

years at the present rate of cutting. The figures indicate that our demands upon the forest have increased twice as fast as our population.

We have anthracite coal for but fifty years, and bituminous coal for less than two hundred.

Our supplies of iron ore, mineral oil, and natural gas are being rapidly depleted, and many of the great fields are already exhausted. Mineral resources such as these when once gone are gone for ever.

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The diversion of great areas of our public land from the homemaker to the landlord and the speculator; the national neglect of great water-powers, which do it well relieve, being perennially renewed, the drain upon our non-renewable coal; the fact that but half the coal has been taken from the mines which have already been abandoned as worked out and by caving-in have made the rest for ever inaccessible; the disuse of the cheaper transportation of our waterways, which involves comparatively slight demand upon our non-renewable supplies of iron ores, and the use of the rail instead—these are other items in the huge bill of particulars of national waste.

We undoubtedly have in Canada very great natural resources. The government of this country, with the hearty support of members of this side of the House, have taken steps along the line of the conservation of our natural resources. We know how immensely important forests are to this country, important not only in respect of their value as material, but in their relation to the great waterways system of this country, and to the preservation of our water-powers, important to the people of this country in every sense; and when we observe that the President of the United States, over land over again, directs the attention of Congress to the importance of giving to the people of the United States direct access to the forests of Canada, in order that their own may be preserved, surely that suggestion and that argument affords ample room for thought to the people of this country as to whether or not they should accept these proposals.

Why did Canada want reciprocity in 1866 and for many years afterwards and why ought we to hesitate before embark-

ing upon any proposal of that kind to-day? In the first place, we are not helpless to-day as we were in 1866. We have built up a great interprovincial trade, we have found stable and sure markets in Great Britain where the producers of the United States are our competitors. Transportation and cold storage have changed the whole situation from what it was in 1866, from what it was in 1878, from what it was even in 1891. The British markets are nearer to-day than the United States markets were fifty years ago. These proposals, in short, change the whole current of our industries and are likely to dislocate our national development. Further than that the law proposed now will, according to the proposals of the government, be so entirely unstable and insecure that after having had the benefit of them for five years or even less, we may be obliged at the end of that period to go back just where we were, to build up our industries again, to make a reputation for our bacon, our cheese, our butter in the markets of the old country, and surely no one of us believes that these markets which we may abandon for the moment will be left unoccupied by the people of Argentina, and other countries which have been competing with us in the past in those very markets.

We want to conserve our natural resources as I have said. We do not desire that they should remain undeveloped, but we want to develop them ourselves, not for the benefit of the few, but for the benefit of the whole people of Canada, and to develop them in such a way that not only the national wealth, but the individual wealth of the entire people of Canada will be increased by these resources.

Now in view of the statistics which I have given, are we not moving along the line of material progress and development about as fast as we could expect to go, or about as fast as it is desirable to go? Are we not at the present time following a perfectly sure and safe path? Have we not markets on the stability of which we can depend at all times in the future, as we have been able to depend upon them at all times during the past thirty or forty years? Is there not even reason to believe that, with increasing facilities of transportation, with the cheaper rates, which I hope will be secured, with better cold storage, with the markets of the British islands more open to the people of Canada, we hope, than they have been in the past, are these not very good reasons why we should be satisfied with the position we now hold. To use a well-