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# **DRAFT**

*Of A*

**Plan for Beginning**

## **ANIMAL SANCTUARIES**

*In*

## **LABRADOR**

BY

**LT.-COLONEL WILLIAM WOOD**

*(to be submitted to the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Conservation Commission of the Dominion of Canada in 1913.)*

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### **I. RECAPITULATION.**

The original address on *Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador* was published in the spring of 1911. The *Supplement* was published in the summer of 1912. The present *Plan*, or *Second Supplement*, is now being submitted for consideration to the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Commission of Conservation at the beginning of 1913.

These papers are published for free distribution among those who are interested in the preservation of wild life. They are to be obtained on application to *The Secretary, Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, Canada.* But both the *Address* and *Supplement* are almost out of print.

Communications on the subject itself should be addressed direct to me:—*Colonel Wood, Quebec, Canada.*

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I gladly take this opportunity of thanking the many experts whose kind help has given my papers whatever real value they possess. Some of these experts have never been called so in their lives, and will be greatly astonished to find that they are called so now. But when I know they are the thing, why should I hesitate about the name? In any proper meaning of the word there are several first-class "experts" among my friends who go fishing, sealing, whaling, hunting, trapping, "furring" or guiding for their livelihood. And I hereby most gratefully acknowledge all I have learnt during many a pleasant day with them, afloat and ashore. The other kind of experts, those who are called so by the world at large, have been quite as generous with their information and advice. In fact, they have been so very generous that perhaps I should call myself the editor, rather than the author, of the *Supplement*, as more than half of it is occupied by extracts from their letters concerning the *Address*.

It might be as well to restate the argument of this *Address* in the fewest possible words.

An eagerly exploiting people in an easily exploited country, we are only too apt to live on the capital of all our natural resources. We are also in the habit of developing one thing at the expense of everything else connected with it. The value of these other things often remains unrecognised till too late. For instance, reckless railways burn forests which ensure a constant flow of water for irrigation, navigation, power plant, and fish, besides providing wood for timber and shelter for bird and beast. The presence of a construction gang generally means the needless extermination of every animal in the neighbourhood. The presence of mills means the needless absence of fish. And the presence of ill-governed cities means the needless and deadly pollution of water that never was meant for a sewer. The idea is the same in each disgraceful case. It is, simply, to snatch whatever is most coveted for the moment, with least trouble to one's self, and at no matter what expense to Nature and the future of man. The cant phrase is only too well known—"Lots more where that came from". Exploitation is destroying now what civilisation will long to restore hereafter. This is lamentably true about material things. It is truer still about the higher than material things. And it is truest of all about both the material and higher values of wild life, which we administer as if we were the final spendthrift heirs and not trustees.

Animal sanctuaries are places where man is passive and the rest of Nature active. A sanctuary is the same thing to wild life as a spring is to a river. In itself a sanctuary is a natural "zoo". But it is much more than a "zoo". It can only contain a certain number of animals. Its surplus must overflow to stock surrounding areas. And it constitutes a refuge for all species whose lines of migration pass through it. So its value in the preservation of desirable wild life is not to be denied. Of course, sanctuaries occasionally develop troubles of their own; for if man interferes with the balance of

nature in one way he must be prepared to interfere in others. But all experience shows that an easily worked system will ensure a *maximum* of gain and a *minimum* of loss.

