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THE FIGHT
FOR CONSERVATION

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INTRODUCTION

The following discussion of the conservation problem is not a systematic treatise upon the subject. Some of the matter has been published previously in magazines, and some is condensed and rearranged from addresses made before conservation conventions and other organizations within the past two years.

While not arranged chronologically, yet the articles here grouped may serve to show the rapid, virile evolution of the campaign for conservation of the nation's resources.

I am indebted to the courtesy of the editors of *The World's Work*, *The Outlook*, and of *American Industries* for the use of matter first contributed to these magazines.

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CHAPTER I

PROSPERITY

THE most prosperous nation of to-day is the United States. Our unexampled wealth and well-being are directly due to the superb natural resources of our country, and to the use which has been made of them by our citizens, both in the present and in the past. We are prosperous because our forefathers bequeathed to us a land of marvellous resources still unexhausted. Shall we conserve those resources, and in our turn transmit them, still unexhausted, to our descendants?

Unless we do, those who come after us will

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have to pay the price of misery, degradation, and failure for the progress and prosperity of our day. When the natural resources of any nation become exhausted, disaster and decay in every department of national life follow as a matter of course. Therefore the conservation of natural resources is the basis, and the only permanent basis, of national success. There are other conditions, but this one lies at the foundation.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the American people is their superb practical optimism; that marvellous hopefulness which keeps the individual efficiently at work. [This hopefulness of the American is, however, as short-sighted as it is intense. As a rule, it does not look ahead beyond the next decade or score of years, and fails wholly to reckon with the real future of the Nation. I do not think I have often heard a forecast of the growth of our population that extended beyond a total of two hundred millions, and that only as a distant

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and shadowy goal. The point of view which this fact illustrates is neither true nor farsighted. We shall reach a population of two hundred millions in the very near future, as time is counted in the lives of nations, and there is nothing more certain than that this country of ours will some day support double or triple or five times that number of prosperous people if only we can bring ourselves so to handle our natural resources in the present as not to lay an embargo on the prosperous growth of the future.

We, the American people, have come into the possession of nearly four million square miles of the richest portion of the earth. [It is ours to use and conserve for ourselves and our descendants, or to destroy.] The fundamental question which confronts us is, What shall we do with it?

That question cannot be answered without first considering the condition of our natural resources and what is being done with them to-day. As a people, we have

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been in the habit of declaring certain of our resources to be inexhaustible. To no other resource more frequently than coal has this stupidly false adjective been applied. Yet our coal supplies are so far from being inexhaustible that if the increasing rate of consumption shown by the figures of the last seventy-five years continues to prevail, our supplies of anthracite coal will last but fifty years and of bituminous coal less than two hundred years. From the point of view of national life, this means the exhaustion of one of the most important factors in our civilization within the immediate future. Not a few coal fields have already been exhausted, as in portions of Iowa and Missouri. Yet, in the face of these known facts, we continue to treat our coal as though there could never be an end of it. The established coal-mining practice at the present date does not take out more than one-half the coal, leaving the less easily mined or lower grade material to be made perma-

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nently inaccessible by the caving in of the abandoned workings. The loss to the Nation from this form of waste is prodigious and inexcusable.

The waste in use is not less appalling. But five per cent. of the potential power residing in the coal actually mined is saved and used. For example, only about five per cent. of the power of the one hundred and fifty million tons annually burned on the railways of the United States is actually used in traction; ninety-five per cent. is expended unproductively or is lost. In the best incandescent electric lighting plants but one-fifth of one per cent. of the potential value of the coal is converted into light.

Many oil and gas fields, as in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the Mississippi Valley, have already failed, yet vast amounts of gas continue to be poured into the air and great quantities of oil into the streams. Cases are known in which great volumes

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of oil were systematically burned in order to get rid of it.

The prodigal squandering of our mineral fuels proceeds unchecked in the face of the fact that such resources as these, once used or wasted, can never be replaced. If waste like this were not chiefly thoughtless, it might well be characterized as the deliberate destruction of the Nation's future.

