

America's Forests:
Chaotic Consternation
or
Constructive Conservation?



THIS IS WHAT THE FOREST INDUSTRIES BELIEVE:

To Editors, Writers and Commentators

"There are those in this nation who think of forests . . . as a paradise . . . far removed from the humdrum world and which warrant continued separation from realities.

"There are others of us who think of forests as a vital and replenishable concentration of miraculous fibers which can serve the needs of mankind.

As a result, the vast majority of us who value order and tranquility tend to find ourselves being pushed to one side or another of this sylvan confrontation."

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"I propose that the United States embark upon an era of constructive conservation, an era of enlightenment when all the inherent and intrinsic values of the forest are realized in the interests of the people."

"The essential ingredients of 'constructive conservation' are simultaneous realization of all the benefits of the forest and the development of a national point-of-view which favors compatibility over exclusivity in terms of forest use."

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"I cannot urge strongly enough that the nation rely in the future upon the professional forester to conceive and execute our long-range plans for the use of the forests in the United States. This is the only way in which we, as a people, can have any assurance that the forests of our land will flourish and be replenished in a scientific and wholly contributive way."

"We are determined that our industry will not fail the American people by being unable to meet the wood fiber demands of the nation today, tomorrow and forever."

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Jim Bronson declares these positions in the attached address. We hope you will read it. You can believe it is so.

H. P. NEWSON
Vice President
Public Affairs

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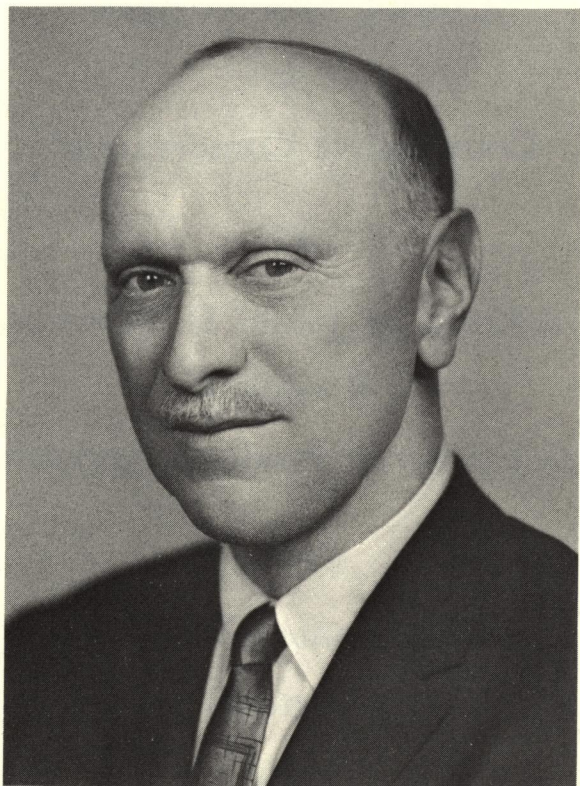
Address by James D. Bronson
President
National Forest Products Association



67th Annual Meeting
Washington D. C.



May 13, 1969



James D. Bronson

Mr. Secretary, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Americans:

There are those in this nation who think of forests, both public and private, as a paradise—a portion of our natural surroundings which are far removed from the humdrum world and which warrant continued separation from realities.

There are others of us who think of forests as a vital and replenishable concentration of miraculous fibers which can serve the needs of mankind.

The extremes of these two interpretations of the meaningful forest have imposed upon our nation, through its lawmakers and its administrators, a patchwork of philosophies and management practices which satisfy few. As a result, the vast majority of us who value order and tranquility tend to find ourselves being pushed to one side or another of this sylvan confrontation.

Faced with a choice, whether we are by nature hikers or loggers, we find ourselves “strangers in paradise”. We are uncomfortable with the restraints imposed upon us by the current policies governing particular forests and, regardless of the side we may find ourselves on in a given situation, we are all deeply concerned.

A Consequence of Differences

American forest management, for its many values, has become a chaotic situation wholly as a consequence of human differences. Those of us obliged to provide a continuous and increasing flow of wood fiber from our forests view with alarm contemporary trends toward land withdrawal for non-economic use. Men and women who are dedicated to the out-of-doors as a retreat for contemplation and wholesome recreation are equally alarmed at the threat they consider commercial forest management and the nation's wood needs may be to their interests.

