WARFARE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

By Professor HENRY BALDWIN WARD

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

The current literature of the day is replete with vivid pictures of the tremendous struggle in which our nation is involved. Our magnificent isolation between two great oceans has vanished like a dream of the night. What our school books have called a continent is after all only an island, nearer to Europe and Asia than England was to Napoleon.

We are forced to ask ourselves, What of the future? Can we meet the demands of a new era or must we face the realization of the historian’s vision that saw the decline of western lands and the passing of power to new nations?

As nation after nation fell into the hands of the plotter, we waited and watched with fatuous confidence that such things could not happen here. Rudely awakened from our dream we are bewildered by vast and urgent demands of a war front that girdles the globe and involves all nations. Confusion is the order of the day. The conflict allows of no compromise, and we are committed to the defense of our freedoms. We must win the war. Every activity, every interest must be subjected to the acid test that will decide its relations to our purposes.

Among the topics which have loomed large in public discussion, no one has demanded in recent years more general attention than that of our natural resources. What then could be more appropriate for the annual conference of the Texas Academy of Science than your program with its discussion of the relations of natural resources to war, the foremost obligation of this nation to-day.

1 Invitation lecture at the annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Science, November 13, 1942.
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