

CALLS ON NATION TO SAVE ITSELF

President's Message Proclaims Need of Conserving Country's Resources.

REPORT OF NATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In Sending It to Congress Executive Declares Facts Contained in Document Constitute an Imperative Call to Action—"Permanent Welfare of Our People Cannot Exist Save on a Firm Foundation of Material Well Being"—He Defends General Course of His Administration.

Washington, Jan. 22.—President Roosevelt sent to congress today a message transmitting the report of the national conservation commission. He prefaces the report with his own comment, stating in vigorous terms his conviction that immediate action is needed if the rightful heritage of posterity in natural resources is to be preserved.

The message says: To the Senate and House of Representatives:

I transmit herewith a report of the national conservation commission, together with the accompanying papers. This report, which is the outgrowth of the conference of governors last May, was unanimously approved by the recent joint conference held in this city between the national conservation commission and governors of states, state conservation commissions and conservation committees of great organizations of citizens. It is therefore in a peculiar sense representative of the whole nation and all its parts.

With the statements and conclusions of this report I heartily concur, and I commend it to the thoughtful consideration both of the congress and of our people generally. It is one of the most fundamentally important documents ever laid before the American people. It contains the first inventory of its natural resources ever made by any nation. In condensed form it presents a statement of our available capital in material resources, which are the means of progress, and calls attention to the essential conditions upon which the perpetuity, safety and welfare of this nation now rest and must always continue to rest. It deserves and should have the widest possible distribution among the people.

The facts set forth in this report constitute an imperative call to action. The situation they disclose demands that we, neglecting for a time, if need be, smaller and less vital questions, shall concentrate an effective part of our attention upon the great material foundations of national existence, progress and prosperity.

Immediate Action Needed.

This first inventory of natural resources prepared by the national conservation commission is undoubtedly but the beginning of a series which will be indispensable for dealing intelligently with what we have. It supplies as close an approximation to the actual facts as it was possible to prepare with the knowledge and time available. The progress of our knowledge of this country will continually lead to more accurate information and better use of the sources of national strength. But we cannot defer action until complete accuracy in the estimates can be reached, because before that time many of our resources will be practically gone. It is not necessary that this inventory should be exact in every minute detail. It is essential that it should correctly describe the general situation and that the present inventory does. As it stands it is an irrefutable proof that the conservation of our resources is the fundamental question before this nation and that our first and greatest task is to set our house in order and begin to live within our means.

The first of all considerations is the permanent welfare of our people, and true moral welfare, the highest form of welfare, cannot permanently exist save on a firm and lasting foundation of material well being. In this respect our situation is far from satisfactory. After every possible allowance has been made and when every hopeful indication has been given its full weight the facts still give reason for grave concern. It would be unworthy of our history and our intelligence and disastrous to our future to shut our eyes to these facts or attempt to laugh them out of court. The people should and will rightly demand that the great fundamental questions shall be given attention by their representatives. I do not advise hasty or ill considered action on disputed points, but I do urge, where the facts are known, where the public interest is clear, that neither indifference and inertia nor adverse private interests shall be allowed to stand in the way of the public good.

Our Responsibility for the Future.

The great basic facts are already well known. We know that our population is now adding about one-fifth to its numbers in ten years and that by the middle of the present century perhaps 150,000,000 Americans and by its end very many millions more must be fed and clothed from the products of our soil. With the steady growth in

population and the still more rapid increase in consumption our people will hereafter make greater and not less demands per capita upon all the natural resources for their livelihood, comfort and convenience. It is high time to realize that our responsibility to the coming millions is like that of parents to their children and that in wasting our resources we are wronging our descendants.

We know now that our rivers can and should be made to serve our people effectively in transportation, but that the vast expenditures for our waterways have not resulted in maintaining, much less in promoting, inland navigation. Therefore let us take immediate steps to ascertain the reasons and to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan for inland waterway navigation that will result in giving the people the benefits for which they have paid, but which they have not yet received. We know now that our forests are fast disappearing, that less than one-fifth of them are being conserved and that no good purpose can be met by failing to provide the relatively small sums needed for the protection, use and improvement of all forests still owned by the government and to enact laws to check the wasteful destruction of the forests in private hands. There are differences of opinion as to many public questions, but the American people stand nearly as a unit for waterway development and for forest protection.

We know now that our mineral resources, once exhausted, are gone forever and that the needless waste of them costs us hundreds of human lives and nearly \$300,000,000 a year. Therefore let us undertake without delay the investigations necessary before our people will be in position through state action or otherwise to put an end to this huge loss and waste and conserve both our mineral resources and the lives of the men who take them from the earth.

