

President Eisenhower's Address Before* The Fourth American Forest Congress

It is my very happy and very distinguished privilege this morning to extend to each of you a welcome on behalf of the Administration to your Nation's Capital.

The very character of your organization confers distinction upon anyone who may be invited before it. But you will realize that due to the number of conventions that meet in this city, there are, at times, staff discussions over in the White House as to whether or not they should send the President forth this morning to attend a meeting of this kind.

Now, in this particular case, entirely aside from my own desires and determinations, I assure you there was no question. It happens that my principal staff officer (Sherman Adams) is a forester. And there are two subjects of which I hear most, I think, when I am with him: New Hampshire and forestry.

I, of course, am not going to trespass upon your time to attempt a discussion of those professional and technical elements of your calling, of which you know so much more than I. It would be sheer presumption for me to mention them.

I should like, though, to speak of just one of those points in which I think our interests are so clearly identical. The interest of this Administration is to create a balanced but advancing economy and prosperity in this country.

Now, for any group of people who are engaged in the conservation of our resources—in the production of a product which may range anywhere from fifteen to eighty or ninety years—you are concerned directly and

by reason of your profession with a steady rather than an intermittent and historical-like action in the advancing forces, the advancing tradition, of our economy. You deal more directly than most, I think, in futures—not merely a future of the day after tomorrow or who are we going to have in such an office, or what kind of activity will be going on in that place. You deal in decades, decades in the growth of your product, of the forests and the trees, and in the conservation of all those elements of our continent that make that possible.

Then again, when I think of the basic resource that is used so widely in clothespins and matchsticks, in ship-building and in construction, in the dissemination of news through the pulp industry, your interests again are not those that are confined merely to the forest. But when you go into the uses of your product, you are concerned with everything that touches the United States.

So is your government. Its purpose is to understand, if possible, the problems of every special group in this country, but never to use the resources of this country to favor any group at the expense of others—to attempt to get that kind of balanced progress that can be sustained, that will not create upsets in our economy.

So you can understand, of course, the interest we have in soil and water conservation.

When I first led an invading force onto another continent during the war, we went into northern Africa. It was difficult to be-

* Held in Washington, D.C. October 29-31, 1953.

lieve that that area had once been the granary of the ancient world, that it provided the timber and almost all of the agricultural resources that were used in Italy and Greece and Sicily, and through those more heavily populated countries.

Today, in such vast areas, there is just a stretch of sand and desert. The civilization that supported the cities that flourished are gone—Timgad, probably one of the famous destroyed cities on the earth, and not far from the great city of Constantine.

That is the kind of thing that must never happen here. It is through the wisdom, the efforts, the dedication, and the devotion of such people as yourselves, that it will not happen. Too many of us are blind, or indifferent, or just completely ignorant of the facts that make that work so important.

So I think I can conclude with just this one word: I cannot tell you how much satisfaction it gives me to know that intelligent Americans are meeting together, whose interests are as broad as this land, whose vi-

sion must be projected forward not merely till tomorrow—or possibly an election—but for a century.

What is going to be the character of this country? Is it going to favor the individual as it favored us? Is it going to give him an opportunity? Is it going to have the resources to give him that opportunity? Or would we have to degenerate into some kind of controlled economy, some kind of regimentation of all of the heritage—of all the phases of our heritage that we have received—all of the God-given resources and privileges we enjoy?

I believe that every true American wants to pass on, without any stricture, the right of the individual to his own determination of what he is fitted for, of how he shall worship, of what he shall earn, of how he can save, and what he can do with his savings—subject to taxes. I should remark that even in such a crown of roses, as we know has always been the promise and the share of our beloved America, there still are some thorns—and taxes is one of them, I guess.

So again, as I bid you welcome, I also express this tremendous gratification that you are here for this Congress, this assembly. I wish you the greatest of success, and to each individual, God bless you.

They are not the best students who are most dependent on books. What can be got of them is at best only material; a man must build his house for himself.

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Talent for talent's sake is a show and a bauble. Stranger, if thou has learned a truth which needs no school of long experience, that the world is full of guilt and misery, and has seen enough of all its sorrows, crimes and cares to tire thee of it, enter a wildwood and view the haunts of Nature. The calm shade shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze that makes the green leaves dance shall waft a balm to thy sick heart.—*Bryant*

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The difference between failure and success is doing a thing nearly right and doing it exactly right.

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Time is what we want most, but what, alas! We use worst.

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