

Obligations Imposed by the Ownership of Cut-Over Lands

By

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IT WAS my very good fortune, as well as a great pleasure, to have been with you gentlemen in April, 1917, on the occasion of your holding the great Cut-Over Land Conference, in fact, it was my privilege to have presided for two days over that gathering. It was also my privilege to be with you in September last, and to have further addressed you on that occasion.

I naturally felt somewhat reticent with respect to any further remarks in the premises. It must, of necessity, begin to appeal to the minds of some of you that I have covered practically all phases of this so-called cut-over land problem in some of my various addresses to you. Notwithstanding all of this, I could not but accept the recent invitation extended to me by your officers to be with you on this occasion and to discuss another phase of the topic, viz, **Obligations Imposed by the Ownership of Cut-Over Lands.**

In consideration of this subject, it is obviously necessary that we give some brief consideration to the general conditions now existing—those that must of necessity have more or less bearing upon any effort, however great or however small, that may be made, by the lumber operators and the producers of and the owners of these cut-over lands to solve their so-called cut-over land problem.

The Diminishing Public Domain.

You have very often heard of late, the expression used, “the public domain is gone.” It is, in fact, substantially gone. According to the figures of the Commissioner of the General Land Office

at Washington, there were remaining at the end of the fiscal year, June 30th, 1917, as yet unappropriated in the public domain of Continental United States, 230,657,755 acres of land. This 230,657,755 acres, you must remember, necessarily contain the "culls." They are, in part, at least, the mountain tops, the mountain sides, the more or less inaccessible semi-arid areas, marsh and swamp areas and land of very low productive power—literally the "culls."

Notwithstanding all of this, it is noted that the operation of the so-called 640 acre homestead law, between the date of its enactment, December 29th, 1916, and August 1st, 1917, upon which date we have the latest available figures, resulted in the appropriation of 23,963,456 acres. In other words, Congress by increasing the area per homesteader from 160 to 640 acres of lands admittedly less valuable and of less potential possibilities, thereby stimulated homesteading of the remainder of the public domain to the extent of 23,000,000 acres in a little over seven months of time.

All of this is mentioned to bring out the obvious deduction that the land hunger of our people is not yet quite satisfied and that the vast balance sheet of public domain in the hands of the Federal Government is about exhausted, and that we must look elsewhere in the future and through other sources to satisfy this world old yearning of our people for land ownership and land possession.

Let us bear in mind that on July 1st, 1917, as I stated above, we still had 230,657,755 acres of land in the public domain. Let us also bear in mind that east of the Mississippi River—Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida were public land States and that west of the river every single State was a public land State with the exception of the State of Texas, which, by the compact which admitted her to the Union, retained and administered within her own borders all her unappropriated lands—so that the 230,657,755 acres represents what is left in all that vast area.

Canada's Feat of Colonization.

From 1900 onward we witness another very remarkable movement—the peopling and appropriation for agricultural purposes, of the public domain or free homestead lands of Western Canada. That was largely accomplished with and through the very best blood and the very best types of our American farmers. It is not necessary here to go into in detail the elaborate carefully planned campaign that brought this about. It is sufficient for our purpose

to know that the free public domain of Western Canada is practically exhausted.

Now let us note that we have approximately 300,000,000 acres of cut-over lands in the South Atlantic and Gulf States. In other words, the frontier is rapidly shifting. The responsibility for satisfying land hunger is passing from the Federal Government, whose balance of public domain is rapidly diminishing on to the shoulders of those who now own or who are now producing the next available area which is far more desirable and adaptable, viz, the Southern Cut-Over Lands. The only difference, or in fact the great fundamental difference, is that the public domain was free so far as cost in dollars and cents per acre was concerned and the cut-over lands, being in private ownership, must necessarily carry some fixed cost in dollars and cents per acre. In the case of Government land while there is no cost per acre there was a service to be performed, generally five years of actual residence with cultivation and improvement. So much for the land phase.

Now let us note a very pertinent factor in consideration of present day conditions.

A Decreasing Percentage of Rural Residents.

In 1880 the total population of the United States was 50,155,783. Of these 14,772,438, or 29.5%, resided in cities, and the remainder, 35,383,345, or 70.5% resided in the country.

The Census of 1890, ten years later, gives us a total population of 62,947,714, of which 22,720,223, or 36.1%, resided in cities and the remainder 40,227,491, or 63.9%, resided in the country.

