I am genuinely pleased to have been asked to speak to you tonight on the occasion of the Annual Dinner of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. I love the opportunity I have as an Assistant Interior Secretary of working with the National Park Service; the rewards of this association include meeting and coming to know groups, like your own, motivated to assist government to reach objectives which government may be too impersonal, too large, or too slow to achieve alone. We are grateful, officially and personally.

The generous contributions made by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in the initial rehabilitation and subsequent maintenance and preservation of this building, the Second Bank of the United States, are deeply appreciated. The veterans of the Service tell me that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the Park Service to have preserved this building for the American people without the timely cooperation of the Foundation in 1939.

And there is another "fringe benefit" to my work. The Park Service and organizations like yours so frequently are delving into our history and our heritage, and sometimes I have the chance to have some of the thrill of it rub off on me. Recently, I attended a National Parks Conference at Grand Canyon, and for two wonderful days, I could absorb the legends, the lore, the wonder of America, as I visited with the Superintendents of Battlefield Parks of our Revolution and Civil Wars, of great National Parks and jewels of National Monuments. These men were Historians, Naturalists, students, even poets, and the experience was rejuvenating.

I've had an experience of uplift such as I had at the Grand Canyon in the exposure I've had to the life of the great adopted American whose memory you honor in your continued good works.

I confess that although I have walked many times by his likeness, which hangs in the long hall which leads to the office of the Secretary of the Interior, I did not, until I began to prepare for this talk, know more than the name, and certainly not the remarkable conservation contribution, of this newspaperman, revolutionary, patriot, orator, United States Senator, Civil War General, scholar, musician and pioneer in civil service reform, who also served as Secretary of the Interior. I take nothing from the luster of the memory of Gifford Pinchot when I say that Schurz, in my opinion, was as great.
The wisdom of Carl Schurz in the resources field is as fresh as tomorrow. President Kennedy's recent message to Congress warned that our forest lands present the sharpest challenge to our foresight because we are using up our old growth timber at an alarming rate and consumption will double in the next forty years.

Schurz put it this way in 1877:

"The rapidity with which this country is being stripped of its timber must alarm every thinking man."

Secretary of the Interior Udall organized a task force to study the distressing state of American Indian Affairs. Back in the seventies, Secretary Schurz advised the President that "the general condition of our Indian affairs is by no means satisfactory." And, he said later, "the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs is one of the most arduous places in the government." Amen to that.

Today, Secretary Udall is pushing the most ambitious National Park program since the National Park Service was founded forty-five years ago. He is appealing for enough money to do the job. Eighty-four years ago, Secretary Schurz was appealing for money enough to pay the salary of the first Superintendent of the first Park, Yellowstone. The Superintendent had been appointed but since Congress had made no appropriation to pay him, he was working for free.

Schurz was concerned with the desert land laws and the problems of the arid Western States. I spent many hours this week working with the Director of the Bureau of Land Management on proposed revisions and improvements of these laws.

This forthright and outspoken man, like an Ickes much later, could castigate the Congress for passing a bill he had opposed. He read them a lecture: "We are now rapidly approaching the day when the forests of this country will no longer be sufficient to supply our home wants, and it is the highest time that the old notion that the timber on the public lands belongs to anybody and everybody, to be cut down and taken off at pleasure, should give way."

Action followed. He whipped up public opinion, and he stopped the export traffic in logs from the public lands by administrative action, continuing to apply the needle to Congress. "... I regret to say that in spite of the repeated recommendation of the passage of a law to facilitate the prevention of the wasteful devastation of the public timber lands ... almost all the legislation that has been had upon this subject consisted in acts relieving those who had committed depredations in the past of their responsibility, and protecting them against the legal consequences of their trespasses."

He told Congress bluntly that it was falling down on the job of protecting Yellowstone. He reorganized the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He told the white people in the West they had to stop stealing Indian land. And while he was busy going around the country creating enemies by the hundreds, he was in the first rank of the conservation movement. "The waste and destruction of the redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) and "big trees" (Sequoia gigantia) of California have been,
and continue to be, so great as to cause apprehension that these species of trees, the noblest and oldest in the world, will entirely disappear unless some measure be soon taken to preserve at least a portion of them," he wrote, following his comments with specific recommendation for Presidential action.

