

FORESTRY AND FORESTERS

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

I BELIEVE that there is no body of men who have it in their power today to do a greater service to the country than those engaged in the scientific study of, and practical application of, approved methods of forestry for the preservation of the woods of the United States.

And now, first and foremost, you can never afford to forget for one moment what is the object of our forest policy. That object is not to preserve the forests because they are beautiful, though that is good in itself, nor because they are refuges for the wild creatures of the wilderness, though that, too, is good in itself; but the primary object of our forest policy, as of the land policy of the United States, is the making of prosperous homes. It is part of the traditional policy of home-making of our country. Every other consideration comes as secondary. The whole effort of the government in dealing with the forests must be directed to this end, keeping in view the fact that it is not only necessary to start the homes as prosperous, but to keep them so. That is why the forests have got to be kept. You can start a prosperous home by destroying the forests, but you can not keep it prosperous that way.

And you are going to be able to make that policy permanently the policy of the country only in so far as you are able to make the people at large, and, above all, the people concretely interested in the results in the different localities, appreciative of what it means. Impress upon them the full recognition of the value of its policy, and make them earnest and zealous adherents of it. Keep in mind the fact that in a government such as ours it is out of the question to impose a policy like this from without. The policy, as a permanent policy, can come only from the intelligent conviction of the people themselves that it is wise and useful; nay, indispensable. We shall decide, in the long run, whether or not we are to preserve or destroy the forests of the

Rocky mountains accordingly as we are or are not able to make the people of the mountain states hearty believers in the policy of forest preservation.

That is the only way in which this policy can be made a permanent success. You must convince the people of the truth—and it is the truth—that the success of home-makers depends in the long run upon the wisdom with which the nation takes care of its forests. That seems a strong statement, but it is none too strong.

You have got to keep this practical object before your mind; to remember that a forest which contributes nothing to the wealth, progress, or safety of the country is of no interest to the government and should be of little interest to the forester. Your attention must be directed to the preservation of the forests, not as an end in itself, but as a means of preserving and increasing the prosperity of the nation.

"Forestry is the preservation of forests by wise use," to quote a phrase I used in my first message to congress. Keep before your minds that definition. Forestry does not mean abbreviating that use; it means making the forest useful, not only to the settler, the rancher, the miner, the man who lives in the neighborhood, but, indirectly, to the man who may live hundreds of miles off down the course of some great river which has had its rise among the forest-bearing mountains.

The forest problem is in many ways the most vital internal problem in the United States. The more closely this statement is examined the more evident its truth becomes. In the arid region of the West agriculture depends first of all upon the available water supply. In such a region forest protection alone can maintain the stream flow necessary for irrigation, and can prevent the great and destructive floods so ruinous to communities farther down the same streams that head in the arid regions.

The relation between the forests and the whole mineral industry is an extremely in-

timate one; for, as every man who has had experience in the West knows, mines can not be developed without timber—usually not without timber close at hand. In many regions throughout the arid country ore is more abundant than wood, and this means that if the ore is of low grade, the transportation of timber from any distance being out of the question, the use of the mine is limited by the amount of timber available.

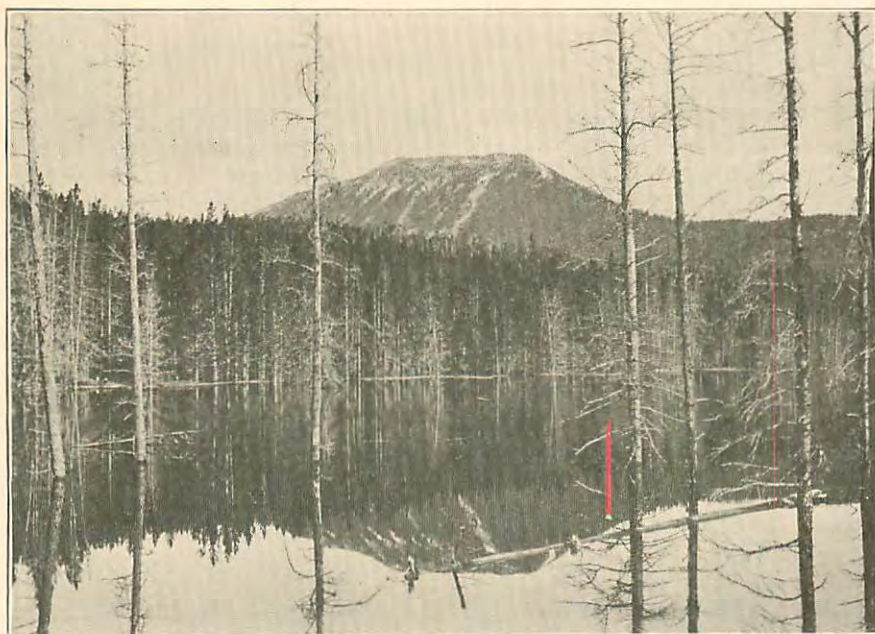
The very existence of lumbering, of course—and lumbering is the fourth great industry of the United States—depends upon the success of our work as a nation in putting practical forestry into effective operation.

As it is with mining and lumbering, so it is in only a less degree with transportation, manufactures, commerce in general. The relation of all of these industries to forestry is of the most intimate and dependent kind.

Nowhere else is the development of a

country more closely bound up with the creation and execution of a judicious forest policy. This is, of course, especially true of the West, but it is true of the East, also. Fortunately, in the West we have been able, relatively to the growth of the country, to begin at an earlier day, so that we have been able to establish great forest reserves in the Rocky mountains instead of having to wait and attempt to get congress to pay large sums for their creation, as we are now endeavoring to do in the Southern Appalachians.

The United States is exhausting its forest supplies far more rapidly than they are being produced. The situation is grave, and there is only one remedy. That remedy is the introduction of practical forestry on a large scale, and, of course, that is impossible without trained men, men trained in the closet, and also by actual field work under practical conditions.



Minneopa Lake and Tent Mountain, Mont.

By Dr. M. A. Walker.