Up till quite recently Nature had her own animal sanctuaries in vast and sparsely settled lands like Labrador. But now she has none. There is no place left where wild life is safe from men who use all the modern means of destruction without being bound by any of the modern means of conservation. And this is nowhere truer than in Labrador, though the area of the whole peninsula is equal to eleven Englands, while, even at the busiest season along the coast, there is not one person to more than every ten square miles. Since the white man went there at least three-quarters of the forests have been burnt, and sometimes the soil burnt too. Wild life of all kinds has been growing rapidly less. The walrus is receding further and further north. Seals are diminishing. Whales are beginning to disappear. Fur-bearing animals can hardly hold their own much longer in face of the ever increasing demand for their pelts and the more systematic invasion of their range. The opening up of the country in the north will mean the extinction of the great migrating herd of barren-ground caribou, unless protection is enforced. The coast birds are going fast. Some very old men can still remember the great auk, which is now as extinct as the dodo. Elderly men have eaten the Labrador duck, which has not been seen alive for thirty years. And young men will certainly see the end of the Hudsonian and Eskimo curlews very soon, under present conditions. The days of commercial "egging" on a large scale are over, because eggs of the final lay were taken like the rest, and the whole bird life was depleted below paying quantities. But "egging" still goes on in other ways, especially at the hands of Newfoundlanders, who are wantonly wasteful in their methods, unlike the coast people, who only take what the birds will replace. The Newfoundlanders and other strangers gather all the eggs they see, put them into water, and throw away every one that floats. Thus many more bird lives are destroyed than eggs are eaten or sold, because schooners appear towards the end of the regular laying season, when most of the eggs are about to hatch out—and these are the ones that float. But even greater destruction is done when a schooner stays several days in the same place. For then the crew go round, first smashing every egg they see, and afterwards gathering every egg they see, because they know the few they find the second time must have been newly laid.

Many details were given of other forms of destruction, and some details of the revolting cruelties practised there, as in every other place where wild life is grossly abused instead of being sanely used. All classes of legitimate human interest were dealt with in turn; and it was shown that the present system—or want of system—was bad for each one: bad for such wild life as must still be used for necessary food, bad for every kind of business in the products of wild life, bad for the future of sport, bad for the pursuits of science, and bad for the prospects of wild "zoos". The *Address* ended with a plea for conservation, and pointed out that the only class of people who could possibly be benefitted under present conditions were those who were ready to destroy both the

capital and interest of any natural resources for the sake of snatching a big and immediate, but really criminal, profit.

The *Address* was sent out for review to several hundreds of general and specialist newspapers, and, thanks to the expert help so freely given me, ran the gauntlet of the press without finding one dissentient voice against it. Copies were also sent to every local expert known, as well as to those experts in the world outside who were the most likely to be interested. Three classes of invaluable expert opinion were thus obtained for the *Supplement*. The first class may be called experts on Labrador; the second, experts on wild life in general; and the third, experts on the public aspects of the question. All three were entirely in favour of general conservation for the whole of Labrador and the immediate establishment of special sanctuaries, as recommended in the *Address*.

Among the experts on Labrador were the following:—DR BELL, late head of the Geological Survey of Canada, who has made seven expeditions into Labrador and who has always paid particular attention to the mammals; DR CLARKE, Director of Science Education in the State of New York, who has spent twelve summers studying the natural history of the Gulf; MR. COMEAU, a past master, of fifty years experience as a professional hunter, guide, inspector and salmon river warden on the North Shore; DR GRENFELL, whose intimate acquaintance with the Atlantic Labrador is universally recognised; DR HARE, whose position on the Canadian Labrador corresponds to that of Dr Grenfell on the Atlantic; DR TOWNSHEND, author of the standard work on *The Birds of Labrador*; and COMMANDER WAKEHAM, head of the Fisheries Protection Service, who knows the wild life of the whole coast, from the River St. Lawrence round to Hudson Bay.

Among the experts on animal life in general were:—THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB, whose one hundred members include most of the greatest sportsman-naturalists in the United States, and whose influence on wild-life conservation is second to none; THE CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA, whose larger membership includes many of the best conservationists in Canada as well as the United States; MR. GRINNELL, one of the greatest authorities in the world on the Indians and wild life of North America; MR. MACOUN, Dominion Naturalist and international expert on seals and whales, who lately examined the zoogeographical area of Hudson Bay; MR. CLIVE-PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY, author of standard books on big game in the *Badminton Library* and elsewhere; MR. THOMPSON SETON, whose *Life-history of Northern Mammals* is the best work of its kind on the area to which the Labrador peninsula belongs; MAJOR STEVENSON HAMILTON, superintendent of the great Government Game Reserves in South Africa; and MR. ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, whose original and creative work on the theory of evolution inseparably connects him with his friend Darwin for all time to come, who is now the last of the giants of the Victorian age, and who is the founder and greatest exponent of the science of zoogeography, which has a special bearing on Labrador.