Many fields of iron ore have already been exhausted, and in still more, as in the coal mines, only the higher grades have been taken from the mines, leaving the least valuable beds to be exploited at increased cost or not at all. Similar waste in the case of other minerals is less serious only because they are less indispensable to our civilization than coal and iron. Mention should be made of the annual loss of millions of dollars worth of by-products from coke, blast, and other furnaces now thrown into the air, often not merely without benefit but to the serious injury of the community.

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In other countries these by-products are saved and used.

We are in the habit of speaking of the solid earth and the eternal hills as though they, at least, were free from the vicissitudes of time and certain to furnish perpetual support for prosperous human life. This conclusion is as false as the term "inexhaustible" applied to other natural resources. The waste of soil is among the most dangerous of all wastes now in progress in the United States. In 1896, Professor Shaler, than whom no one has spoken with greater authority on this subject, estimated that in the upland regions of the states south of Pennsylvania three thousand square miles of soil had been destroyed as the result of forest denudation, and that destruction was then proceeding at the rate of one hundred square miles of fertile soil per year. No seeing man can travel through the United States without being struck with the enormous and unnecessary loss of fertility by

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easily preventable soil wash. The soil so lost, as in the case of many other wastes, becomes itself a source of damage and expense, and must be removed from the channels of our navigable streams at an enormous annual cost. The Mississippi River alone is estimated to transport yearly four hundred million tons of sediment, or about twice the amount of material to be excavated from the Panama Canal. This material is the most fertile portion of our richest fields, transformed from a blessing to a curse by unrestricted erosion.

The destruction of forage plants by overgrazing has resulted, in the opinion of men most capable of judging, in reducing the grazing value of the public lands by one-half. This enormous loss of forage, serious though it be in itself, is not the only result of wrong methods of pasturage. The destruction of forage plants is accompanied by loss of surface soil through erosion; by forest destruction; by corresponding deterioration in the

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water supply; and by a serious decrease in the quality and weight of animals grown on overgrazed lands. These sources of loss from failure to conserve the range are felt to-day. They are accompanied by the certainty of a future loss not less important, for range lands once badly overgrazed can be restored to their former value but slowly or not at all. The obvious and certain remedy is for the Government to hold and control the public range until it can pass into the hands of settlers who will make their homes upon it. As methods of agriculture improve and new dry-land crops are introduced, vast areas once considered unavailable for cultivation are being made into prosperous homes; and this movement has only begun.

[The single object of the public land system of the United States, as President Roosevelt repeatedly declared, is the making and maintenance of prosperous homes. That object cannot be achieved unless

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such of the public lands as are suitable for settlement are conserved for the actual home-maker. Such lands should pass from the possession of the Government directly and only into the hands of the settler who lives on the land. Of all forms of conservation there is none more important than that of holding the public lands for the actual home-maker.]

It is a notorious fact that the public land laws have been deflected from their beneficent original purpose of home-making by lax administration, short-sighted departmental decisions, and the growth of an unhealthy public sentiment in portions of the West. Great areas of the public domain have passed into the hands, not of the home-maker, but of large individual or corporate owners whose object is always the making of profit and seldom the making of homes. It is sometimes urged that enlightened self-interest will lead the men who have acquired large holdings of public lands to put

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them to their most productive use, and it is said with truth that this best use is the tillage of small areas by small owners. Unfortunately, the facts and this theory disagree. Even the most cursory examination of large holdings throughout the West will refute the contention that the intelligent self-interest of large owners results promptly and directly in the making of homes. Few passions of the human mind are stronger than land hunger, and the large holder clings to his land until circumstances make it actually impossible for him to hold it any longer. Large holdings result in sheep or cattle ranges, in huge ranches, in great areas held for speculative rise in price, and not in homes. Unless the American homestead system of small free-holders is to be so replaced by a foreign system of tenantry, there are few things of more importance to the West than to see to it that the public lands pass directly into the hands of the actual settler instead of into the hands of

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the man who, if he can, will force the settler to pay him the unearned profit of the land speculator, or will hold him in economic and political dependence as a tenant. If we are to have homes on the public lands, they must be conserved for the men who make homes.