I desire to make grateful acknowledgment to the men both in and out of the government service who have prepared the first inventory of our natural resources. They have made it possible for this nation to take a great step forward. Their work is helping us to see that the greatest questions before us are not partisan questions, but questions upon which men of all parties and all shades of opinion may be united for the common good. Among such questions, on the material side, the conservation of natural resources stands first. It is the bottom round of the ladder on our upward progress toward a condition in which the nation as a whole and its citizens as individuals will set national efficiency and the public welfare before personal profit.

Industrial Democracy in Danger.

The policy of conservation is perhaps the most typical example of the general policies which this government has made peculiarly its own during the opening years of the present century. The function of our government is to insure to all its citizens now and hereafter their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population and so either degrade the standard of living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent. If we allow great industrial organizations to exercise unregulated control of the means of production and the necessities of life we deprive the Americans of today and of the future of industrial liberty, a right no less precious and vital than political freedom. Industrial liberty was a fruit of political liberty and in turn has become one of its chief supports, and exactly as we stand for political democracy so we must stand for industrial democracy.

The rights to life and liberty are fundamental, and, like other fundamental necessities, when once acquired they are little dwelt upon. The right to the pursuit of happiness is the right whose presence or absence is most likely to be felt in daily life. In whatever it has accomplished or failed to accomplish the administration which is just drawing to a close has at least seen clearly the fundamental need of freedom of opportunity for every citizen. We have realized that the right of every man to live his own life, provide for his family and endeavor, according to his abilities, to secure for himself and for them a fair share of the good things of existence should be subject to one limitation and to no other. The freedom of the individual should be limited only by the present and future rights, interests and needs of the other individuals who make up the community. We should do all in our power to develop and protect individual liberty, individual initiative, but subject always to the need of preserving and promoting the general good. When necessary the private right must yield, under due process of law and with proper compensation, to the welfare of the commonwealth. The man who serves the community greatly should be greatly rewarded by the community. As there is great inequality of service, so there must be great inequality of reward, but no man and no set of men should be allowed to play the game of competition with loaded dice.

All this is simply good common sense. The underlying principle of conservation has been described as the application of common sense to common problems for the common good. If the description is correct, then conservation is the great fundamental basis for national efficiency. In this stage of the world's history to be fearless, to be just and to be efficient are the three great requirements of national life.

Administration's Aims Defended.

This administration has achieved some things. It has sought, but has

not been able, to achieve others. I have doubtless made mistakes, but it has done or attempted has been the single, consistent effort to secure and enlarge the rights and opportunities of the men and women of the United States. We are trying to conserve what is good in our social system, and we are striving toward the end when we endeavor to do away with what is bad. Success may be made too hard for some if it is made too easy for others. The rewards of common industry and thrift may be too small if the rewards for other and on the whole less valuable qualities are made too large, and especially if the rewards for qualities which are really, from the public standpoint, undesirable are permitted to become too large.

The unchecked existence of monopoly is incompatible with equality of opportunity. The reason for the exercise of government control over great monopolies is to equalize opportunity. We are fighting against privilege. It was made unlawful for corporations to contribute money for election expenses in order to abridge the power of special privilege at the polls. Railroad rate control is an attempt to secure an equality of opportunity for all men affected by rail transportation, and that means all of us. The great anthracite coal strike was settled and the pressing danger of a coal famine averted because we recognized that the control of a public necessity involves a duty to the people and that public intervention in the affairs of a public service corporation is neither to be resented as usurpation nor permitted as a privilege by the corporations, but, on the contrary, to be accepted as a duty and exercised as a right by the government in the interest of all the people. The efficiency of the army and the navy has been increased so that our people may follow in peace the great work of making this country a better place for Americans to live in, and our navy was sent round the world for the same ultimate purpose. All the acts taken by the government during the last seven years and all the policies now being pursued by the government fit in as parts of a consistent whole.

Measures for Country's Good.

Our public land policy has for its aim the use of the public land so that it will promote local development by the settlement of homesteaders. The policy we abandoned is to serve all the people legitimately and openly, instead of parceling the lands to be converted, illegitimately and under cover, to the private benefit of a few. Our forest policy was established so that we might use the public forests for the permanent public good, instead of merely for temporary private gain. The reclamation act, under which the desert parts of the public domain are converted to higher uses for the general benefit, was passed so that more Americans might have homes on the land.

These policies were enacted into law and have justified their enactment. Others have failed so far to reach the public good. Among such is the attempt to exercise public control of the open range and to convert its benefits to the use of the small man, who is the homesteader, instead of allowing it to be controlled by a few great cattle and sheep owners.