Among the experts on the public aspects of the question were:—MR. BRYCE, who has been an ardent lover of the wilds throughout his distinguished career on both sides of the Atlantic; LORD GREY, who paid special attention to the subject during his journey to Hudson Bay in 1910; MR. KIPLING, whose *Jungle Books* revealed the soul of wild life to so many readers; and MR. ROOSEVELT, a sportsman-naturalist of world-wide fame, during whose Presidential terms more wild-life conservation was effected in the United States than during all other Presidential terms put together, before or since.

To this I am graciously permitted to add that HIS MAJESTY THE KING was pleased to manifest his interest in the subject by taking the *Address* with him to read on his way to India; and that HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, Governor-General, who has shown his own keen interest on several occasions, has marked his approval by writing the following letter for publication here:—

Dear Colonel Wood,

I have been reading with the greatest interest your address on Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador and also the draft of the Supplement which you were good enough to send me for perusal. You have certainly been so far rewarded for your trouble by having collected a great weight of testimony and of valuable opinions, all endorsing the useful cause to which you are devoting yourself.

I know from reports that many varieties of game, which were threatened with extinction in South Africa ten years ago, have, by the timely establishment of game reserves, been saved, and are now relatively numerous. I may add that this end has not been obtained simply by the establishment of the reserves and by the passing of game-laws, but by enforcing those laws in the most rigid manner and by appointing the right men to enforce them.

From personal experience I know what the game reserves have done for East Africa. In these reserves the wild animals are left to breed and live in peace, undisturbed by any one but the game-warden. From them the overflow drifts out into the surrounding districts and provides a plentiful supply for the hunter and settler. What has been done in Africa could be done in Canada and elsewhere. You have so much land which is favourable to birds and beasts, though unfavourable to the settler, that it would seem to be no hardship to give up a suitable area or areas for the purpose of a reserve. This, with the infliction of heavy penalties for the ruthless destruction of animal life, should secure a fresh lease of existence for the various species whose extermination now appears to be imminent.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your work, in which you may always count upon my greatest sympathy.

Believe me,

Yours truly,  
ARTHUR.

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## II. VERIFICATION.

In order to make quite sure about conditions up to date, I spent two months last summer examining some 1500 miles of coast line, from Nova Scotia, round by Newfoundland to the Straits, and thence inwards along the Canadian Labrador and North Shore of the St. Lawrence. On the whole, I found that I had rather under- than over-stated the dangers threatening the wild life there, and that I had nothing to retract from what I said in my *Address* and *Supplement*.

As I spent one month among the fishermen of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, who commit most of the depredations, and the other month among the people along the Canadian Labrador, on whom the depredations are committed, I enjoyed the advantage of hearing both sides of the story. It was very much what I had heard before and what I said it was. The argument is, that so long as there is no law, or no law put in force, every man will do what he likes—which is unanswerably true. I am also afraid that there is no practical answer to the logical deduction from this, that so long as bad men can do what they like good men must do the same or "get left". Good, bad and indifferent, all alike, are squandering the capital of the wild life as fast as they can, though the legitimate interest of it would soon yield far better returns if conservation was to replace the beggaring methods in vogue to-day.

I would urge the earliest possible extension of thoroughly well enforced wild-life conservation laws to the whole Labrador peninsula; and I would venture to remind the Commission again, as I did in my *Supplement*, that the wild life of Arctic Canada is even now in danger and ought to be efficiently protected before it is too late. But, for the present purpose, I shall revert to Labrador only; and, for a practical beginning, recommend the immediate adoption of conservation only in the "Canadian Labrador".

So far as I could judge from talking things over with the south coast trappers, most of the fur-bearing animals seem to be holding their own fairly well in the market. But it should be remembered that, with the recent great rise in prices, fewer skins may mean more money, and that even the establishment of fox farms, and the probable establishment of other fur farms, may not overtake the present increasing demand, which, in its turn, must tend to deplete the original source of supply still further, unless strict conservation is enforced. There was a wonderful supply of foxes a year ago, though nothing to the muskrats which swarmed down south last fall. But failure of food

further north may have had more to do with those irruptions than any outburst of unusual fecundity. Caribou apparently remain much as they have been lately. But the hunger of wolves and the greed of men are two enemies that nothing but conservation can keep in check. Of course, genuinely "necessary food" is not at all in question. I know an old hunter, living at Pokkashoo in summer and St. Augustine in winter, who brought in sixteen caribou last season. But he gave fifteen away to really necessitous families and kept only one for himself.