And, when the nation is faced with a crisis in housing requiring vast quantities of wood—as it presently is—both sides of the forest controversy dissolve in chaotic consternation.

Each sees his own paradise threatened or forever lost to him. Chaos reigns.

John Milton described the circumstances in his "Paradise Lost":

"*Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him high arbiter
Chance governs all.*"

We have, I fear, reached that state in the responsible management of our forest resource for all the people. We have submitted our differences to umpire Chaos and have appealed chaotic decisions to Chance for arbitration.

This is a luxury of indulged whimsy which we as a nation can no longer afford.

That is why I intend to speak out today for a new concept in forest management—a second chance, if you will, to establish orderly fulfillment of the needs and desires of all of our people. I propose that the United States embark upon an era of constructive conservation, an era of enlightenment when all the inherent and intrinsic values of the forest are realized in the interest of the people.

As concerned citizens there is none of us who does not recognize the urgent need to improve the environment for human life. This is just as true of lumbermen as it is of outdoor recreationists. The forests of America are in a unique position to bridge the void between the daily needs of citizens for improved housing as an element of environment and the desire of men to flee the cities and enjoy the beauties and solace of the out-of-doors. Both of these purposes can be accomplished *at the same time*—if we all have the will to make it happen.

Essential Ingredients

The essential ingredients of "constructive conservation" are simultaneous realization of all the benefits of the forest and development of a national point-of-view which favors compatibility over exclusivity in terms of forest use.

There may be some who will consider that what I am espousing is already provided in the Multiple Use Act of 1960 which stipulated that National Forests should be managed for timber, fish and wildlife, watershed, grazing and recreation. This is not so.

Multiple Use Act implementation has ignored the second ingredient of "constructive conservation" . . . compatible use rather than exclusive use of given areas for given pur-

poses. Multiple Use has been attacked by the recreationists because it permits the harvesting of timber; it has been attacked by individuals in the forest industries because it requires them to adjust or abandon harvesting operations to the recreationists. It has been honored in the breach by the Forest Service which has increasingly tended to set aside areas for exclusive use of recreationists, sometimes without regard to the timber values involved. Multiple Use has been criticized as a meaningless term—"the people don't understand it", "the people don't want it", the loggers can't live with it", "the Forest Service declines to impose it"—all these things have been said.

Broader Views Necessary

But each of those statements has been made by someone expressing disdain from a single use point-of-view without regard to the interests of others and with, in the final analysis, total disregard for the best interests of all the people.

I am persuaded that we cannot, as a nation, prolong the series of monologues which have tended to constitute the bulk of our literature on forest use.

If we are to achieve understanding and respect of varying views it is essential that there be constructive leadership demonstrated by the single element of our society which has the strength and the responsibility to accommodate public opinion and public interest. In our system this power is assigned to the Federal government. It is from the government that we have the right to expect attentive consideration of all sides of the forest management issue and objective evaluation of the course which will best serve the nation.

Federal forest management policies today tend to vacillate with the winds of public and private pressures. This is

not surprising and is no indictment of the public officials involved. The Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for instance, is the principal manager of the Federally-owned commercial timber lands of the nation. We are honored, as was pointed out in presenting our head table, to have the distinguished Chief of the Forest Service, Ed Cliff, with us. He is a highly responsible official. He is eminently qualified to bear the burdens imposed upon him and he is assisted in his undertakings by other dedicated Americans of the Forest Service—many of whom are with us today.

Mr. Cliff's Impossible Task

But Ed Cliff has been assigned an almost impossible task by the public policies with respect to forest management which respond to changes in administration, legislative response to public pressures, and local or regional accommodation to special situations. In addition, his is a head which must wear an almost constantly changing series of hats. He is regularly obliged to wear two and three hats simultaneously and I would guess that he is subject to frequent headaches since the headbands tend to shrink or expand depending upon the particular block upon which they have been shaped.

This fluctuating pressure to which Ed Cliff must respond would not be tolerated by the business executives in any corporation represented here.