The lowest estimate reached by the Forest Service of the timber now standing in the United States is 1,400 billion feet, board measure; the highest, ^{estimate} 2,500 billion. The present annual consumption is approximately 100 billion feet, while the annual growth is but a third of the consumption, or from 30 to 40 billion feet. If we accept the larger estimate of the standing timber, 2,500 billion feet, and the larger estimate of the annual growth, 40 billion feet, and apply the present rate of consumption, the result shows a probable duration of our supplies of timber of little more than a single generation.

Estimates of this kind are almost inev-

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itably misleading. For example, it is certain that the rate of consumption of timber will increase enormously in the future, as it has in the past, so long as supplies remain to draw upon. Exact knowledge of many other factors is needed before closely accurate results can be obtained. The figures cited are, however, sufficiently reliable to make it certain that the United States has already crossed the verge of a timber famine so severe that its blighting effects will be felt in every household in the land. The rise in the price of lumber which marked the opening of the present century is the beginning of a vastly greater and more rapid rise which is to come. We must necessarily begin to suffer from the scarcity of timber long before our supplies are completely exhausted.

It is well to remember that there is no foreign source from which we can draw cheap and abundant supplies of timber to meet a demand per capita so large as to be

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without parallel in the world, and that the suffering which will result from the progressive failure of our timber has been but faintly foreshadowed by temporary scarcities of coal.

What will happen when the forests fail? In the first place, the business of lumbering will disappear. It is now the fourth greatest industry in the United States. All forms of building industries will suffer with it, and the occupants of houses, offices, and stores must pay the added cost. Mining will become vastly more expensive; and with the rise in the cost of mining there must follow a corresponding rise in the price of coal, iron, and other minerals. The railways, which have as yet failed entirely to develop a satisfactory substitute for the wooden tie (and must, in the opinion of their best engineers, continue to fail), will be profoundly affected, and the cost of transportation will suffer a corresponding increase. Water power for lighting, manu-

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facturing, and transportation, and the movement of freight and passengers by inland waterways, will be affected still more directly than the steam railways. The cultivation of the soil, with or without irrigation, will be hampered by the increased cost of agricultural tools, fencing, and the wood needed for other purposes about the farm. Irrigated agriculture will suffer most of all, for the destruction of the forests means the loss of the waters as surely as night follows day. With the rise in the cost of producing food, the cost of food itself will rise. Commerce in general will necessarily be affected by the difficulties of the primary industries upon which it depends. In a word, when the forests fail, the daily life of the average citizen will inevitably feel the pinch on every side. And the forests have already begun to fail, as the direct result of the suicidal policy of forest destruction which the people of the United States have allowed themselves to pursue.

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It is true that about twenty per cent. of the less valuable timber land in the United States remains in the possession of the people in the National Forests, and that it is being cared for and conserved to supply the needs of the present and to mitigate the suffering of the near future. But it needs no argument to prove that this comparatively small area will be insufficient to meet the demand which is now exhausting an area four times as great, or to prevent the suffering I have described. Measures of greater vigor are imperatively required.

The conception that water is, on the whole, the most important natural resource has gained firm hold in the irrigated West, and is making rapid progress in the humid East. Water, not land, is the primary value in the Western country, and its conservation and use to irrigate land is the first condition of prosperity. The use of our streams for irrigation and for domestic and manufacturing uses is comparatively

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well developed. Their use for power is less developed, while their use for transportation has only begun. [The conservation of the inland waterways of the United States for these great purposes constitutes, perhaps, the largest single task which now confronts the Nation.] The maintenance and increase of agriculture, the supply of clear water for domestic and manufacturing uses, the development of electrical power, transportation, and lighting, and the creation of a system of inland transportation by water whereby to regulate freight-rates by rail and to move the bulkier commodities cheaply from place to place, is a task upon the successful accomplishment of which the future of the Nation depends in a peculiar degree.