The enactment of a pure food law was a recognition of the fact that the public welfare outweighs the right to private gain and that no man may poison the people for his private profit. The employers' liability bill recognized the controlling fact that, while the employer usually has at stake no more than his profit, the stake of the employee is a living for himself and his family.

For the Benefit of the People.

We are building the Panama canal, and this means that we are engaged in the giant engineering feat of all time. We are striving to add in all ways to the habitability and beauty of our country. We are striving to hold in the public hands the remaining supply of unappropriated coal for the protection and benefit of all the people. We have taken the first steps toward the conservation of our natural resources and the betterment of country life and the improvement of our waterways. We stand for the right of every child to a childhood free from grinding toil and to an education, for the civic responsibility and decency of every citizen, for prudent foresight in public matters and for fair play in every relation of our national and economic life. In international matters we apply a system of diplomacy which puts the obligations of international morality on a level with those that govern the actions of an honest gentleman in dealing with his fellow men. Within our own border we stand for truth and honesty in public and in private life, and we war sternly against wrongdoers of every grade.

The obligations and not the rights of citizenship increase in proportion to the increase of a man's wealth or power. The time is coming when a man will be judged not by what he has succeeded in getting for himself from the common store, but by how well he has done his duty as a citizen and by what the ordinary citizen has gained in freedom of opportunity because of his service for the common good. The highest value we know is that of the individual citizen, and the highest justice is to give him fair play in the effort to realize the best there is in him.

Common Sense Needed.

The tasks this nation has to do are great tasks. They can only be done at all by our citizens acting together, and they can be done best of all by the direct and simple application of homely common sense.

The national conservation commission wisely confined its report to the

statement of facts and principles, leaving the executive to recommend the specific steps to which these facts and principles inevitably lead. Accordingly I call your attention to some of the larger features of the situation disclosed by the report and to the action thereby clearly demanded for the general good.

Waters.

The report says: Within recent months it has been recognized and demanded by the people, through many thousand delegates from all states assembled in convention in different sections of the country, that the waterways should and must be improved promptly and effectively as a means of maintaining national prosperity.

The first requisite for waterway improvement is the control of the waters in such manner as to reduce floods and regulate the regimen of the navigable rivers. The second requisite is development of terminals and connections in such manner as to regulate commerce.

Accordingly I urge that the broad plan for the development of our waterways, recommended by the inland waterways commission, be put in effect without delay. It provides for a comprehensive system of waterway improvement extending to all the uses of the waters and benefits to be derived from their control, including navigation, the development of power, the extension of irrigation, the drainage of swamps and overflow lands, the prevention of soil wash and the purification of streams for water supply. It proposes to carry out the work by coordinating agencies in the federal departments through the medium of an administrative commission or board, acting in co-operation with the states and other organizations and individual citizens.

The work of waterway development should be undertaken without delay. Meritorious projects in known conformity with the general outlines of any comprehensive plan should proceed at once. The cost of the whole work should be met by direct appropriation if possible, but if necessary by the issue of bonds in small denominations.

It is especially important that the development of water power should be guarded with the utmost care both by the national government and by the states in order to protect the people against the upgrowth of monopoly and to insure to them a fair share in the benefits which will follow the development of this great asset, which belongs to the people and should be controlled by them.

Forests.

I urge that provision be made for both protection and more rapid development of the national forests. Otherwise, either the increasing use of these forests by the people must be checked or their protection against fire must be dangerously weakened. If we compare the actual fire damage on similar areas on private and national forest lands during the past year, the government fire patrol saved commercial timber worth as much as the total cost of caring for all national forests at the present rate for about ten years.

I especially commend to the congress the facts presented by the commission as to the relation between forests and stream flow in its bearing upon the importance of the forest lands in national ownership. Without an understanding of this intimate relation the conservation of both these natural resources must largely fail.

The time has fully arrived for recognizing in the law the responsibility to the community, the state and the nation which rests upon the private owners of private lands. The ownership of forest land is a public trust. The man who would so handle his forest as to cause erosion and to injure stream flow must be not only educated, but he must be controlled.

The report of the national conservation commission says:

Forests in private ownership cannot be conserved unless they are protected from fire. We need good fire laws, well enforced. Fire control is impossible without an adequate force of men whose sole duty is fire patrol during the dangerous season.

I hold as first among the tasks before the states and the nation in their respective shares in forest conservation the organization of efficient fire patrols and the enactment of good fire laws on the part of the states.