The whale factories at Lark Harbour and Hawke Bay, on the west coast of Newfoundland, were both closed for want of whales. The only one in the Gulf that was working last year was at Seven Islands, on the North Shore, 300 miles below Quebec. I happened to be almost in at the death of the biggest finback ever taken. But, speaking generally, the season was not really prosperous. The station of Seven Islands is worked by Norwegians, who are the most exterminatingly efficient whalers in the world. They worked their own whaleries to exhaustion and raised so much feeling against them among the fishermen that the Norwegian government forbade every factory along the shore. They then invented floating factories, which may still be used in Canadian waters with deadly effect unless we put whaling under conservation. The feeling among the fishermen here is the same as elsewhere, strongly in favour of the whales and strongly against the exterminating kind of whaler, because whales are believed to drive the bait fish close inshore, which is very "handy" for the fishermen.

The spring sealing of 1912 was a failure on the Canadian Labrador, as the main "harp" herd was missed by just one day. The whole industry is carried on by Newfoundlanders and men whose vessels take their catch to Newfoundland, because the only working plant is concentrated there. The excessive spring kill greatly depletes the females and young, as it takes place in the whelping season, when the herds are moving north along the off-shore ice; and this depletion naturally spoils not only the Newfoundlanders' permanent industry itself but the much smaller inshore autumn catch by our own Canadian Labradorians, when the herds are moving south. The Canadians along the North Shore and Labrador look upon the invading Newfoundlanders, in this and other pursuits, very much as a farmer looks upon a gipsy whose horse comes grazing in his hayfield. And the analogy sometimes does hold good. When men under a different government, men who do not own a foot of land in Canada, men who do not pay specific taxes for Canadian rights, when these men slaughter seals on inshore ice, use land and inlets for cleaning fish and foul the water with their "gurry", and when they also "egg" on other peoples' islands in defiance of the law, then the analogy is perfect. It does not hold good, of course, in ordinary fishing, which is conducted under Dominion licence and vigilantly watched by Commander Wakeham. But whether Canada is not giving away too much for what she gets in licences is quite another question.

The excessive spring kill by the Newfoundlanders does not seem to be the only reason why the local seal hunt is not so good as it used to be. The whites complain that the

Indians along the coast kill an undue number of seals on the one hand and of caribou on the other. But fishermen all the world over are against the harbour seals; and generally exaggerate their depredations, as they exaggerate the depredations of most kinds of seabirds. Whatever the fate of the harbour seals should be, there can be no doubt that the harps or Greenland seals, the bearded or square-flippers, the grey or horseheads, and the gigantic and magnificently game hoods, should all be put under conservation. I am also inclined to think that the walrus could be coaxed back to what once were some of his most favourite haunts. Just now he has no chance whatever; and he is so extremely rare that the one I nearly rowed the dinghy into last August, down at Whale Head East, was only the second seen inside the Straits during the present century.

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### **III. PLAN OF CONSERVATION FOR THE CANADIAN LABRADOR.**

Whaling, sealing and deep-sea fishing are Dominion and international affairs; and whaling, at all events, is soon to engage the attention of statesmen, experts and the public—let us hope, to some good end. The inland birds and mammals from the St. Lawrence to Ungava now come under the Province of Quebec; though no effective protection has ever reached the Canadian Labrador. Beyond this, again, lies the Atlantic Labrador, which is entirely under Newfoundland. So I would suggest that the Commission should try a five-year experiment in the conservation of seabird life along the Canadian Labrador, because this would not come into overlapping contact with any other exercised authority, because it is bound to be successful, because it will only cost a sum that should be had for the asking, because it is most urgently pressing, and because it can be begun at once, to the lasting advantage of all concerned.

The "Canadian Labrador" is the last remaining vestige of the No-Man's-Land which, only a hundred years ago, began at the Saguenay, within 120 miles of Quebec. Then, as the organised "North Shore" advanced down stream, the unorganised "Canadian Labrador" receded before it. Fifty years ago the dividing line was at Seven Islands, 300 miles below Quebec. To-day it runs just east of Natashquan and is a full 500 miles below.

