(January 8, 1906.)

American Forestry.

By Hon Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the United States Forest Service.

Mr. Pinchot said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—What your chairman has so kindly said about forestry work in the United States is, I am afraid, rather more in the nature of a prophecy than a statement of fact, for, while we have made progress, we are not yet in a position to deserve all the kind words he has said.

I am here to speak of American forestry. That means forestry on both sides of the line. I find the problems so absolutely alike that you have to meet here and that we have to meet in the United States because the conditions are the same, the topography and the national characteristics are the same, and consequently it seemed to me the best thing I could do was not to speak to you of things you have here, except as I describe them when I describe the things we have there.

Forestry with us and forestry with you is first of all a business proposition and nothing else. We are approaching it strictly from that point of view, not because we do not love the forests and enjoy them and see the need for protection of game, for game protection itself is a business proposition, but the fundamental thing which we claim is simply that forestry, for both the nation and the individual, is a business matter, to be treated on business lines, and that unless it is worth while as a business proposition it is not worth bothering about. I have no use for a forest that is not good for something, and a forest that is simply good to look at is good for very little. We have consequently asserted that as the foundation stone of our work. There is no other continent on which forestry begins to be important in the same sense as on this continent of ours. In the eastern part, timber protection stands first; in the west, in the irrigable regions, water production; and everywhere the production of forage—these are most important uses of the forest. These three great objects are the three points toward which the forestry service is working. I will not detain you with a description of the organization, of the machinery with which we do our business, but having in mind protection as the first object of our service we take up all other things as subsidiary matters. Our first duty is to protect the forests, and we go about that in three different ways. We realize that with us, as with you, any

permanent protection must rest on one thing—the conviction of the people that it is worth while. The first thing, therefore, is the education of the public in these matters, and we undertake that with all the emphasis at our command, and it is because we have acted upon that principle that we have a united, and, what is more important, an effective public opinion to assist us in carrying out the necessary measures. And I have yet to find a single instance where the public opinion for rational forestry in the United States has been appealed to without getting a response. Secondly, we have a situation there which does not obtain so much with you. The great bulk of forest land is under private ownership. Now, the only way you can appeal with any effect to private owners of timber lands for improved forestry methods is to show them it is a good investment, that it is worth their while from a dollar and cent point of view. We have taken it up by sending trained men out to deal with the individual tract under a co-operative plan, by which the Government pays the salaries and the firms pay the expenses. As a result several millions of acres have come under forestry work, and we have all the time more applications for the assistance of trained foresters than the department is able to fill. The best illustration of the effect upon the lumbermen (for it is the way the lumbermen look upon this that its success depends) is this: that the lumbermen, through their association, the Lumber Manufacturers' Association, voted last spring to raise $150,000 to endow a chair of lumbering in one of our forestry schools. When the interest of a commercial body is translated into money you may be perfectly sure it means something. So we are getting on with the lumbermen. Then a third point is in dealing with public lands, and we have laid this down as a fundamental proposition: that no public land, that will serve the public better under public ownership, shall be allowed to pass into private ownership (applause). That is a simple statement, but we are trying to carry it out by making forest reserves, and this has changed the whole aspect of forestry work in the United States. We have in the western states 150,000,000 acres of reserve land. We should have had, if we had taken this in time, perhaps 250,000,000, and the United States will have ultimately to pay out millions of dollars to buy back lands which it allowed to pass out of its hands, but which it had only to say the word to keep. You have this advantage, that where the worst damage has been done with us the harm is not yet done here, and if I should make any suggestion it is that you should make use of this enormous advantage for the lack of which we will have to pay out vast sums of money in the not distant future.

Working along these three lines we find that we are able gradually to bring about the application of the knowledge of the trained foresters to the handling of private and public forest lands. Some