The Census of 1900 gives us a population of 75,994,575, of which 30,797,185, or 40.5%, were in the cities, and 45,197,390, or 59.5%, were rural or resided in the country.

Now the last Census, 1910, gives us a population of 91,972,266, of which 42,623,383, or 46.3%, resided in the cities and 49,348,883, or 53.7%, remained in the country.

Taking the mid-census estimate as made by the Bureau of Census in the Department of Commerce, the total population of the United States was in 1917, 105,118,000. Applying the running ratio of shift from urban to city from 1880 to 1910, to the estimated population of 105,118,000 in 1917, our present division between urban and rural population should be expressed in a ratio of 50% to 50%.

From this you will note that since 1880 there has been a most decided swing from rural to city life, and that it is still on and will

probably continue until we very radically change our system of education. Just what effect our entrance into the world war, our consequent demobilization and reconstruction will have upon the trend of our people towards the city, remains to be seen. It may, and it may not have bearing upon what is generally termed "the back to the land movement." It depends, in my judgment, very very largely on how intelligently we handle the problem and just how soon we unitedly get down to a consideration of the basic factors underlying its solution. So much for our population.

Some Comparisons in Food Production.

Now let us glance for a moment, having considered our land conditions and the state of our population, at just what progress we have made in food production. Remember that all of these figures which I have been giving you, are taken from the United States Census Reports and they apply to Continental United States. I think that we already agree that wheat, corn and meat production form the great back-bone of our consumption.

With respect to wheat production, in 1880 we produced 459,483,137 bushels on 35,430,333 acres, being 13 bushels per acre and a per capita production of 9.2 bushel.

In 1890 there were raised 468,373,968 bushels of wheat on 32,579,514 acres, being 13.9 per acre and a per capita production of 7.4 bushel.

In 1900 there were raised 658,379,259 bushels of wheat on 52,588,574 acres, being 12.5 bushels per acre and a per capita production of 8.7 bushel.

In 1910 there were raised 683,379,259 bushels of wheat on 44,262,592 acres, being 15.4 per acre and a per capita production of 7.4 bushel.

The following is quoted from the 13th Census Report of the United States, 1910, Vol 5, Page 585:

"The production of wheat increased from 459,483,000 bushels in 1879 to 683,379,000 bushels in 1909, an increase of 223,896,000 bushels or 48.7 per cent. The population of the country increased 83.4 per cent during the same period, and the per capita production of wheat thus declined from 9.2 bushels in 1879 to 7.4 bushels in 1908. But the exports of wheat also declined during this period, so that the per capita amount of wheat retained for home consumption increased from 6.1 bushels in 1879 to 6.5 bushels in 1909."

The Record Of Corn Production.

Our production of corn was as follows:

In 1880 there were raised 1,754,676 bushels of corn on 62,368,504 acres, being 28.1 per acre and a per capita production of 35.0 bushel.

In 1890 there were raised 2,122,327,547 bushels of corn on 72,087,752 acres, being 29.4 bushels per acre and a per capita production of 33.7 bushels.

In 1900 there were raised 2,666,324,370 bushels of corn on 94,913,673 acres, being 28.1 bushels per acre and a per capita production of 35.1 bushels.

In 1910 there were raised 2,552,189,630 bushels of corn on 98,382,655 acres, being 25.9 bushels per acre and a per capita production of 27.7 bushels.

The following is quoted from the 13th Census Report of the United States, 1910, Vol. 5, Page 576:

“The area of corn harvested in 1909 was 98,382,665 acres; in 1899 it was 94,913,673 acres, the increase for the decade thus being 3,468,992 acres or 3.7 per cent. The production of corn, however, decreased from 2,666,324,000 bushels in 1899 to 2,552,190,000 bushels or 4.3 per cent.