We are accustomed, and rightly accustomed, to take pride in the vigorous and healthful growth of the United States, and in its vast promise for the future. Yet we are making no preparation to realize what we so easily foresee and glibly predict.

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The vast possibilities of our great future will become realities only if we make ourselves, in a sense, responsible for that future. The planned and orderly development and conservation of our natural resources is the first duty of the United States. It is the only form of insurance that will certainly protect us against the disasters that lack of foresight has in the past repeatedly brought down on nations since passed away.

CHAPTER II

HOME-BUILDING FOR THE NATION

THE most valuable citizen of this or any other country is the man who owns the land from which he makes his living. No other man has such a stake in the country. No other man lends such steadiness and stability to our national life. Therefore no other question concerns us more intimately than the question of homes. Permanent homes for ourselves, our children, and our Nation — this is a central problem. The policy of national irrigation is of value to the United States in very many ways, but the greatest of all is this, that national irrigation multiplies the men who own the land from which they make their living. The old saying, "Who ever heard

CHAPTER XI

THE NEW PATRIOTISM

THE people of the United States are on the verge of one of the great quiet decisions which determine national destinies. Crises happen in peace as well as in war, and a peaceful crisis may be as vital and controlling as any that comes with national uprising and the clash of arms. Such a crisis, at first uneventful and almost unperceived, is upon us now, and we are engaged in making the decision that is thus forced upon us. And, so far as it has gone, our decision is largely wrong. Fortunately it is not yet final.

The question we are deciding with so little consciousness of what it involves is this: What shall we do with our natural

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resources? Upon the final answer that we shall make to it hangs the success or failure of this Nation in accomplishing its manifest destiny.

Few Americans will deny that it is the manifest destiny of the United States to demonstrate that a democratic republic is the best form of government yet devised, and that the ideals and institutions of the great republic taken together must and do work out in a prosperous, contented, peaceful, and righteous people; and also to exercise, through precept and example, an influence for good among the nations of the world. That destiny seems to us brighter and more certain of realization to-day than ever before. It is true that in population, in wealth, in knowledge, in national efficiency generally, we have reached a place far beyond the farthest hopes of the founders of the Republic. Are the causes which have led to our marvellous development likely to be repeated indefinitely in the future, or is there a reason-

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able possibility, or even a probability, that conditions may arise which will check our growth?

Danger to a nation comes either from without or from within. In the first great crisis of our history, the Revolution, another people attempted from without to halt the march of our destiny by refusing to us liberty. With reasonable prudence and preparedness we need never fear another such attempt. If there be danger, it is not from an external source. In the second great crisis, the Civil War, a part of our own people strove for an end which would have checked the progress of development. Another such attempt has become forever impossible. If there be danger, it is not from a division of our people.

In the third great crisis of our history, which has now come squarely upon us, the special interests and the thoughtless citizens seem to have united together to deprive the Nation of the great natural

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resources without which it cannot endure. This is the pressing danger now, and it is not the least to which our National life has been exposed. A nation deprived of liberty may win it, a nation divided may reunite, but a nation whose natural resources are destroyed must inevitably pay the penalty of poverty, degradation, and decay.

At first blush this may seem like an unpardonable misconception and over-statement, and if it is not true it certainly is unpardonable. Let us consider the facts. Some of them are well known, and the salient ones can be put very briefly.

The five indispensably essential materials in our civilization are wood, water, coal, iron, and agricultural products.

We have timber for less than thirty years at the present rate of cutting. The figures indicate that our demands upon the forest have increased twice as fast as our population.

We have anthracite coal for but fifty

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years, and bituminous coal for less than two hundred.