years ago, when I first took up this work, there was a condition of things in Washington which was simply fatal to the progress of forestry. On one side was the Public Lands Office, controlling all public lands, including forests, with not a single trained forester in its employ; and on the other hand there was the Agricultural Department, employing nearly every trained forester in the United States, and with not a single acre of forest to look after. This was a situation which simply vetoed any idea of progress, because it is a difficult matter to set a forester at handling lands over which he has no control. I have tried it (laughter). Last April we got things together, got foresters over public lands, and considerable progress has been made. What does all this mean? It means just this, that the whole effort which now is engaging the attention of a fairly numerous body of trained foresters is directed to this—to the making and maintenance of prosperous homes. That is our basis; our forestry reserves are managed for that purpose. We do not want to grow trees on any land that can be used to grow children (laughter). Taking that conception of the matter we find that our forest policy merges immediately into our public lands policy and is one of the features of it. Now, the public lands policy of any nation in the making (as ours on both sides of the line are) lies at the bottom of nearly everything. Land hunger, the desire for land, is almost the strongest passion of the human mind, and the things men will do to get land are indescribable in polite language. (Laughter.) Men who are perfectly respectable and honorable in every other walk of life will steal public lands. (Renewed laughter.) I say this not as a confession, not because I have been stealing public lands myself, but because people have been stealing public lands in the United States, and some in high positions have been sent to jail for it. (Applause.) That does not mean that there has been any sudden outburst of corruption in regard to public lands, but the reverse, for there has been an awakening in regard to matters that have been taking place for many years. There is no way in which bad administration can make such a bad impression upon the morals of a nation as the bad administration of public lands. What happened with us was this. Our land laws were framed to suit certain states, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and when these were filled up, the people kept moving on westward, and instead of changing the laws to suit the new conditions we tried to deal with them under the old laws. And when the new wine was put into the old bottles, the bottles burst and the wine ran all over the place. What it meant was that when a man tried to get land under the new conditions and the old laws something had to be stretched, and generally it was the man's conscience. That meant that perjury in public lands matters grew to be a semi-respetable function, exercised over large portions of the public lands states, partly because of this land hunger, and partly because it was difficult for an honest man to get public land and tell the truth all the

way through. We are trying to remedy this evil, and one of the means adopted by our President was the creation of a Commission charged with the entire revision of public land laws and public land systems. I speak of this personally because for my sins I was made the secretary of it. (Laughter.) It is not, however, a jesting matter, for the effect of wrong public land laws is one of the most lasting that can come to any nation. What has happened to us will happen to you unless you move in time. What has happened with us is that interests have sprung up, controlling large blocks of land, so that they threaten a land monopoly; but that is a thing which, thanks to President Roosevelt, is not going to happen. (Prolonged applause.) If the forest policy is part of the public land policy, the public land policy is simply one phase of the way in which a nation deals with its problems; and I want to say in a word something of the attempt at reform along different lines which President Roosevelt is leading and which, thanks to his leadership, bids fair to be successful. It is not always easy to realize what the national housekeeping means to the individual and to the nation. Curiously enough, personal morality has always stood on a higher plane than business morality; business morality, as a rule, has stood higher than political morality, and the relations of nations are on a yet lower plane than any of the three. (Applause.) Take bodies of men, and the tendency in things of this kind is to level down instead of levelling up. National administration, therefore, means an immense deal in the way of setting standards in the nation's life. The president realized that and set himself to work gradually, for these are large problems to level up. He has been doing very much through a number of different commissions, as well as through the agitation for a "square deal" in every line of life. The president is standing more and more for a series of theorems, the fundamental one of which is that every man should have no less than a "square deal"—and no more. The "square deal" in forest work translates itself into this: That every acre should be put to the use that will contribute most to the well-being of the nation. (Applause.) I have heard it said by a congressman: "There is 20 per cent. of such a district in forest reserve. What a shame!" I say it makes no difference whether it is 20 per cent. or 90 per cent., if the lands can be best used in that form, but if there is an acre which can be used in any better way then by all means let us take it out of the forest reserve. (Applause.) This policy of the president has translated itself into a number of commissions of reform. One of these is the Public Lands Commission, of which I spoke, and which is making good progress. Another is a commission to organize all government scientific work, which gradually is going to reorganize the somewhat chaotic state of the government's scientific activity, for it is true of every government that I know of that its scientific work has grown up without provision and simply because things were put here and there for convenience. Finally, there is a

commission on the business methods of the government, based on this theory: That it is not enough for a great government to do busines as well as a large business institution, but that it ought to do it better. and we, if we are fortunate, will work that out to see that the business methods of the United States will correspond in integrity and effectiveness with the size of the country and the importance of the work to be done. (Applause.) All this means simply that the attempt is now being made in the United States in forestry, in public lands, in relation to the railways and the trusts and many other matters, not merely to give every man a "square deal," which is the foundation, but to use the best intelligence of the nation for the good of the nation.

Gentlemen, there are so many things to be said about this matter that I shy off,—(laughter)—but if there is any one message I have for you it is to save yourselves in regard to forestry, now you have the chance, the uphill fight we have had because we did not take hold in time to lay our foundations straight. (Loud and prolonged applause.)