

*Land Management
Concepts Affecting
the
Redwood Empire*

An Address by
DAVE JAMES



REDWOOD EMPIRE ASSOCIATION

476 POST STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

I am aware that these are warm days and that before you have heard no less than 17 speeches. And beyond me before you adjourn this 44th convention are eight more speakers, including a Democratic state senator and a Republican governor.

I am listed as your only speaker from the forest industry, which in California employs 100,000 people and creates \$1 billion worth of merchandise from an annual tree harvest of six billion board feet.

Within this large industry is its oldest and most concentrated sector, the redwood lumber industry.

"Land Management Concepts Affecting the Redwood Empire"

An Address by Dave James

Director of Public Affairs

Simpson Timber Company

before the

44th Annual Convention of the

REDWOOD EMPIRE ASSOCIATION

Crescent City, California

September 24, 1964

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Within this large industry is its oldest and most concentrated sector, the redwood lumber industry, which has been serving the nation for more than a century. In fact, the sawmill industry of Humboldt County will be just 110 years old this coming November. The Russians were cutting redwoods at Fort Ross even longer ago than that, and among the stumps of those pioneer cuttings now stand new redwoods four to six feet thick and tall enough to hide the sun.

The redwood industry is a part of the attractions which bring visitors into this area by the hundreds of thousands each tourist season. One must acknowledge that motorists sometimes grow weary of examining the ring growth on big logs riding on wheels, but one day your organization, working with the highway people, will have roads broad enough and straight enough to serve all.

There are those — fortunately few — who would solve the problem of traffic by removing industry and trucks totally from the picture. This is an extremism to which I will now speak. I will quote from the President, who on Wednesday said:

"All citizens have a clear and compelling duty to make it clear that America has not fallen and will not fall into the hands of extremists of any stripe."

I understand this to mean economic as well as political extremism.

If this statement means what it seems to mean,

then the President is asking us to approach all public issues with an open mind and with full regard for the consequences of our acts.

Only yesterday the National Park Service announced in Washington, D.C. that it is prepared to ask Congress for taxpayers' funds to preserve up to 52,000 acres of redwood forests, beaches and creeks in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties. This would mean taking acres from private owners by purchase or by legal force. This could deprive the region of 3 to 5 billion board feet — one quarter of its wood supply. Now how you react to this proposal could vary with whether they are talking about your acres or somebody's else. When we read that a bank has been robbed, we really don't become excited unless we happen to own the money acquired by the robber.

We do not yet have at hand the official details. Therefore I cannot describe specifically what they contain. I understand Mr. E. A. Hummel (Western Regional Director) of the National Park Service will speak to you tomorrow about this subject. I will look forward to reading his statement.

I can only say I trust the survey made by the National Park Service and its proposals—about which we in the industry have not yet been consulted — will meet with the President's wishes for reasonability and responsibility. I hope it is not an example of the extremism the President deplors.

I hope that the proposal to add more private land to the already commanding acreage of Jedediah Smith and Del Norte Coast (State) parks does not mean the doom of an \$8,000,000 industrial development now in progress under the initiative of Mr. Harold Miller and his Rellim Redwood Company just a few miles from this city. I hope the many local lumber and plywood mills do not find their life-lines cut. Perhaps Mr. Hummel will clarify tomorrow just how many additional acres are proposed for amputation from the tax rolls of this county, now supported at the local level by the scant 28 per cent of land ownership not yet in state or federal hands.

I hope the hard-working supervisors of this county who have adopted a budget of \$3,185,000 for county operations in 1964-65 are not to have torn from their hands the income which private industry has fostered and built. If tax relief, in other words, means relieving an owner of his property, then we would hope for other solutions.

Our own company knows well the history of Del Norte County finances. When we first invested here over two decades ago, the county was badly bent if not dead-broke. Its employees had been on script and discounted warrants since the pit of the great Depression. Thousands of acres had gone back to the county through forfeit by those who had no money to pay their taxes. The mills were down. There were no jobs. The forest itself was silent.