Our supplies of iron ore, mineral oil, and natural gas are being rapidly depleted, and many of the great fields are already exhausted. Mineral resources such as these when once gone are gone forever.

We have allowed erosion, that great enemy of agriculture, to impoverish and, over thousands of square miles, to destroy our farms. The Mississippi alone carries yearly to the sea more than 400,000,000 tons of the richest soil within its drainage basin. If this soil is worth a dollar a ton, it is probable that the total loss of fertility from soil-wash to the farmers and forest-owners of the United States is not far from a billion dollars a year. Our streams, in spite of the millions of dollars spent upon them, are less navigable now than they were fifty years ago, and the soil lost by erosion from the farms and the deforested mountain sides, is the chief reason. The great cattle

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and sheep ranges of the West, because of overgrazing, are capable, in an average year, of carrying but half the stock they once could support and should still. Their condition affects the price of meat in practically every city of the United States.

These are but a few of the more striking examples. The diversion of great areas of our public lands from the home-maker to the landlord and the speculator; the national neglect of great water powers, which might well relieve, being perennially renewed, the drain upon our non-renewable coal; the fact that but half the coal has been taken from the mines which have already been abandoned as worked out and by caving-in have made the rest forever inaccessible; the disuse of the cheaper transportation of our waterways, which involves comparatively slight demand upon our non-renewable supplies of iron ore, and the use of the rail instead — these are other items in the huge bill of particulars of national waste.

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[We have a well-marked national tendency to disregard the future, and it has led us to look upon all our natural resources as inexhaustible.] Even now that the actual exhaustion of some of them is forcing itself upon us in higher prices and the greater cost of living, we are still asserting, if not always in words, yet in the far stronger language of action, that nevertheless and in spite of it all, they still are inexhaustible.

It is this national attitude of exclusive attention to the present, this absence of foresight from among the springs of national action, which is directly responsible for the present condition of our natural resources. It was precisely the same attitude which brought Palestine, once rich and populous, to its present desert condition, and which destroyed the fertility and habitability of vast areas in northern Africa and elsewhere in so many of the older regions of the world.

The conservation of our natural resources is a question of primary importance on the

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economic side. It pays better to conserve our natural resources than to destroy them, and this is especially true when the national interest is considered. But the business reason, weighty and worthy though it be, is not the fundamental reason. In such matters, business is a poor master but a good servant. The law of self-preservation is higher than the law of business, and the duty of preserving the Nation is still higher than either.

The American Revolution had its origin in part in economic causes, and it produced economic results of tremendous reach and weight. The Civil War also arose in large part from economic conditions, and it has had the largest economic consequences. But in each case there was a higher and more compelling reason. So with the third great crisis of our history. It has an economic aspect of the largest and most permanent importance, and the motive for action along that line, once it is recognized, should be

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more than sufficient. But that is not all. In this case, too, there is a higher and more compelling reason. The question of the conservation of natural resources, or national resources, does not stop with being a question of profit. It is a vital question of profit, but what is still more vital, it is a question of national safety and patriotism also.

We have passed the inevitable stage of pioneer pillage of natural resources. The natural wealth we found upon this continent has made us rich. We have used it, as we had a right to do, but we have not stopped there. We have abused, and wasted, and exhausted it also, so that there is the gravest danger that our prosperity to-day will have been bought at the price of the suffering and poverty of our descendants. We may now fairly ask of ourselves a reasonable care for the future and a natural interest in those who are to come after us. No patriotic citizen expects this Nation to run

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its course and perish in a hundred or two hundred, or five hundred years; but, on the contrary, we expect it to grow in influence and power and, what is of vastly greater importance, in the happiness and prosperity of our people. But we have as little reason to expect that all this will happen of itself as there would have been for the men who established this Nation to expect that a United States would grow of itself without their efforts and sacrifices. It was their duty to found this Nation, and they did it. It is our duty to provide for its continuance in well-being and honor. That duty it seems as though we might neglect — not in wilfulness, not in any lack of patriotic devotion, when once our patriotism is aroused, but in mere thoughtlessness and inability or unwillingness to drop the interests of the moment long enough to realize that what we do now will decide the future of the Nation. For, if we do not take action to conserve the Nation's natural resources, and

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that soon, our descendants will suffer the penalty of our neglect.