There is no stranger country anywhere than this Canadian Labrador. Dr Grenfell's Labrador, which has nothing to do with Canada, is known to everyone. But the very existence of our own Labrador, with its 200 miles of coastline and its more than 20,000 islands, is quite unknown, as a separate entity, to all but a very few outside of its little, but increasing, population of 1200 souls. It lies on the north shore of the Gulf, just inside



the Straits of Belle Isle, and runs from Bradore in the east to Kegashka in the west. Here, close beside the crowded track of ocean liners, and well below the latitude of London, is by far the most southerly arctic region in the world. It is a land of rock and moss; for, except along the river valleys, there are neither grass nor trees. No crops are grown or ever can be grown. There are no horses, cattle, poultry, pigs or sheep. Reindeer are said to be coming. But there are none at present. The only domestic animals are dogs, that howl like wolves, but never bark. And yet it is a country which is rich, and might be richer still, in fish and fur, and which seems formed by Nature to be a perfect paradise of all that is most desirable in the wild life of the north, especially in the seabirds that are now being done to death among its countless archipelagoes.

Its natural features are not the only strange things in it. It is a curiosity of government, or, rather, of the want of government. It is *in* the Province of Quebec and *in* the Dominion; yet, in one sense, not *of* either. For it is the only place of its kind inhabited by educated whites, in any part of the self-governing Empire, where no man has ever cast a single vote or ever had the right to cast one. The electoral line stops short at Natashquan, 36 miles west of Kegashka. So 1200 good Canadians have no vote. They are dumb and their two governments are deaf. They have bought their little holdings from the Province; and they pay Canadian custom dues to the Dominion, on everything they get from the Quebec truck traders or the Hudson Bay posts, in exchange for their fish and fur. But they do not enjoy even the elementary right of protection from depredation committed by men who have no claim on Canada at all. Let me add that by this I do not mean for one moment to abuse my friends the Newfoundlanders. A kindlier people I have never met. Nor do I mean to abuse the Americans and Nova Scotians who sometimes slink inside the three-mile limit. But I do mean to draw attention to the regrettable fact that the absence of all wild-life conservation is becoming ruinous to everyone concerned—even to the exterminating Newfoundlanders, who are now making our shores as bleak a desert as they have made their own.

Of course the Canadian Labrador should help itself. Let it form a "Neighbourhood Improvement Association" under the Commission. There are good leaders in Dr Hare, the head of the medical mission; in the three religious missions—Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic; and among the principal fishermen, who are mostly Anglo- but partly French-Canadian. What the coast needs is not coddling and charity but conservation and protection against depredators from outside. The best way to begin is to protect the seabirds. And the best body to do this is the Commission of Conservation. The Province of Quebec has just put the finishing touch to a great work by establishing an animal sanctuary in the heart of the Laurentides National Park. It is also doing good work by making the game laws more effective elsewhere. But, being dependently human, it can hardly pass over the whole North Shore of voters in order to give special protection to the little, voteless No-Man's-Land of the Canadian Labrador; though immediate special protection is a very vital concern to that most neglected part

of Canada. The Dominion stops short by water as decidedly as the Province does by land. So an ideal place is left defenceless between the two, as if expressly made for the Commission to conserve.

I know that the Commission cannot undertake any executive work of a permanent character. But it can undertake an experimental investigation for a term of years. And, here again, the Canadian Labrador offers a perfect field. For if only five years' effective conservation is extended to the bird life of that coast the whole situation will be saved. I do not presume to lay down the law on the subject. But I would venture to suggest that some such plan as the following would probably be found quite effective at the very moderate cost of five thousand dollars a year.

