

All other resources of our continent, and, for that matter of the globe, may be exhausted before civilization is much older, and, in some cases, before two or three generations have passed. The annual production of anthracite coal in the United States, it has been claimed, has already passed its maximum and the output will from now on continue to decline to a vanishing point in the not far distant future. It is also claimed that the coal supply of Great Britain will be exhausted in three hundred and fifty years. No estimate can be given of the duration of the supply in our maritime provinces, but it is maintained by some that coals and lignites in Western Canada are sufficient in quantities to supply its needs for many centuries to come. If that is so, and there is abundance evidence to support the claim, the fuel supply of the West is one of the richest of our resources.

They are, however, not inexhaustible, and, let me repeat, none of the natural resources of the globe, except the energy of the sunlight, are, humanly speaking, inexhaustible. Mankind has, therefore, been for the last century spendthrift, prodigal, living wastefully on its capital, instead of carefully conserving it to the utmost. It has acted as if it had the purse of Fortunatus, giving no thought to the future and swayed only by the needs and the illusions of the hour. It has not yet begun to recognize that its resources are not inexhaustible, but it experienced a shock when it faced the diminished food supply of the last three years, and it is, in consequence, more inclined to-day to give serious attention to problems which it would not consider when under the influence of some of its cherished illusions. It has not wholly emerged from these, but they distort its outlook less and it is anxious, and rightly so, as to how in the new order of things the merciless trade competition between the Teutonic nations and the other nations, that is to come, is to be met. This is, indeed, all material and, therefore, from the purely intellectual point of view, gross, but such materialism determines the course of history as it did when Rome overthrew Carthage, Corinth and Rhodes, as certain historians maintain, not from a lust of power, but from a desire to destroy her keenest competitors in the then trade of the world.

The enormous sacrifices that this war has entailed and will entail until it closes can never be equated by way of compensation with any product or result of it. Whatever else befalls, liberty and the right to happiness will be maintained, but these are fundamental, for life without them is unthinkable, and we do not rank them as compensations. Amongst the very few results, however, which may have ultimately a markedly beneficial effect is the altered point of