Gifford Pinchot found inspiration in Schurz' lonely battle, and gave him credit as the only Secretary of the Interior who had sensed the forest problem and tried to do anything about it.

This is heady wine. It is a tonic to a bureaucrat buried in papers to find the issues stated with such clarity and brevity. His annual reports bear his mark, and each is only fifty or so pages in length.

But I am indebted to my wife, the scholar in my family, for the inspiration to leave this exciting facet of his life in pursuit of another equally fascinating one--his friendship with Abraham Lincoln.

This friendship must have been the richest experience of his life. It was a friendship based upon profound mutual respect; no fawning or cheap adulation marred it. It was an active, give-and-take, useful friendship.

Lincoln found in the fugitive German firebrand an entree to the "German vote" in the 1860 election. He discovered soon that the 31-year old from Wisconsin was scholar, poet, and idea man, and then, as now, public figures were on the lookout for competent speech advisers.

So Schurz was one of the inner circle in the drafting of the first inaugural; like an early version Harry Hopkins, within a few years he was on the stump himself. By the time the 1864 re-election campaign came round, the matured Schurz (by then 35, a major general in the Army and an ex-Minister to Spain) was doing an Ickes-type hatchet job on the Democrats and George McClellan in this very city.

But let's return to the first inaugural, when the new administration was being formed. Schurz, like many campaign workers after a successful election, must have had a dual role in this process--to give his advice on the deserving, the able, and the politically potent aspirants; and to worry quietly about what was in the Chief's mind for him.

Schurz wrote to his wife: "As I was leaving him after this long conversation [on the draft of the first inaugural] in which he explained his opinions and plans with the greatest frankness, I told him I should ask his administration for a few offices for my friends." He answered: "You write to me and you may be sure that I shall attend to everything you may ask for; and as for your own case, which you have not spoken of to me, I shall never forget you."

Lincoln expressed a distaste for the business of finding the right man for each job. On one occasion he said the process itself was like a landlord letting rooms in one part of the building, while a fire raged in the other part. At another time he said: "I have discovered a good way of providing officers for
this Government: put all the names of the applicants into one pepper box and all the offices into another, and then shake the two, and make appointments just as the names and offices happen to drop out together." As to Schurz, it turned out that Mr. Lincoln had ideas different from the prevalent one that Carl would be just right for the Kingdom of Sardinia as Ambassador. Instead, he was offered the post of Minister to Spain.

Like Adlai Stevenson, much later, he asked time to think; and then he accepted. But the intervening period of rumors and clearances were stormy.

His case was argued up and down in the Cabinet. Seward declared that Schurz's record in violent, insurrectionary, red-republican movements in Germany in 1848 would be frowned on by the Spanish monarchy. Lincoln replied that Schurz would be discreet; it ought not to be held against the man that he had made efforts for liberty; and it might be well for European governments to realize this.

Schurz had the human touch, which requires a talent for making mistakes and changing opinions. He could and did bawl out the President of his country for not eradicating Democrats and replacing them with Republicans--yet he could, and did, become a leader in the reformation of the spoils system and the institution of the civil service merit system in the Federal Government.

I've said that Schurz took the stump in this city--his speech here reminds one of a later Secretary of Interior who mastered the high art of invective on a public platform.

The country was in a divisive campaign, and McClellan, a man for whom Schurz never had any use, was the Democratic nominee on a platform which called for a convention to restore the union. McClellan had ducked that issue, and Schurz called him on it: "He ignored the platform and took the nomination, wrote a skillfully worded political letter showing that the art, How not to say it, can be brought to as high a degree of perfection as the art, How not to do it."

Schurz sounds like an early Alben Barkley when he sets out to remind his opponents of earlier administration of their party: "Although Buchanan is dead and buried, those who indulged in the soothing delusion that such a man could leave no progeny, find themselves mistaken. Behold, a whole brood of young Buchanans has risen up and met in convention in Chicago. The laurels of their father do not let them sleep. I see again the cunning twinkle of the eye, I see the white necktie again; they try to adjust it like a halter around the throat of the Republic, to throttle her to death. Truly the sons are greater than the sire. For what he did, we may say he did as a weak old man, whose life had been spent in a constant exercise of his knee-joints; and who, when the rebellion first raised its Gorgon-head, had neither the firmness of a patriot nor the courage of a traitor. But what they do, they do after thousands have stained battlefields of their country with precious blood, after the people have poured out money like water to save the Republic, when the hero of Vicksburg is thundering at the gates of Richmond, when our flag waves over Atlanta, and Victory is the cry!"

