

portance shall be attached to the water-power data we have to consider. Therefore, before passing to the treatment of more specific subjects it will be profitable to offer some remarks which are pertinent to water when viewed broadly as a natural resource.

There has been a tendency on the part of many persons interested in the observation of natural resources to state that this or that particular resource is the most important. Some have said that the forests are the most important asset; others maintain that the soil, with its fertility, is the most important resource; and, of late, great stress is being laid upon the statement that water is the chief asset, the prediction being made that the nation which has the most and cheapest water-power available is destined to take precedence in the world of commerce. As a matter of fact, however, all these various interests are interdependent one upon the other. If any one feature of our natural resources is to be placed before others, probably it could be most reasonably urged that a fertile condition of the soil is the most important natural asset to be safeguarded; because, for his sustenance on the earth, man requires food, raiment and shelter, and these essentials are supplied him, in one form or another, either directly or indirectly, from the soil. It must be manifest, therefore, that the factors which make for the permanence of the soil's productivity are factors of paramount importance; and hence the subject of the conservation and use of waters as a natural asset must, among other things, be considered in its prime relationship to the subject of the productivity of the soil.

The interests of municipal and domestic water supply, water for manufacturing and industrial purposes, irrigation, navigation, and water-power, are all inter-related and interdependent. They all depend on the same natural source—precipitation. Precipitation by rainfall or snowfall virtually constitutes the only source of inland water supply, and the natural and cultivated properties of the land on which the rain and snow fall largely determine the efficient uses to which precipitation is applied. It is in this connection that forests are so indispensably associated with the rainfall, and hence, with water as a natural resource. Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the effect of forests in influencing the amount of precipitation, all are agreed that no feature of the topography of a country ministers more efficiently to the gradual and economical run-off from the precipitation than do forest areas. Thus it is that failure to intelligently conserve forest areas has wrought havoc by causing a great destruction of forest floors and agricultural lands, which, humanly speaking, can never be restored, to say nothing of the annual destruction to property by flood run-off, which seems yearly to increase rather than diminish.

In the case of water-power developments, therefore, it is necessary to know whether or not the industries which propose to use the water-powers will prove to be a menace to the district of their proposed location. Thus, wood-pulp mills, for example, which might completely denude the timber lands of trees, at, or near, the heads of important waterways, had better not be established at all; or, if established, then only under the strictest regulation and supervision designed to conserve the forest growth. A deforested, eroded, and scoured territory, which has lost the humus of its soil, cannot retain the beneficent rains which, instead of being retained in the ground and transmuted into plants by the various processes of growth, carry destruction in the pathways of their torrential run-off. The water is neces-

sary to the soil, and the soil, with its plant growth, is necessary to an economical disposition of the water.

These remarks, suggested and quoted from the Conservation Commission's report, are sufficient to lead those interested in the subject to obtain the report itself, which is the most valuable reference volume of its kind ever issued in Canada.

#### CANADA'S MINT, GOLD AND SILVER.

Mr. D. R. Wilkie, general manager of the Imperial Bank, referred at the bank's annual meeting to the completion of the branch of the Royal Mint at Ottawa and the issue of Canadian gold and silver coins. As he truly remarked, these are incidents in the life of the Dominion that should not be passed over without some notice being taken of it. The total cost of the building and equipment, including the refinery, is \$540,000, a trifling sum when compared with the immense satisfaction which we now have in the manufacture of our own coins within our own borders. The coins struck are a credit to Dr. Bonar and his assistants. "The new ten-dollar Canadian gold piece and the new Canadian five-dollar gold piece are marvels of beauty and execution, whilst the sovereign, although in every respect identical with the same coin struck in London by the Royal Mint, and recognized as on a par therewith, has a more attractive appearance," said Mr. Wilkie. "The silver coins are also to be admired."

"We need no longer be dependent upon a foreign Government for our gold currency, and, with the enormous profit to the Government in the manufacture of silver currency there is every reason why the Government should continue to encourage the 'deportation' of foreign coins of that metal. Few elements tend more to build up a national sentiment than a national coinage. Royal or National Mints exist in every important country of the world; even countries of much less importance than Canada have such establishments, to wit, Argentina, Chili, Colombia, Denmark, Holland, Honduras, Norway, Persia, Peru, Siam, Switzerland—all of them have found it desirable and directly or indirectly profitable to encourage the manufacture of their own coinage in their own country."

The address of this prominent banker is printed in detail on another page, and is well worthy of perusal.

#### BANK ACCOUNTS OF PROVINCIAL TREASURERS.

In the January bank statement the deposits carried by the various provincial governments with their bankers amounted to \$27,015,103. Throughout 1911 the total amount of provincial government deposits did not fall below \$25,000,000, taking the balances at the end of the months. The high point was reached on July 31st, at which date the provincial balances amounted to nearly \$31,000,000. Throughout 1910 the balances were, if anything, higher than in 1911. The low point was reached on December 31st, on which date the deposits were \$24,714,358, and the high point was reached on 31st July, when they were \$32,175,484. The provincial government balances tend to rise when the subsidy from the Dominion Treasury is paid; and they also tend to rise when the provinces float loans abroad or at home.

The bank holding the largest balance is the Royal Bank of Canada—\$6,572,296, or nearly one-fifth of the