

are still in the ownership of our Governments, so that extensive reserves can be made with little expense to the public treasury.

As an illustration of the importance of this fact, it may be mentioned that, for the last twenty-five years, it has been recognized in the United States that forest reservations were necessary to protect the head-waters of the streams that arise in the Appalachian mountains. Thousands of newspaper and magazine articles have been written on the subject. Bills have been introduced into Congress; influential associations and deputations have implored Congress to take action; presidents have recommended it; but no action has yet been taken. So difficult is it to secure intelligent attention to a subject which involves the welfare of whole states, once the land has passed from Government control.

Where the scope is almost infinite the effort should be to choose that which is immediately practical and useful. And first of all it appears clear to me that provision should be made for making a comprehensive and accurate inventory of our natural resources, so far as our available information extends. The beginning of all proper investigations is the ascertainment of facts, and there is no country that I know of where it is more urgently necessary in the public interest that the natural resources should be tabulated and inventoried than it is in Canada. When the Commission was appointed by the Canadian Government to go to Washington last winter, we set on foot a preliminary movement to tabulate information. The results of that work are now among our records. It is, I may say, of the most fragmentary description. It was surprising to find how difficult it was to get anything like accurate information. Statistical information of the class which our census officers prepare is abundant and accurate, but it does not assume to deal with the question of natural resources. At the present moment there are but few publications of any Government in Canada which give accurate and comprehensive information upon these subjects.

The utility of such an inventory hardly needs discussion. Both for the purposes of development and of conservation it is the first essential to have an accurate and complete statement of the facts, readily available, accessible to all, and couched in language that the average reader can understand.

You have no doubt made yourselves familiar with the declaration of principles adopted by the North American Conservation Conference at Washington. Let me quote from it one paragraph which, I think, should be regarded as embodying the guiding principle of our work.