Let me use a homely illustration: We have all known fathers and mothers, devoted to their children, whose attention was fixed and limited by the household routine of daily life. Such parents were actively concerned with the common needs and precautions and remedies entailed in bringing up a family, but blind to every threat that was at all unusual. Fathers and mothers such as these often remain serenely unaware while some dangerous malady or injurious habit is fastening itself upon a favorite child. Once the evil is discovered, there is no sacrifice too great to repair the damage which their unwitting neglect may have allowed to become irreparable. So it is, I think, with the people of the United States. Capable of every devotion in a recognized crisis, we have yet carelessly allowed the habit of improvidence and waste of resources to find lodgment. It is our great good fortune that

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the harm is not yet altogether beyond repair.

The profoundest duty that lies upon any father is to leave his son with a reasonable equipment for the struggle of life and an untarnished name. So the noblest task that confronts us all to-day is to leave this country unspotted in honor, and unexhausted in resources, to our descendants, who will be, not less than we, the children of the Founders of the Republic. I conceive this task to partake of the highest spirit of patriotism.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRESENT BATTLE

CONSERVATION has captured the Nation. Its progress during the last twelve months is amazing. Official opposition to the conservation movement, whatever damage it has done or still threatens to the public interest, has vastly strengthened the grasp of conservation upon the minds and consciences of our people. Efforts to obscure or belittle the issue have only served to make it larger and clearer in the public estimation. The conservation movement cannot be checked by the baseless charge that it will prevent development, or that every man who tells the plain truth is either a muck-raker or a demagogue. It has taken firm hold on our

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national moral sense, and when an issue does that it has won.

The conservation issue is a moral issue, and the heart of it is this: For whose benefit shall our natural resources be conserved — for the benefit of us all, or for the use and profit of the few? This truth is so obvious and the question itself so simple that the attitude toward conservation of any man in public or private life indicates his stand in the fight for public rights.

All monopoly rests on the unregulated control of natural resources and natural advantages, and such control by the special interests is impossible without the help of politics. The alliance between business and politics is the most dangerous thing in our political life. It is the snake that we must kill. The special interests must get out of politics, or the American people will put them out of business. There is no third course.

Because the special interests are in politics,

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we as a Nation have lost confidence in Congress. This is a serious statement to make, but it is true. It does not apply, of course, to the men who really represent their constituents and who are making so fine a fight for the conservation of self-government. As soon as these men have won their battle and consolidated their victory, confidence in Congress will return.

But in the meantime the people of the United States believe that, as a whole, the Senate and the House no longer represent the voters by whom they were elected, but the special interests by whom they are controlled. They believe so because they have so often seen Congress reject what the people desire, and do instead what the interests demand. And of this there could be no better illustration than the tariff.

The tariff, under the policy of protection, was originally a means to raise the rate of wages. It has been made a tool to increase the cost of living. The wool schedule, pro-

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fessing to protect the wool-grower, is found to result in sacrificing grower and consumer alike to one of the most rapacious of trusts.

The cotton cloth schedule was increased in the face of the uncontradicted public testimony of the manufacturers themselves that it ought to remain unchanged.

The Steel interests by a trick secured an indefensible increase in the tariff on structural steel.

The Sugar Trust stole from the Government like a petty thief, yet Congress, by means of a dishonest schedule, continues to protect it in bleeding the public.

At the very time the duties on manufactured rubber were being raised, the leader of the Senate, in company with the Guggenheim Syndicate, was organizing an international rubber trust, whose charter made it also a holding company for the coal and copper deposits of the whole world.

For a dozen years the demand of the

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Nation for the Pure Food and Drug bill was outweighed in Congress by the interests which asserted their right to poison the people for a profit.