It is intolerable that a business executive—and the Chief of the Forest Service operates a timber growing business which returns \$300 million dollars in sales receipts to the Federal Treasury every year—he operates a land area twice the size of the State of California—half of which is commercial timber growing land—it is intolerable that such a busi-

ness executive is denied enduring long-range policy which will enable him to improve his product, broaden its market, and increase its annual sales.

But this is the condition which exists and the Federal government—in both its legislative and executive branches—is the only agency which has either the authority or the responsibility to alter it.

The National Timber Supply Act

Senator Sparkman told us in some detail yesterday the means to this end which resides in the National Timber Supply Act. Our industry considers the reinvestment of Federal timber sale dollars in improved management of Federal commercial timber lands a logical and wholly responsible means to guarantee the nation's future wood needs. It is, we believe, the only feasible way to respond with speed and efficiency to the urgent demands for softwood lumber and plywood imposed upon our industry and upon the nation by the projected housing goals of 26 million units in the next decade.

We intend to work for the speedy passage of this measure, along with the National Association of Home Builders, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association, the National-American Wholesale Lumber Association and the many other organizations directly concerned with fulfilling America's housing needs. We are most heartened by the spontaneous support which has been generated in the Senate and the House of Representatives on both sides of the aisle. Sponsors of this bill reflect a true cross-section of our nation and demonstrate that our legislators recognize that timber availability holds the key to adequate housing for all our people.

The National Timber Supply Act affords a dramatic demonstration of the interdependency of social progress and natural resource management. It has been heartening to see dedicated preservationists, who have been traditionally antagonistic to timber harvest measures sought by the forest products industry and the Federal forest management agencies, endorse the concept of high yield management of the National Forest commercial timberlands.

Responsible Action By All

The positive response of the Sierra Club witnesses before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee is a sign, I believe, that where the national interest is clearly revealed and the social need is obviously compelling, natural adversaries can act responsibly together. The Sierra Club, properly, stipulated that intensified management of the National Forests for timber harvest should be undertaken with full consideration of the other forest values. The forest products industry fully endorses this stipulation and asks that the Forest Service full emulate the practices which have been pioneered in this regard on better managed industrial forest lands.

This mutuality of positions between the Sierra Club and the forest industries is, I am convinced, the first glimmer of what can be achieved under the concept of "constructive conservation." There will, no doubt, be confrontations on specific issues in the future. There will be extremists on both sides who will indulge in invective.

But, it is my earnest hope that in the great middle, the center, if you will, of the dedicated men and women heretofore on opposite sides of the conservation fence there will be enlightenment and understanding. It is only when the

common interest of all the people is properly served that "constructive conservation" can be a reality.

Who Will Decide?

Who will decide what the policy should embrace? How should the scales be balanced equitably if a choice must be made between areas where timber harvest should be encouraged and areas where other forest use should be emphasized? When should community dependency on timber harvest take precedence over potentialities which might develop as a result of emphasis on recreation and tourism?

These are difficult questions which I am not prepared to answer.

But they must be answered. And they must be answered always in terms of the indentifiable needs of all the people of the United States where public lands are involved. And they must, further, be answered on a foundation of logic and reason and judgment so firmly established that the long-term process of growing timber is not subject to the vagaries of temporary expediency or momentary clamor.

It occurs to me that where issues of public policy affecting the nation's timberlands are concerned the people must look to the responsible public agencies for expertise. In turn, the public agencies must apply their expertise without regard to the pressures from one side or another of the controversy. The Forest Service timber management function, for instance, should not be susceptible to stop-and-go restraints imposed by speculative consideration of realignment of area uses. Growing a crop, and timber is a crop, must be governed by the duration of the time from planting to maturity and harvest. Land committed to a crop must be reserved for that primary use and all other uses must be coordinated with that rather than superior to that use.

This is simply one example of the kind of decision which must be made binding upon the nation if it is to realize the potentials of modern forest management.

We Can Improve

And these potentials are remarkable, as most of this audience knows. It is possible to improve timberland through fertilization; it is possible to increase the yield and quality of timber by genetic selection; it is possible to accelerate growth through thinning and spacing; it is possible to maximize the timber harvest through orderly salvage operations. All of these things are being done with great success on industrial forest lands. They should be done on all forest lands so that there need never be any shortage of timber in the United States.