We have seen Del Norte County recover from this awesome economic crisis by engaging in its own War on Poverty, stimulated by the newly awakened vigor of its forest industries. We have seen its people fend off the cruel punishment and personal suffering of repeated floods, fires and tidal waves. We have seen its industrious community leaders and heads of local government building a community of beauty and pride. And we in Simpson have helped pay the bill annually at the rate of about \$275,000 in property taxes.

So when I mention extremism, I can only remind you to ask the question about this new park expansion into private lands. Will this latest proposal by the planners back in Foggy Bottom actually help the people of this county and bring them greater opportunity and greater development than they now know? Now will it, really?

If the answer is that Del Norte can spare more of its tax-paying lands and timber, and that threatened curtailment of industrial development is not an extremism, then I can only conclude that we in industry must be wrong in our understanding of what people want and need. If less industry is the road to the Great Society, then all the economic books need revamping.

We do want to be sure the people know every fact and realize what may be done with their county. We want to be sure they approve with full knowledge, and that later they will not say to us "Why didn't you tell us this in 1964?"

Now I could ask the same questions about the economy in Humboldt County, which in the coming biennium will have a budget of \$18,000,000. Much of this, of course, will come from state and federal funds which, so I have always believed, came from the pockets of taxpayers. Therefore, every citizen has an obligation to examine critically suggestions for new public expenditures which would reduce local revenues to local government.

The forest industry today is investing almost \$90,000,000 in Humboldt County, building new pulp and plywood mills, and improving present plants. Industrial water needs have made possible a splendid new source of water for Humboldt communities.

These investments were approved in the belief that Arcata Redwood, Georgia-Pacific, Pacific Lumber, Simpson and others all would have orderly and continuous management of their existing commercial stands of timber. There was no thought by these ownerships that they would have more timber, but that they could work with what they possessed.

The companies knew at the time the pulp mills were planned how many acres were in private hands. They knew what the government owned. They knew what had gone permanently into parks and groves to be preserved for public enjoyment. All of this was fine.

Now the future has become obscure. A great cloud of uncertainty as big as the smoke from forest fires has moved in. Until the park proposal is fully revealed, the industry won't know whether its \$90,000,000 investment is a wise step or a potential fiscal quicksand which ultimately could swallow both companies and jobs.

Let me tell you what the forest industries mean to

the North Coast. I'll quote from a recent survey by the North Coast Timber Association.

The total annual sales of forest products from Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties is \$269,000,000. That money comes here.

Our companies have invested in plants, equipment and timber \$346,500,000. That forms the major tax base in each county.

Our annual payrolls costs are \$103,475,000. These dollars go to your merchants.

We employ directly 16,695 people. We create indirectly service jobs for 33,390 people. One out of every four people living in these counties owes his paycheck to trees.

Our industry pays in property taxes to these counties each year \$6,900,000. This maintains schools, roads and the functions of local government.

Our industry pays to local firms for services, suppliers and motor fuel a total of \$25,500,000. Here are more dollars for local trade.

The total increase in the value of wood added by manufacture is \$142,000,000. In other words, having mills here brings in this much more revenue than would result from logging alone.

In 1961 our industry accounted for 133 vessel loads leaving the Port of Eureka. In 1962, we shipped 147 vessels and in 1963 we sent out 158. This accounts for several hundred waterfront jobs from Brookings to Eureka.

Our ability to restore and replace what we take from the land is our greatest claim to responsibility and community respect. Beyond the commercial virgin timber remaining in these counties are thousands of acres of new growth rushing upward toward harvest only a few years hence. Nowhere on earth is new timber growing faster.

Now, if 52,000 acres is the asking price of the National Park Service, let it demonstrate conclusively and to the satisfaction of all reasonable men that this, and no less, must be taken from owners who must have what they now own to support the growing needs of this region.

Let us examine how well the more than 100,000 acres of redwood parklands now in state ownership have been developed to serve the people's maximum needs. Before we condemn private lands with another federal land rush, let's look at the feasibility of a national redwood park through combining several state parks.

Let us be for a national dedication to these mighty trees in a manner which preserves that which has already been preserved.

I quote again from the President, who said "Those who love America must go forth to save it."

Those are good words. I hope we all agree that saving this country means saving for all people the right of opportunity, the dignity of labor, the security of investment, the conservation of our natural resources through wise use, and the rewards of a full and good life for all who work to keep America the land of freedom.



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