“The acreage of corn has shown an uninterrupted increase for the past 30 years, the greatest gain occurring between 1889 and 1899. Starting with 62,368,504 acres in 1879, it rose to 72,987,752 in 1889, to 94,813,673 in 1899 and to 98,382,665 in 1909, a gain for the 30 years of 36,014,161 acres or 57.7 per cent. The production of corn was 1,754,592,000 bushels in 1879, 2,122,328,000 bushels in 1889, 2,666,324,000 bushels in 1899, and 2,552,190,000 bushels in 1909. The production in 1909 was thus 114,135,000 bushels or 4.3 per cent less than that in 1899, while that in 1889 was 543,997,000 bushels, or 25.6 per cent greater than that reported ten years earlier. The increase in production for the 30 years, 1879 to 1909, was 797,598,000 bushels, or 4.5 per cent, as compared with an increase in population for the same period of 83.4 per cent, the production of corn thus appearing not to have kept pace with the growth in population. In 1899 the per capita amount of corn for home use was 32.3 bushels, in 1909 the amount was 27.3 bushels.”

Population Outstripping Food Production.

So that you will note that with respect to each of these grains there has been an increase in population without the corresponding increase in volume of production. There has of course, since 1880, been tremendous areas of new land put into cultivation but the per capita yield has declined and in my judgment will continue to decline until we have settled down to a system of agriculture in this country that aims primarily at soil enrichment and conservation of soil fertility. Until there is bought under cultivation additional areas or until a system of soil enrichment and conservation of soil fertility is followed, we cannot hope to increase our aggregate production. An increasing population under such conditions means a lower per capita production which in the end can only be supplied by the importation of grains from abroad and it is a matter well known that we had either actually taken the initial step or had this under serious contemplation at the time of the outbreak of the European War.

A Decrease In Meat Animals.

Now with respect to our meat animals. Since 1900 there has been an increase of approximately 29,000,000 in population and a decrease of about 7,000,000 in our animal production.

Since August 1st, 1914, to September 1st, 1917, according to United States Government figures, there was a decrease in the world supply of meat animals—cattle 28,000,000; hogs 32,000,000; sheep 56,000,000; while the ratio of destruction, it is reasonable to assume, has not abated since September 1st, 1917. Some recent figures coming under my observation indicate that it is the belief of men who have made a careful study of this phase of the problem that at least 40,000,000 head of livestock will be required by Europe in her work of rehabilitation after the War, to serve as foundation flocks.

The foregoing leads to the very decided view point, earnestly asserted by some and rejected with equal earnestness by others, that the greatest problem that now confronts the American people is to be assured of an adequate supply of food at reasonable prices for her people and an adequate supply of raw materials for her industries. It will not avail us greatly if we send abroad our coal, our iron, our phosphate, our timber, in fact our capital and with the proceeds buy back food and clothing. Sound economics unequivocally points the way. We must feed and clothe ourselves in every

particular and that in abundance. Then shall our national prosperity rest upon absolute bed rock. Let it be remembered that I am not discussing this problem from the standpoint of the present day war emergency condition. I am not unmindful of the tremendous duties and tasks imposed, but I am discussing this matter from the standpoint of its broad enduring aspects.

Time To Pay For Spendthrift Habits.

The figures quoted above with respect to grain would tend to indicate that we have been doing that which has often been charged that generally speaking we have been a spendthrift nation, living up to our natural resources and existing upon the present day fertility of our soil while waiting for the unearned increment and that we have now reached the day of final readjustment.

With respect to the condition presented in our domestic animal resources, it is not a far cry to understand how this has occurred. After the Civil War it became the practice to raise both cattle and sheep in tremendous herds on the open public domain of the Western States; free, if you please, and at no cost per acre for grazing. The United States Government tacidly acquiesced in the indiscriminate use of her public domain until the actual settler demanded it for homestead purposes. The result of this was that meat and wool and hides were produced at less cost and with greater profit in that area than it could be produced in the old sections where there was a rising land value, increased taxation and a decreasing fertility, and so the East dropped out of both sheep raising and beef cattle production and finally the homesteader and now the 640 acre homestead law has operated to the exhaustion of the public domain, and he who raised sheep and cattle on the free Government land has suddenly found himself face to face with abandoning his occupation, removing to South or Central America or finding a new location within the United States, where conditions most nearly approximate those to which he had formerly been adapted.

The World's Need Of Southern Lands.

That brings us to the consideration of this question: Does or does not the world need the 300,000,000 of idle acres in the South Atlantic and Gulf States, the larger portion of which lies in the South Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Area and were produced as a by-product of the Naval Stores and Timber operators? And is

there any burden upon the owners of these lands, either legal or moral, in the premises under present day conditions?