1. The residents to form their own "Neighbourhood Improvement Association" under the Commission of Conservation.
2. The Commission to protect the bird life of the coast experimentally for five years, from the 1st of May, 1913.
3. The 200 miles of coast, from Kegashka to Bradore, to be divided into 5 beats. One local boat and two local men to each beat, from the 1st of May to the 1st of September, by contract, at \$600 a boat = \$3,000. Each boat to have a motor capable of doing at least 6 knots an hour. Local men are essential. Strangers, however good otherwise, would be lost in that labyrinth of uncharted and unlighted islands. \$2 a day a man is not too much for these men, who would have to give up their whole time in the busy season, the only season, in fact, when they make money, except for the chance of "furring". \$1 a day a boat is equally reasonable. The five beats might be called the Romaine, Harrington, Tabatière, Shekattika and Bradore.
4. A sixth boat should move about inspecting the whole coast during the season. It should have a trained naturalist as Inspector, the local game warden of the Province of Quebec, and a crew of two men. The Quebec warden would be paid by the Province. The men and boat, in view of the larger size of the boat and the greater expenditure of fuel, would be, say, \$6 a day, instead of \$5, which, for 4 months, would mean \$720. The Inspector's salary and the incidental expenses of the service would make up the \$5,000. The Province would pay the cost of punishing offenders. Fines should be divided between the Province and the men who effect the arrests.
5. One necessary expense would be officially warning the Newfoundlanders and other depredators through their own press.
6. Arrange co-operation with the Dominion Fisheries Protection Service and Dominion Government telegraph line; also with the Provincial Government, which would naturally be glad to have red-handed offenders consigned to it for punishment. The

Commission's boats might be very useful in giving information to the Fisheries Protection Service, and *vice versa*. All conservation telegrams should be free.

7. Forbid all outsiders to take eggs or young birds, or to shoot anything before the 1st of September, or to shoot after that without a license.

8. Allow genuine residents of the Canadian Labrador to take ducks' and gulls' eggs up to the 1st of June, and murre's, auks' and puffins' eggs up to the 15th of June. Allow them to take young birds only in case of sickness: (gull broth is the local equivalent of chicken broth). Allow them to shoot after the 1st of September without a license. The conditions of the coast require these exceptions, which will not endanger the bird life there.

9. Establish one bird sanctuary on the inshore islands between Fond au Fecteau and Whale Head East, and another on the inshore islands round Yankee Harbour (Wapitagan).

10. These islands are favourite haunts of the American eider ("sea-duck", "metik", *Somateria dresseri*.)

Perhaps the Northern or Greenland eider (*Somateria mollissima borealis*) might also be induced to concentrate there. There seems to be no reason why an eider-down industry should not be built up by the end of the five years. The eider ought to be specially protected all the way up to the Pilgrims, which are only 100 miles below Quebec. The Province might do this from Natashquan west.

11. Begin by protecting all birds except the Great Blackback Gull ("Saddleback", *Larus marinus*) which is very destructive to other bird life. Let its eggs and young be taken at all times; but prevent adult birds from being shot before the 1st of September, so as not to starve the helpless young to death. When other species become really noxious it will be time enough to treat them in the same way. As a rule, the harm done by birds popularly but falsely supposed to live on food fishes, and by birds of prey, is grossly exaggerated. Birds and beasts of prey often do good service in keeping up a breed by killing off the weaklings.

12. It would be well worth while to keep the Inspector on for the eight months between the 1st of September, 1913, and the 1st of May, 1914, so that he and the Provincial warden might make a thorough investigation of conditions all the year round, inland as well as on the coast, and of the mammals as well as of the birds. One man from each of the five local boats and two men from the Inspector's boat would make seven assistants already trained in conservation. They would have to be paid enough to counterbalance their strong desire for the rare but sometimes relatively enormous profits of "furring". Perhaps \$50 a man a month would do, the men to find themselves in everything, as during the summer. This, for seven men for eight months, would be \$2,800. The

incidental expenses and Inspector's salary would bring the total up to \$5,000. The Inspector cannot be too good a man. He should be a good leader as well as a trained naturalist. The Province should send him the best warden it can find, to act as his chief assistant. After a year's work, afloat and ashore, in summer and winter, with birds and mammals, he ought to be able to make a comprehensive and unbiassed report, which, by itself, would repay the Commission for introducing conservation into such a suitable area. Zoogeographic maps and charts would be an indispensable part of this report.