Congress refused to authorize the preparation of a great plan of waterway development in the general interest, and for ten years has declined to pass the Appalachian and White Mountain National Forest bill, although the people are practically unanimous for both.

The whole Nation is in favor of protecting the coal and other natural resources in Alaska, yet they are still in grave danger of being absorbed by the special interests. And as for the general conservation movement, Congress not only refused to help it on, but tried to forbid any progress without its help. Fortunately for us all, in this attempt it has utterly failed.

This loss of confidence in Congress is a matter for deep concern to every thinking American. It has not come quickly or

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without good reason. Every man who knows Congress well knows the names of Senators and members who betray the people they were elected to represent, and knows also the names of the masters whom they obey. A representative of the people who wears the collar of the special interests has touched bottom. He can sink no farther.

Who is to blame because representatives of the people are so commonly led to betray their trust? We all are — we who have not taken the trouble to resent and put an end to the knavery we knew was going on. The brand of politics served out to us by the professional politician has long been composed largely of hot meals for the interests and hot air for the people, and we have all known it.

Political platforms are not sincere statements of what the leaders of a party really believe, but rather forms of words which those leaders think they can get others to believe they believe. The realities of the

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regular political game lie at present far beneath the surface; many of the issues advanced are mere empty sound; while the issues really at stake must be sought deep down in the politics of business — in politics for revenue only. All this the people realize as they never did before, and, what is more, they are ready to act on their knowledge.

Some of the men who are responsible for the union of business and politics may be profoundly dishonest, but more of them are not. They were trained in a wrong school, and they cannot forget their training. Clay hardens by immobility — men's minds by standing pat. Both lose the power to take new impressions. Many of the old-style leaders regard the political truths which alone insure the progress of the Nation, and will hereafter completely dominate it, as the mere meaningless babble of political infants. They have grown old in the belief that money has the right to rule, and they can never

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understand the point of view of the men who recognize in the corrupt political activity of a railroad or a trust a most dangerous kind of treason to government by the people.

When party leaders go wrong, it requires a high sense of public duty, true courage, and a strong belief in the people for a man in politics to take his future in his hands and stand against them.

The black shadow of party regularity as the supreme test in public affairs has passed away from the public mind. It is a great deliverance. The man in the street no longer asks about a measure or a policy merely whether it is good Republican or good Democratic doctrine. Now he asks whether it is honest, and means what it says, whether it will promote the public interest, weaken special privilege, and help to give every man a fair chance. If it will, it is good, no matter who proposed it. If it will not, it is bad, no matter who defends it.

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It is a greater thing to be a good citizen than to be a good Republican or a good Democrat.

The protest against politics for revenue only is as strong in one party as in the other, for the servants of the interests are plentiful in both. In that respect there is little to choose between them.

Differences of purpose and belief between political parties to-day are vastly less than the differences within the parties. The great gulf of division which strikes across our whole people pays little heed to fading party lines, or to any distinction in name only. The vital separation is between the partisans of government by money for profit and the believers in government by men for human welfare.

When political parties come to be badly led, when their leaders lose touch with the people, when their object ceases to be everybody's welfare and becomes somebody's profit, it is time to change the leaders. One

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of the most significant facts of the time is that the professional politicians appear to be wholly unaware of the great moral change which has come over political thinking in the last decade. They fail to see that the political dogmas, the political slogans, and the political methods of the past generation have lost their power, and that our people have come at last to judge of politics by the eternal rules of right and wrong.

A new life is stirring among the dry bones of formal platforms and artificial issues. Morality has broken into politics. Political leaders, Trust-bred and Trust-fed, find it harder and harder to conceal their actual character. The brass-bound collar of privilege has become plain upon their necks for all men to see. They are known for what they are, and their time is short. But when they come to be retired it will be of little use to replace an unfaithful public servant who wears the collar by another public servant with the same collar around his neck. Above

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all, what we need in every office is free men representing a free people.