I cannot forebear here to quote at some length from the address delivered before you in this hotel on the twenty-seventh day of last September by Dr. George M. Rommel, Chief, Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. That address was so very thoughtful, so very well prepared and so very pertinent, that I have taken the liberty before and do again take the liberty on this occasion to refer to it and quote from it at some length.

"The area of these lands is estimated at approximately 76,000,000 acres, to which the cutting of timber is adding about 10,000,000 acres each year. Eventually the total extent of the cut-over timber lands of the South will be in the neighborhood of 300,000,000 acres, which is greater than the present unsettled public domain of the United States. The utilization of these lands is therefore very much in the nature of a public obligation, and the immensity of the problem leads me to discuss the subject somewhat extensively even at the risk of repeating some of the statements made at your conference in April last. I shall also take the liberty of touching on some subjects which do not pertain directly to the necessity for increased meat production but which are vital in a consideration of the use of these lands for live stock raising.

The Features Of Constructive Development.

"Permit me to state in simplest terms the principles of the problem as an introduction to the elaboration of the argument. The cut-over lands of the South need constructive development based on economic possibilities and economic needs. To develop them for live stock production means (1) a minimum requirement for capital, (2) a minimum need for man power, and (3) the production of human food for which there is now and has been for a decade and a half the keenest need and of which there is very little danger of overproduction. To develop them at this time as farming regions on the other hand means (1) exceedingly heavy demands for capital from resources already taxed to the utmost, (2) a large demand for man power on a supply already undermanned, and (3) the

production of crops in a market already adequately supplied.

“The question of equipment and man-power seems to me among the first which must be considered. You gentlemen are concerned with the effective utilization of areas of many millions of acres. Livestock ranches of a hundred thousand acres are common and ranches of several hundred thousand or even a million acres are in successful operation. The equipment, expense, therefore, to put into operation the ranching business on these undeveloped Southern lands, can be worked out by studying the requirements shown by the business as already established elsewhere in the United States. In proportion to the total area involved, there does not seem to be anything insurmountable in this phase of the problem.

“We may take a similar view of the question of man power. The ranching business is like any other business—the big, constructive leaders are rare, but, again, like any other business, there are sufficient well trained men to take hold of any new development of the business which is justified by circumstances, which promises to be successful and which is backed by sufficient capital to develop it.

The Question Of Capital.

“Now let us apply these two factors to the development of the cut-over lands on a purely agricultural basis under present conditions. Use the 160 acre homestead factor and suppose we start in with the 76,000,000 acres now on our hands. Where, in the first place, would the money come from to develop more or less half a million additional farms in this territory? We must not ignore the fact that the great obstacle to the diversified farming movement in the South is not the colored brother, nor the landlord indisposition to grow anything but cotton until the boll-weevil wakes him up, nor even the cattle tick.

“It is the fact that many, if not most of the banks in the South which make a business of agricultural loans have only sufficient capital to finance the cotton crop. To develop these lands as farms will not only require immense sums to equip them, but equally great amounts to clear them and make them ready for crop production.

With the present shortage of agricultural capital in the South, it does not require the exercise of much imagination to realize what would be the effect of an attempt to develop them at this time as farming regions.

The Problem Of Man Power.

“To get enough competent men to develop these areas for cattle or sheep ranching will be a serious problem but not an insoluble one. To get approximately half a million farmers to develop 160 acre homesteads or a quarter of a million to develop 320 acre homesteads is a practical impossibility. There are approximately six million farmers in the United States. If the drafting of a small percentage of their employees into the army is working a hardship on the owners, what hope is there then to get nearly ten per cent of the owners of farms elsewhere to undertake the agricultural development of these cut-over lands? Men of no experience in agriculture could not be depended upon if they were available, and this phase of the question seems to settle itself with a mere statement of the fact.”

It would, therefore, seem to me that while there is no legal obligation imposed or entailed upon either the man who now owns a large or small area of the so-called cut-over lands or the timber operator who is now engaged daily in the production of additional areas or acres of cut-over land, to do aught than he has hitherto done, it does seem to me that out of all of the foregoing there arises a very distinct moral obligation. I would say that ten years ago this obligation was just beginning to evolve; that twenty-five years ago it did not exist. Let me be more explicit. Does any one contend that under our system of property rights that the owner of these lands has not the right to remove the resources therefrom, provided always he complies with the regulations locally enforced with respect to fire and kindred potent possibilities for neighborhood damage? Having removed the timber and produced an area of cut over land, no one will dispute his right to have allowed it to again grow up in trees or to pay taxes thereon and allow it to remain idle or to decline to pay taxes and allow it to revert to the state and that for the very simple reason that all things considered his cut-over lands were in competition with the free public domain of the United States and all of the education and all of the trend and all of the psychology of our people was westward and not eastward or southward?