I believe that they will be done as a matter of national policy within the life-times of many of us in this room. I am hopeful that the passage of the National Timber Supply Act, coupled with the assumption of leadership in "constructive conservation" by the Forest Service, will make them happen this year on the commercial timberlands of the National Forest system.

Let The Foresters Do Their Job

The leaders of this crusade towards "constructive conservation" must, of necessity, be professional foresters. The forester—while the nature of his work and his surroundings tend to identify him with rough clothes and rugged physical strength—is a professional man like a doctor or a lawyer or a nuclear scientist. He is a highly trained specialist in dealing with the needs of trees from gestation through

harvest. He is, if you will, a forest agronomist and ecologist dedicated wholly to the creation of a flourishing balance among trees, wildlife, watershed, recreation and forage. He is a planner and a protector. He is the fundamental factor in determining whether a forest is to become an asset to our society or a curiosity fit only for occasional visits and contributing little to our human material requirements.

The public has for too long viewed foresters as gamekeepers and fire watchers when they should be equated with surgeons, engineers, attorneys, and scientific agriculturists. There has been a tendency on the part of the public at large to respond to preservationist appeals for the *status quo* in the forests when, without the practice of scientific and technical forestry the forest is doomed to eventual decline through age, fire, storm, insect attack, disease, decay and neglect.

I cannot urge strongly enough that everyone in this room, in this capital city, and in the nation at large, rely in the future upon the professional forester to conceive and execute our long-range plans for use of the forests in the United States. This is the only way in which we as a people can have any assurance that the forests of our land will flourish and be replenished in a scientific and wholly contributive way.

Technology Contributes

Our industry believes in science and technology, and professionalism as a means to greater productivity—not only in the woods—but in the mill and at the jobsite as well. In recent years our industry, through mechanization and product line diversification has been able to increase log utilization remarkably. Sawn lumber is simply a primary product of timber as is plywood—bits and pieces, chips, bark, culls, and other odd parts of the logs are converted into pulp

and paper, particle board, hardboard, glued laminated assemblies of various kinds, on through the final composite fireplace log. Little is wasted at the mill any longer—and this advancement contributes to “constructive conservation” of our timber resource too.

Construction techniques have been advanced to reduce waste on the jobsite as well. Pre-cut members for modular framing are an example. The elimination of bridging between floor joists is another. Research studies have demonstrated the concept of load-sharing among members in wood frame construction and have thus led the way to reduced dimensions which perform well but reduce the volume of wood fiber necessary to do the job. The long sought-after improved lumber standard will be a major breakthrough in improving the quality and performance of lumber. The new dimensions will save an estimated eight per cent in every stud and larger dimension lumber and that represents a tremendous amount of wood fiber nationwide. In effect, adoption and application of the new American lumber standard will mean that a log which would produce twelve studs today will produce thirteen tomorrow.

Both Ends of the Line

So, we in the industry are working towards “constructive conservation” from both ends of the line—in the woods and on the construction site.

We are determined that our industry will not fail the American people by being unable to meet the wood fiber demands of the nation today, tomorrow and forever.

But to fulfill this commitment we will need help. We will need the help of the Congress in passing the National Timber Supply Act so that the National Forests can assume an

appropriate share of wood fiber production; we will need the help and guidance of the Department of Agriculture in doing a better woods job on both public and private lands; we will need the enthusiasm of public and private foresters and those who own the lands of America; we will need the understanding of our purposes and our performance from the people who want to use the out-of-doors for purposes other than wood production; we will need the patience and cooperation of communities, counties, and states.

Most of all we will need the help of Nature itself and of the Creator of all growing things. Blessed with both sunshine and rain, free from storm and destruction, inspired by the wonderment of the seedling, the sapling, and the sturdy forest giant and their endless regeneration we will serve our America.

If we assume and carry forward the promise of "constructive conservation" against all odds, it may be our chance to realize in our own time the words of Isaiah 35:1,

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

God will it shall be so.

Thank you.

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

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