It was Schurz who said: "Our country, right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right."
Later:

"Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on a desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny."

The shaping of the statements, as well as the thought behind them, have the ring of Lincoln's prose. Some of his speeches were so markedly in Lincoln's flair, so Sandburg tells us, that it seems sure Lincoln wrote parts of them.

Sandburg says that Carl Schurz's private letters held opinions about Lincoln that he could not fully and conveniently have given in his orations to the immense metropolitan audiences that heard him in the autumn of 1864. To Theodor Petrash, a newly arrived emigrant, once a schooldays chum of Schurz in Germany, went a letter in 1864. "I wish to enlighten you on two other points. You are underestimating the President. I grant that he lacks higher education and his manners are not in accord with European conceptions of the dignity of a chief magistrate. He is a well-developed child of nature and is not skilled in polite phrases and poses. But he is a man of profound feeling, correct and firm principles and incorruptible honesty. His motives are unquestionable, and he possesses to a remarkable degree the characteristic, God-given trait of this people, sound common sense. Should you read his official documents and his political letters you would find this verified to a surprising extent."

At another time he said:

"I will make a prophecy that may now sound peculiar. In fifty years, perhaps much sooner, Lincoln's name will be inscribed close to Washington's on this American Republic's roll of honor. And there it will remain for all time. The children of those who persecute him now, will bless him."

Studying his life and times has been fascinating fun. I think he would enjoy the peculiar situation that now exists between your organization and the National Park Service. As I said before, without your timely cooperation in 1939, it would have been difficult for the Service to preserve this building. Your generous contributions in rehabilitating and then maintaining the Second Bank of the United States made it possible to save the place. Now we tell you that we appreciate it so much we are going to evict you.

Naturally we are pleased to have his Memorial Foundation working so harmoniously with our Park Service. And while this building is nearing the time when it will have to be devoted wholly to public use, we are glad that it will be possible to accommodate your organization in other quarters in the Park.

We plan to restore, or recreate as authentically as possible, the entire row of houses on the north side of Walnut Street between Third and Fourth Streets. Your new home will be located there. It will be a strategic headquarters site from which to tell your story and his story.
The heart of old Philadelphia has the Nation's greatest concentration of physical reminders of the story of independence and the establishment of the United States as a free country.

Urban blight caused this neighborhood to degenerate, but the move to reclaim the area, launched by the Independence Hall Association under the leadership of Judge Edwin O. Lewis, [We are honored to have him here tonight.] has been gathering vigor. It is now one of the foremost historical projects in the country, representing a joint Federal, State and Community expenditure of perhaps $30 million.

As to the Federal part, we've been working, as you know. We will continue to work. We hope to put up a Visitor Center to guide visitors from City Tavern to Carpenters' Hall and finally to Independence Hall.

The reconstruction of City Tavern, where Paul Revere brought the news of the closing of the port of Boston, and where delegates to the First Continental Congress met to do their politicking, is vital to the interpretation of the Park story.

Carl Schurz would have been delighted with City Tavern. Those men had faith and courage and high intelligence. They were in love with the words "Liberty" and "Freedom" and "Democracy." And like him, they were spoiling for a fight.

I've had a personal lift learning about Carl Schurz. As a tough-minded and dedicated Secretary of the Interior, he wrenched my Department off its old ways and set it moving ahead on a path of progress. His lofty aims in the park and recreation field are an inspiration today, when we have nearly run out of time in which to save the wild and beautiful open spaces from the bulldozer. His vigilance in sounding the alarm for the vanishing forest lands set off a clamor that finally resulted in corrective action.

This German-born agitator was the essence of Americanism. It is fitting that we pay tribute to his memory tonight here at the birthplace of America. We need to be reminded of what he did and why.

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