necessary to make efficient use of all our known resources of agriculture and fisheries. As for our forests, while only about one-half of the productive forest area which can be classed as accessible to commercial operation is now occupied under government licence or private ownership, the remaining half consists for the most part of forests of poorer quality and slower growth located in areas which would be relatively expensive to operate. It is on the occupied forest lands that the future of most of our established forest industries must continue to depend. There is reason to believe that the rate of timber depletion on such lands, taken as a whole, may be equal to or even greater than the annual growth in those forests. To cite facts like these is to bring out how far we have drawn, even at this early stage in our history, on this country's natural wealth.

Also we have come to realize that our present productivity and prosperity are not due to any innate virtue of our own. They are not due to any superiority over other peoples. But rather they are due to our having been endowed with the great and varied resources we have. As we have recognized that fact we have come to realize also that unless we handle those resources well, and unless we continue to have resources that are economically usable for decades to come, our productivity and prosperity will not go on unendingly. We know as we never knew before that it is our resources that have made our economy great.

Out of these considerations has developed a new interest in what is called "conservation"; and the conservation of resources is unfortunately a subject about which a good deal of confusion and uncertainty exists. There is, it is true, a very general feeling that resource conservation is important and that much more remains to be done about it in Canada. Along with this, however, there is confusion as to what conservation really