

process of years time is effecting its changes, and time is a great changer and a great healer of these conditions. It is almost 50 years ago since I made my first trip through this area, known as the Carberry Hills. At that time only here and there could a coniferous tree be seen. Today they are there in tens of thousands, wholly through natural reforestation; but had we devoted to the development of the resources of this district a fraction of what we have wasted in other directions over the last 75 years, it would now be the home of a vast spruce forest with all the wealth, the means of livelihood and the pleasure that it would give.

I shall mention only one other example in Canada, and that is the east slope of the Rocky Mountains. This slope, from the international boundary to the northern confines of Alberta, was at one time covered with forest, which acted as a natural reservoir for moisture and precipitation, and the streams that came down from the mountain-side found their way across the prairies. With the passage of time some of the forest was cut down, and fire, the most destructive agency, carried away a great deal of the rest. The result is that many of these rivers that should have their headwaters conserved by forest growth, become in the spring raging torrents and in the summer a pitiful trickle of water. The effect of this is felt in the numberless towns and cities along these rivers.

Now it is possible to restore much of the original condition, and this resolution is wide enough in its context, I take it, to authorize examination into these matters if the committee wishes to examine into them. We know very little about conservation in this country. We have been a most prodigal people, a most wasteful people. I remember that, when I had the responsibility of being a minister in the Government, one day a European diplomat came to my office to see me. I always had maps hanging in my office, because I am a great believer in maps. This diplomat asked me if I could show him where the radium mines were located. At that time the only source of radium was on the eastern end of Great Bear Lake at Cameron Bay, and I pulled down the map and pointed out the location. That led to other questions, and I showed him where our great belt of coniferous trees stretched across Canada from Labrador to the Pacific Coast, where our minerals were being discovered, and the location of our fertile lands in the valleys of British Columbia. We sat down for a moment, and then he said: "Mr. Crerar, you have a very rich country here but, if you do not mind my saying so, you

are a very wasteful people." He was correct on both counts. I am not sure that I did not relate that incident in the Senate several years ago. Anyway, it is true: we were, and are, a very wasteful people; but there is evidence that the importance of conservation in its many aspects is being realized by the Canadian people in an ever widening measure, and it is a good thing that this is so.

We have abused our farm lands in a large part of Canada. Now we have the problem of restoration before us and on that point may I mention this, that if any of my honourable colleagues are interested in what can be done in restoring farm lands I would suggest that they read a couple of books written by the author Louis Bromfield. Mr. Bromfield made his first start at writing books quite a number of years ago and he was very successful. He went to France to live, but during the Second World War when France was threatened with being overrun by the Germans he escaped from that country and came back to America, to the small country district in Ohio where he had been born. He had a recollection of what Ohio originally was. It had all been a forest at one time; but the land had been cleared of its forest growth and had been cropped year after year. The fertility of the soil had disappeared. Bromfield, who had the means to do it, undertook, as an illustration project, to bring back the old homestead upon which his grandfather had located more than a hundred years before. These books are named *Pleasant Valley* and *Malabar Farm*, and they tell the story of the restoration of that old farm to full fertility. It is an extraordinarily interesting illustration of what can be done by sound rehabilitation and conservation methods.

It is eminently fitting that this inquiry should be entrusted to the Senate. It is a duty we are well qualified to undertake and one through which we can render a definite service by an examination of these problems, and, I trust, the presentation of wholly non-partisan and constructive proposals that will adequately fix attention upon them. I realize that in respect of the administration of resources the provinces are supreme; but that does not prevent this house from making an examination, accumulating data, analysing it, and, I trust, drawing sound conclusions.

For these reasons, honourable senators, I warmly welcome this resolution, and I think we need have no hesitation in giving it our unanimous support.

Hon. Mr. Davies: Can the honourable Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) inform us whether this committee is to be a travelling body, or will it sit only in