

United States National Conservation Congress.

A Brief Epitome of the Work of the Meeting at St. Paul.

The second annual National Conservation Congress of the United States was held at St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A., Sept. 5-8. The Congress was addressed by many men distinguished in the movement for conservation, including President Taft and ex-President Roosevelt.

The sessions of the Congress were by no means entirely academic. The practical question of whether the state governments or the federal government should control the disposition of natural resources was brought up by some western and southern delegates, and provoked some lively and at times acrimonious discussion. President Taft expressed himself in favor of state control, but Colonel Roosevelt strongly insisted on the control of resources by the nation. Those in favor of national control won, though the resolutions adopted by the convention approved a scheme of co-operation between state and federal authorities.

The chairman at most of the sessions was H. N. Baker, president of the congress, and at some of the meetings it is stated twelve thousand people were present. The delegates were welcomed by Governor Eberhardt of Minnesota.

President Taft.

The great event of the first day of the Congress was the speech of President Taft, who was warmly received. He traced the growth of the conservation idea, paid a tribute to ex-President Roosevelt for his share in promoting it, and voiced his own gratification at his opportunity for carrying it out. Conservation was not a matter of politics, but a business matter affecting every citizen.

The body of President Taft's talk was a review of federal land policies and laws. The lands he divided into six classes, namely, (1) agricultural lands, (2) mineral lands, (3) forest lands, (4) coal lands, (5) oil and gas lands, and (6) phosphate lands. Among other things he recommended the repeal of the Timber and Stone Act.*

*NOTE.—The Timber and Stone Act, passed in 1878, provides that government land deemed unfit for agriculture may be sold at the rate of \$2.50 per acre for the timber and stone thereon. It is claimed that under this Act much valuable land has wrongly passed out of the possession of the United States government.

Touching on the national forests (the present area of which is some 144,000,000 acres) he foreshadowed the addition to them of other forest land now owned by the government and the elimination from the national forests of agricultural land. The losses from forest fires throughout the United States he estimated at \$50,000,000 per year. It was in the power of the state legislatures, he believed, to require the enforcement of regulations in the general public interest as to fire and other causes of waste in the management of forests owned by private individuals and corporations.

State versus Federal Control.

At Monday afternoon's session the chief conflict on the question of federal vs. state control took place.

Federal control was favored by Governor E. F. Noel, of Mississippi, Governor W. R. Stubbs, of Kansas, and Senator Beveridge, of Indiana. State control was championed by Governor E. L. Norris, of Montana, Governor M. E. Hay, of Washington, and Governor R. B. Brooks, of Wyoming. Governor Deneen of Illinois pleaded for co-operation between state and federal authorities.

An exciting five minutes was contributed by Governor Stubbs, who, after Governors Hay and Norris had spoken strongly favoring state control, arose and delivered an impassioned tribute to ex-President Roosevelt and ex-Forester Pinchot.

Senator Knute Nelson.

Senator Knute Nelson, of Minnesota, also addressed the congress on 'The Public Land Laws.' He favored co-operation between the state and the federal authorities in the development of water power under present conditions, where the state owns the water rights and the federal government the site.

Col. Roosevelt.

On Tuesday morning, when Col. Roosevelt addressed the congress, the attendance was even larger than that on the day before when President Taft spoke. Five minutes of hearty cheering greeted Roosevelt on his introduction.

In his speech he emphasized the importance of the lakes-to-gulf waterway. He noted also the fact that the railways controlled the water-front in nearly every city from St. Paul to the Gulf, and urged that a close watch