An Increasing Moral Obligation.

The world wanted his naval stores and it wanted his lumber and he had an undoubted right to sever it and sell it and he must perforce leave a by-product, cut-over lands, behind him and I cannot consider that there existed either a legal or moral obligation to do more than that which he did. If there was a great underlying problem involved, the problem belonged to the state under all the circumstances then existing rather than to the individual owner. But it seems to me that beginning about ten years ago there has been a shifting and while there still remains so far as the legal obligation is concerned, no change in the status, there has been a growing and ever increasing moral obligation. And, added to this there can be no doubt that the assumption of this obligation on the part of the owner and operators is also fraught with tremendous possibilities in the way of profit. This is essentially an era of service. Sooner or later those of our people who are unable to satisfy their land hunger from the remaining portions of the public domain, will turn to and should be brought to the more fertile areas of our cut-over lands of the South. All of this means land classification and sooner or later land classification must become an accomplished fact if we are to have a maximum or even a minimum for that matter, of efficiency with respect to the transition of our privately owned, idle lands into actual, active agriculture. With your permission I will quote from an address delivered by me before the North Carolina State Forestry Association at Wilmington, North Carolina, on January 25th, 1918.

The Necessity For Land Classification.

“It seems to me that the day has now arrived when we are face to face with land classification as a basis for further agricultural development; and with land classification there undoubtedly comes reforestation. If I were to suggest a practical plan of operation of the South Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Area, I would suggest the enactment by the congress of legislation creating a commission to be composed of one representative from the Department of Agriculture, one from the Department of Labor and one from the Department of the Interior which has been charged with the disposition of the public domain of the United States. These three should constitute a permanent federal classification and colonization com-

mission. It is true that they would have no jurisdiction except in government owned land, but they should stand ready to aid and assist whenever the state of North Carolina or the citizens of that state sees fit to avail themselves of the co-operation. I would have them divide the lands into A, B and C classes.

“Class A—Those immediately available for general agriculture.

“Class B—Those adapted to grazing and where practicable, reforestation.

“Class C—Those which will not be during our generation or the next, fit for either farming or grazing, those I would devote to reforestation.

“Now comes the crisis of the entire reforestation problem upon lands under private ownership not within national forests. Who will defray the expense? Personally my mind is very conclusively made up—that the state must either remit the taxes and furnish ample production for a period of forty years, or else the owners of such lands must eventually relinquish them to the state for taxes and the state will find itself under the necessity of engaging in this form of activity; unless, on the contrary, we are going to admit that we are going to continue to allow the owner or his agent to exploit the poorer areas for practical development, to the unsuspecting home-seeker.”

The Situation Summed Up.

So that to sum up in a few words;—the great proportion of the idle lands of the South are cut-over lands;—that these lands have been produced by the naval stores and timber operators that the flood tide of production is now in the territory of the Southern Pine Association; that there has never existed and does not now exist under our great Anglo Saxon system of land tenure, any legal obligation upon the operator to do aught else than that which he has done save to properly safe-guard the lives and property of his neighbors under the local police regulations; that owing to the shifting of conditions generally and perhaps too a shift in the public mind and the public attitude, a moral obligation is being forced upon those who own or who are producing these lands to aid and assist both collectively and individually in their preparation for and their actual transition, so far as the more adaptable

and more fertile areas are concerned into the hands of actual settlers for general agricultural purposes; that pending the day when there shall be a sufficient number of applicants to people all of this area, it should be classified and that which it not now fit for immediate profitable, general agriculture should both individually and collectively be devoted as far as possible to the production of live stock and the still less adaptable areas to the reproduction of timber; that the Federal Government has no direct legal responsibility in the premises but she has a moral obligation and she would, no doubt, acknowledge it and stand ready to cooperate out of the abundance of her knowledge and experience in disposing of the public domain; that the various states affected will co-operate when an awakened public conscience has been brought to see the necessity; that the primary move which by every consideration is fraught with expectation of profit, must come from the owners of these lands themselves acting intelligently, unitedly, concertedly and with persistent purpose and sustained effort.