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To sum up:—

I beg to propose that the Commission should bring the Canadian Labrador under conservation by protecting bird life on the coast for a term of five years, as an experimental investigation, and by examining, for one year, the whole question of the birds and mammals, inland as well as on the seaboard, and in winter as well as summer. The cost of the first would be \$5,000 a year for five years = \$25,000. The cost of the second would be \$5,000 for one year only. The total cost would be \$30,000.

I would never have ventured to suggest this plan to the Commission if I had not been encouraged by one of your own most valued members, Dr Robertson. But as soon as he told me what your powers were I saw clearly that, in this particular case, the Commission and the Canadian Labrador were each exactly suited to the other.

Under all these circumstances I have no hesitation in making the strongest possible appeal for action before it is too late. The time has come when the seabird life must be either made or marred for ever. And I would ask you to remember what seabird conservation means down there. It means fresh food, the only kind the people ever get, apart from fish. It means new business, if the eiders are once made safe in sanctuaries; for we now import our eider down from points outside of Canada. And it means the quickening of every human interest, once you encourage the people to join you in this excellently practical form of "Neighbourhood Improvement".

There is another and very important point, which I discussed at considerable length in my *Address*, but to which I return here, because it can only be settled by a body of men, who, like this Commission, are national trustees. This point is that certain parts of Labrador are bound to become ideal public playgrounds, if their wild life is only saved in time. The common conception of Labrador as being inaccessibly remote is entirely wrong. It is accessible all round a coast line of 3000 miles at the proper season and with proper care; and its vast peninsula lies straight between the British Islands and our own North West. So there is nothing absurd in expecting people to come to Labrador tomorrow when they are going to Spitzbergen, far north of the Arctic Circle to-day. Of

course, Spitzbergen enjoys an invincible advantage at present, as its wild life is being carefully preserved. But once Labrador is put under conservation the odds will be reversed. And I what is true of Labrador in general is much truer still of the Canadian Labrador. Here is a country which is actually south of London, which is only 2000 miles from England, 1000 from New York, and 500 from Quebec; which stands beside one of the most frequented of ocean highways; and which has a labyrinth of islands, a maze of rivers, and an untamed hinterland, all formed by Nature for wild "zoos", preserves and open hunting grounds. And here, too, all over the civilized world, are city-bound men, turning more and more to Nature for health and recreation, and willing to spend increasingly large sums for what they seek and find. Surely, it is only the common sense of statesmanship to bring this country and those men together, in the near future, under conditions which are best for both, by making the Canadian Labrador an attractive land of life and not a hopelessly repellant land of death.

One good, long look ahead to-day, and immediate action following, will bring the No-Man's-Land of the Canadian Labrador into its rightful place within the fellowship of the Province and Dominion. You will never find cause for vain regret. There is a sound basis of material value in the products of the coast already; and material value is always increased by conservation. But there is more than material value involved. We still have far too much wanton destruction of wild life in Canada, not only among those who have ignorantly grown up to it, but among the well-to-do and presumably well-educated sham sportsmen who go into any unprotected wilds simply to indulge their lust of slaughter to the full. Both these classes will be stopped in their abominations and shown a better way; for whenever man is taught a lesson in conservation he rises to a higher plane in his attitude towards all his humbler fellow-beings, and eventually becomes a sportsman-naturalist and true lover of the wilds.

Then, but not till then, he will see such a drama of Creation along the Canadian Labrador as the whole world can never show elsewhere. On the one hand lies the illimitable past, a past which actually existed before the earliest of living creatures: on the other, the promise of a great human future. The past is in the hills, the true, the only "everlasting hills of time"; for they are of the old, the immeasurably old, azoic rock of the Laurentians, which forms the roots of other mountains, and which here alone appears to-day, on the face of a young Earth, the same as at the birth of Life itself. The future lies within the ships that sail the offing of these hills, crowded with those hosts of immigration who are so eager to become a part of what may be a mighty nation. And there, between and round the ships and hills, in sea and sky and on the land, our kindred of the wild are linking these vastly different ages close together in what should be a present paradise. Shall one, short, heedless generation break that whole chain of glorious life and make that paradise a desert?

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DRAFT OF A PLAN FOR BEGINNING ANIMAL SANCTUARIES  
IN LABRADOR \*\*\*

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