The report says further:

Present tax laws prevent reforestation of cut over land and the perpetuation of existing forests by use. An annual tax upon the land itself, exclusive of the timber, and a tax upon the timber when cut is well adapted to actual conditions of forest investment and is practicable and certain. It is far better that forest land should pay a moderate tax permanently than that it should pay an excessive revenue temporarily and then cease to yield at all.

Second only in importance to good fire laws well enforced is the enactment of tax laws which will permit the perpetuation of existing forests by use.

Lands.

With our increasing population the time is not far distant when the problem of supplying our people with food will become pressing. The possible additions to our arable area are not great, and it will become necessary to obtain much larger crops from the land, as is now done in more densely settled countries. To do this we need better farm practice and better strains of wheat, corn and other crop plants, with a reduction in losses from soil erosion and from insects, animals and other enemies of agriculture. The United States department of agriculture is doing excellent work in these directions, and it should be liberally supported.

The remaining public lands should be classified and the arable lands disposed of to homesteaders. In their interest the timber and stone act and the commutation clause of the homestead act should be repealed, and a desert land law should be modified in accordance with the recommendations of the public lands commission.

The use of the public grazing lands should be regulated in such ways as to improve and conserve their value.

Rights to the surface of the public land should be separated from rights to forests upon it and to minerals beneath it, and these should be subject to separate disposal.

The coal, oil, gas and phosphate rights still remaining with the government should be withdrawn from entry and leased under conditions favorable for economic development.

Minerals.

The accompanying reports show that the consumption of nearly all of our mineral products is increasing more rapidly than our population. Our mineral waste is about one-sixth of our product, or nearly \$1,000,000 for each working day in the year. The loss of structural materials through fire is about another million a day. The loss of life in the mines is appalling. The larger part of these losses of life and property can be avoided.

Our mineral resources are limited in quantity and cannot be increased or reproduced. With the rapidly increasing rate of consumption the supply will be exhausted while yet the nation is in its infancy unless better methods are devised or substitutes are found. Further investigation is urgently needed in order to improve methods and to develop and apply substitutes.

It is of the utmost importance that a bureau of mines be established in accordance with the pending bill to reduce the loss of life in mines and the waste of mineral resources and to investigate the methods and substitutes for prolonging the duration of our mineral supplies. Both the need and the public demand for such a bureau are rapidly becoming more urgent. It should co-operate with the states in supplying data to serve as a basis for state mine regulations. The establishment of this bureau will mean merely the transfer from other bureaus of work which it is agreed should be transferred and slightly enlarged and reorganized for these purposes.

Conclusions.

The joint conference already mentioned adopted two resolutions to which I call your special attention. The first was intended to promote co-operation between the states and the nation upon all of the great questions here discussed. It is as follows:

Resolved, That a joint committee be appointed by the chairman, to consist of six members of state conservation commissions and three members of the national conservation commission, whose duty it shall be to prepare and present to the state and national commissions and through them to the governors and the president a plan for united action by all organizations concerned with the conservation of natural resources. (On motion of Governor Noel of Mississippi the chairman and secretary of the conference were added to and constituted a part of this committee.)

The second resolution of the joint conference to which I refer calls upon the congress to provide the means for such co-operation. The principle of the community of interest among all our people in the great natural resources runs through the report of the national conservation commission and the proceedings of the joint conference. These resources, which form the common basis of our welfare, can be wisely developed, rightly used and prudently conserved only by the common action of all the people, acting through their representatives in state and nation; hence the fundamental necessity for co-operation. Without it we shall accomplish but little, and that little badly. The resolution follows:

We also especially urge on the congress of the United States the high desirability of maintaining a national commission on the conservation of the resources of this country, empowered to co-operate with state commissions to the end that every sovereign commonwealth and every section of the country may attain the high degree of prosperity and the sureness of perpetuity naturally arising in the abundant resources and the vigor, intelligence and patriotism of our people.

In this recommendation I most heartily concur, and I urge that an appropriation of at least \$50,000 be made to cover the expenses of the national conservation commission for necessary report, assistance and traveling expenses. This is a very small sum. I know of no other way in which the appropriation of so small a sum would result in so large a benefit to the whole nation. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

The White House, Jan. 22, 1909.

INVENTORY OF COUNTRY'S RESOURCES

Commission Tells How They Should Be Conserved.

In forwarding to the president the report of the national conservation commission Gifford Pinchot, chairman of the commission, says the entry of the conservation movement into the field of definite constructive work is accomplished by the authorization of a joint committee on co-operation, to be composed of six members of the state conservation commissions and three members of the national conservation commission, with its chairman and secretary. This committee is to devise ways and means for effective co-operation between all forces working for the conservation of national resources.

