

Conservation of the Fur Resources of Northern Canada

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IN considering how we may conserve to the best advantage, that is, how we may use in such a manner as to prevent destruction or depletion, the different natural resources of the country, it is necessary to take stock of the available resources of different sections of the country. In some regions agriculture is the most important resource, in others forests, water-powers or mines may constitute the natural wealth. But, while the wild life of all parts of Canada forms an important natural resource, in northern Canada it is practically the only natural resource. On its continued existence in an unimpaired condition depend not only the lives of thousands of the native inhabitants of the country but the future economic development of that immense area, which would otherwise be devoid of available natural resources. Thousands of square miles are unsuitable for agriculture, the forest resources are, on the whole, not sufficiently extensive or accessible to permit successful exploitation, and the development of the mineral resources is not only full of difficulties but is also dependent on the presence of a native food supply.

Northern
Fur-bearing
Animals

On previous occasions I have addressed the Commission on certain aspects of the conservation of the wild life of the north, but I wish now to deal briefly with other problems to which we should devote, and I am pleased to say we are devoting, our earnest attention. I have already dealt with the conservation of the great natural supply of meat and clothing in the north, namely, the barren ground caribou, and with the musk-ox. Another important constituent of the northern wild life resources—the fur-bearing animals—demands our careful consideration.

It is unnecessary to emphasize the wealth of fur-bearing animals in the north, where the more important of these animals find an environment so eminently suited to them and to the production of high grade furs. Our fur-bearing animals were the first of our natural resources to lure to our shores the intrepid souls who braved every kind of danger in their quest for furs. The fur trade of the