The motto in every primary — in every election — should be this: No watch-dogs of the Interests need apply.

The old order, standing pat in dull failure to sense the great forward sweep of a nation determined on honesty and publicity in public affairs, is already wearing thin under the ceaseless hammering of the progressive onset. The demand of the people for political progress will not be denied. Does any man, not blinded by personal interest or by the dust of political dry rot, suppose that the bulk of our people are anything else but progressive? If such there be, let him ask the young men, in whose minds the policies of to-morrow first see the light.

The people of the United States demand a new deal and a square deal. They have grasped the fact that the special interests are now in control of public affairs. They

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have decided once more to take control of their own business. For the last ten years the determination to do so has been swelling like a river. They insist that the special interests shall go out of politics or out of business — one or the other. And the choice will lie with the interests themselves. If they resist, both the interests and the people will suffer. If wisely they accept the inevitable, the adjustment will not be hard. It will do their business no manner of harm to make it conform to the general welfare. But one way or the other, conform it must.

The overshadowing question before the American people to-day is this: Shall the Nation govern itself or shall the interests run this country? The one great political demand, underlying all others, giving meaning to all others, is this: The special interests must get out of politics. The old-style leaders, seeking to switch public attention away from this one absorbing and overwhelming issue are pitifully ridiculous and

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out of date. To try to divert the march of an aroused public conscience from this righteous inevitable conflict by means of obsolete political catchwords is like trying to dam the Mississippi with dead leaves.

To drive the special interests out of politics is a vast undertaking, for in politics lies their strength. If they resist, as doubtless they will, it will call for nerve, endurance, and sacrifice on the part of the people. It will be no child's play, for the power of privilege is great. But the power of our people is greater still, and their steadfastness is equal to the need. The task is a tremendous one, both in the demands it will make and the rewards it will bring. It must be undertaken soberly, carried out firmly and justly, and relentlessly followed to the very end. Two things alone can bring success. The first is honesty in public men, without which no popular government can long succeed. The second is complete publicity of all the affairs in which the public has an interest,

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such as the business of corporations and political expenses during campaigns and between them. To these ends, many unfaithful public servants must be retired, much wise legislation must be framed and passed, and the struggle will be bitter and long. But it will be well worth all it will cost, for self-government is at stake.

There can be no legislative cure-all for great political evils, but legislation can make easier the effective expression and execution of the popular will. One step in this direction, which I personally believe should be taken without delay, is a law forbidding any Senator or Member of Congress or other public servant to perform any services for any corporation engaged in interstate commerce, or to accept any valuable consideration, directly or indirectly, from any such corporation, while he is a representative of the people, and for a reasonable time thereafter. If such a law would be good for the Nation in its affairs, a similar law should

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be good for the States and the cities in their affairs. And I see no reason why Members and Senators and State Legislators should not keep the people informed of their pecuniary interest in interstate or public service corporations, if they have any. It is certain such publicity would do the public no harm.

This Nation has decided to do away with government by money for profit and return to the government our forefathers died for and gave to us — government by men for human welfare and human progress.

Opposition to progress has produced its natural results. There is profound dissatisfaction and unrest, and profound cause for both. Yet the result is good, for at last the country is awake. For a generation at least there has not been a situation so promising for the ultimate public welfare as that of to-day. Our people are like a hive of bees, full of agitation before taking flight to a better place. Also they are ready to sting. Out of the whole situa-

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tion shines the confident hope of better things. If any man is discouraged, let him consider the rise of cleaner standards in this country within the last ten years.

The task of translating these new standards into action lies before us. From sea to sea the people are taking a fresh grip on their own affairs. The conservation of political liberty will take its proper place alongside the conservation of the means of living, and in both we shall look to the permanent welfare by the plain people as the supreme end. The way out lies in direct interest by the people in their own affairs and direct action in the few great things that really count.

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? The special interests must be put out of politics. I believe the young men will do it.