

Conservation and Technical Education

sion itself is not an executive or administrative body with power to deal with the natural resources themselves. The authority of its recommendations rests upon and rises from their merits. It has no legal power to say "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." Its findings will carry weight from their intrinsic worth. Parliament or Legislatures can regulate by legislation the control of waterpowers, and the terms and conditions to govern the use of forests and fisheries. It is immensely more difficult to accomplish much by legislation in the case of conserving the fertility of lands and preventing the intrusion of weeds. The ownership and control of the lands are in the hands of multitudes of individuals acting singly and independently. Because it is difficult it is all the more needful that the task should be undertaken with care and energy. To some extent regulation by law can prevent waste and damage. But no parliament has yet been able to legislate ability into citizens for the wise use of what they have conserved. Conservation does not mean keeping out of use. The conservation of seed grain is putting it on the best field over as wide an area as possible. That applies to forestry also. I have no sympathy with the people who would reserve the forests for our descendants; if only that, you multiply the risks of fire and insects. Conservation means taking the largest toll out of these resources now and leaving them not only unimpaired but extended and improved by wise use—using the annual production but not destroying or reducing the source of supply.

At its first meeting in 1910, the Commission formed Committees for the particular consideration of the several large questions with which it has to deal. The