Soldiers Who Will Turn To Farming.

There is one other phase that I cannot conclude without referring to. These United States in support of a great principle of humanity, in support of common justice, in support of decency amongst nations, has entered the great world's struggle. How long or how short its duration no man can say. Sooner or later we will be mobilized a million, two million, or even five million of the flower of American manhood. The experience of all wars tends to point that the majority of these men will never again return to sedentary life; that their preference will be for the great outdoors. Where shall they go? Remain in Europe, go to South America, Australia, Asia, or come back to take their place in the great upward march of the great American Republic? What would be more to the point than to prepare to give these men available homesteads? Remember, the public domain is gone. The approximate 300,000,000 acres of land remaining in the South Atlantic and Gulf States is the only great body of low price lands on the American continent capable of high development. It is under private ownership. There is no legal obligation on the part of the United States government and none on the part of the states to meet this problem, but to my mind there is a tremendous moral obligation. Whether it will be ultimately met remains to be seen. Recently the National House of Representatives by a vote of 101

to 31 declined to take this question under consideration at this time, holding that we were now mostly concerned with winning the war, and not with what we would do after the war had closed. Nevertheless, I apprehend that this question will not down. England has foreseen it, and is preparing for it and has been for some time past. A commission headed by Sir Rider Haggard has been making a thorough investigation with respect to the available land in Great Britain, of the Colonial possessions available after the war for agricultural pursuits for her demobilized soldiers.

In an article prepared a few weeks since with respect to this question I used the following language:

A Federal Classification Commission.

“It has always seemed to the writer that sooner or later since the near exhaustion of the public domain, that we must come to land classification as a basis for intelligent, efficient, and economic use of our remaining unused lands, especially for agricultural purposes. A reference to the census returns very readily indicates the areas of unused and idle lands in the respective states. Great areas are to be found in the upper lake states, known as cut-over lands. Quite a respectable balance sheet is to be found in some of the middle Atlantic and even in the New England states, known as abandoned farms. Millions upon millions of acres can be found in the Southern states and quite a balance in the Southwestern states and still other areas in the Pacific northwest. Is it not good reasoning to assume that only the very fertile areas should be adapted to our requirements and that as our requirements lengthen through the years and our standard perhaps lowers, that the less fertile areas be then absorbed? Ought we allow the less fertile areas to be exploited from the purely commercial standpoint, to the unsuspecting and uninitiated but willing seeker for agricultural lands? It was earnestly to have been hoped that Congress would have seen fit to have established a commission in Washington, of one representative from the Department of Labor, one representative from the Department of the Interior and one representative from the Department of Agriculture these three representing the respective secretaries in charge of these Departments;

these three to be known as the Federal Commission on Land Classification and Agricultural Development and Colonization.

Directing The Seeker For Land.

“Whenever a state or the citizens of a state should see fit to avail themselves of the services of that commission, a classification of any lands within the state could be had, fixing the economic area of each unit, adaptability to use and financing through the Federal Farm Loan Bank would seem easy of accomplishment. The joint state and Federal commissions having pronounced their judgment, it remains for the owner to comply or otherwise. If he accepted the classification and the so called standardization with respect to the area of unit, adaptability and financing, the Federal Government and the State Government should undertake to turn the seeker in his direction. In the case of demobilized soldier, it ought to be very easy for the Federal Government to ascertain before discharge his wishes in the premises. In other words, we ought to have some preparation for him when the day of demobilization comes. If it is left to private citizens, human nature, being as it is, we are quite likely to fail utterly. Since congress made its recent pronouncement, the questions arise—Was it worth doing? Is it worth doing? Will congress yet realize that it perhaps passed over a wonderful opportunity to lay a foundation, strong and enduring, against the rising tide of social unrest within our gates? It would seem now to rest upon the crystallization of public sentiment and expressed demand for early solution.”

The Land Owner's Great Opportunity.

As a concluding word, I would say to the members of the Southern Pine Association that there has never existed such an opportunity as does exist today in their hands for concrete constructive work of fundamental advantage both to the nation and to the state and that there is also the added advantage and lure of profit far greater perhaps than that which has come to them hitherto from the exploitation of the naval stores and timber.

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