Mr. Pinchot takes occasion to recognize the work of the secretary of the commission, Thomas B. Shipp, and the secretaries of the four sections of waters, forests, lands and minerals, Messrs. W. J. McGee, Overton W. Price, George W. Woodruff and J. A. Holmes, respectively, without whose services, together with the government experts, the making of the national in-

ventory would have been impossible. The five secretaries sign the report with him.

The report of the commission is devoted mainly to an inventory of the country's resources in minerals, lands, forests and waters, closing with a section on "national efficiency."

The mineral production of the United States for 1907 exceeded \$2,000,000,000 and contributed 65 per cent of the total freight traffic of the country. The waste in the extraction and treatment of mineral products during the same year was equivalent to more than \$300,000,000. The available and easily accessible supplies of coal in the United States aggregate approximately 1,400,000,000 tons. At the present increasing rate of production this supply will be so depleted as to approach exhaustion before the middle of the next century. The high grade iron ores (the only iron ores available for use under existing conditions) cannot be expected to last beyond the middle of the present century. The same is true of the petroleum supply. The supply of stone, clay, cement, lime, sand and salt is ample, while the stock of the precious metals and of copper, lead, zinc, sulphur, asphalt, graphite, quicksilver, mica and the rare metals cannot well be estimated, but is clearly exhaustible within one to three centuries unless unexpected deposits are found.

The consumption of nearly all our mineral products is increasing far more rapidly than our population. A stray gleam of light in the otherwise gloomy mineral situation is seen in the fact that while the production of coal is increasing enormously, the waste and loss in mining are diminishing. There is urgent need of greater safety to the miner. The loss of life through mine accidents is appalling. Stress is laid on the assertion that four-fifths of the country's fire losses, or an average of \$1,000,000 a day, could be prevented if the precautions taken in Europe were adopted here.

Speaking of the nation's cultivable area, the report declares that there has been a slight increase in the average yield of our great staple farm products, but neither the increase in acreage nor the yield per acre has kept pace with our increase in population. Within a century we shall probably have to feed three times as many people as now, and the main bulk of our food supply must be grown on our own soil. We have now nearly 6,000,000 farms, averaging 145 acres each, but only a little more than two-fifths of the area of continental United States is under cultivation. The United States can grow the farm products needed by a population more than three times as great as our country now contains, but we must greatly increase the yield per acre.

The greatest unnecessary waste of our soil is preventable erosion. Second only to this is the waste, misuse and misuse of fertilizer derived from animals and men. Other great causes of loss are due to injurious mammals, plant diseases and insects. Most of these farm losses are preventable. The present public land laws as a whole do not conserve the best interests of the people. Title to the surface of the remaining nonmineral public lands should be granted only to actual homesteaders.

Next to our need of food and water comes our need of timber, declares the report. The preservation by use under the methods of practical forestry of all public forest lands either in state or federal ownership is essential for the permanent public welfare. Effective and immediate co-operation by private enterprise, state ownership and federal ownership is needed if the public interest is to be subserved. By reasonable thrift we can produce a constant timber supply beyond our present need and with it conserve the usefulness of our streams for irrigation, water supply, navigation and power.

Of the 70,000,000,000 cubic feet of water annually flowing into the sea less than 1 per cent is restrained and utilized for municipal and community supply; less than 2 per cent (or some 10 per cent of that in the arid and semiarid regions) is used for irrigation; perhaps 5 per cent is used for navigation and less than 5 per cent for power. The freshets are attended by destructive soil erosion. The soil matter annually carried into lower rivers and harbors or into the sea is computed at 780,000,000 tons. Soil wash reduces by 10 to 20 per cent the productivity of upland farms and increases channel cutting and bar building in the rivers. The annual loss to the farms alone is \$500,000,000, and large losses follow the fouling of the waters and the diminished navigation of the streams.

Broad plans should be adopted providing for a system of waterway improvement extending to all uses of the waters and benefits to be derived from their control.

Under the heading "National Efficiency" the report says:

"Since the greatest of our national assets is the health and vigor of the American people, our efficiency must depend on national vitality even more than on the resources of the mineral, lands, forests and waters. "Our annual mortality from tuberculosis is about 150,000. Stopping three-fourths of the loss of life from this cause and from typhoid and other prevalent and preventable diseases would increase our average length of life over fifteen years. "If we count the value of each life lost at only \$1,700 and reckon the average earning lost by illness as \$700 per year for grown men, we find that the economic gain from mitigation of preventable disease in the United States would exceed \$1,500,000,000 a year. In addition, we would decrease suffering and increase happiness and contentment among the people."

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