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NORTH AMERICAN CONSERVATION CONFERENCE.

It is no exaggeration to affirm that the North American Conservation Conference is the official beginning of a movement that will affect profoundly the future history of Canada and this continent generally.

Sessional Paper, No. 90, issued by the Dominion Parliament, embodies a Declaration of Principles as drawn up by the Conference. The opening paragraph runs thus: "We recognize the mutual interests of the nations which occupy the Continent of North America and the dependence of the welfare of each upon its national resources. We agree that the conservation of these resources is indispensable for the continued prosperity of each nation." Then, as summing up the spirit of the Conference, we find this:—"We agree that those resources which are necessities of life should be regarded as public utilities, that their ownership entails specific duties to the public, and that as far as possible effective measures should be adopted to guard against monopoly."

The paper then proceeds to define its attitude towards public health, forests, waters, lands, minerals, and protection of game.

We have especial concern with the section on minerals. It is proper, considering the importance of the matter, to quote the full text of this section:—

Minerals.

"We recognize the mineral resources as forming the chief basis of industrial progress, and regard their use and conservation as essential to the public welfare. The mineral fuels play an indispensable part in our modern civilization. We favour action on the part of each government looking towards reduction of the enormous waste in the exploitation of such fuels, and we direct attention to the necessity for an inventory thereof. Such fuels should hereafter be disposed of by lease under such restrictions of regulations as will prevent waste and monopolistic or speculative holding, and supply the public at reasonable prices.

"We believe that the surface rights and underground mineral rights in lands should be separately dealt with so as to permit the surface of the land to be utilized to the fullest extent, while preserving government control over the minerals.

"Regulations should be adopted looking to the most economical production of coal and other mineral fuels and the prolongation of the supply to the utmost. We favour also the substitution of water power for steam or other power produced by the consumption of fuel.