REMARKS OF UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR.,
AT BANQUET MEETING OF THE AMERICAN FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES
IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL 20, 1966

A certain Senator, then in his nineties and
since retired, was furnished by his personal secretary
with a schedule of his appointments, often showing
several receptions and parties on the same evening.

At one such reception, the elderly Senator was
seen to be studying his schedule. "Senator," he was
asked, "are you finding out where you are going next?"

"No," he replied, "I'm trying to find out where
I am now."

Tomorrow, your Open Forum takes up "The Next
25 Years." Tonight I will make a few comments on that
subject, but I think that like the Senator we should
first consider "where we are now."

Twenty-seven years ago this month,
J. P. Weyerhaeuser, Jr., wrote to Chief Forester Silcox
about matters on which his company and the Forest
Service agreed: each looked to the future, each
understood the necessity of cutting old growths and
raising new crops, and each believed in forest
management.

What "management" meant at that time, of
course, was rudimentary by our present standards.
The "Clemons Tree Farm" was a test-tube for
timber management before it became the Clemons
Tree Farm. The immediate motivation had been
rehabilitation of fire damage, and the stated goal
was to make the forest safe from fire. There radio
communication began to replace telephone lines.
There the bulldozer came into its own for building
a pattern of roads. Three hundred miles of trails
and road and ridiculed innovations like pumper-tank
trucks gave the Clemons Farm a city-type fire protection,
and the foresters' goal of 99.75 percent fire prevention was bettered—99.90 percent was achieved.

Aerial seeding was tried; that a decade was to pass before it succeeded was no discredit to the management innovativeness of the owners. New techniques of design planning, fire control, seeding, and spraying were undertaken.

We celebrate tonight the ceremonies at the Montesano Theatre where Governor Langlie predicted, accurately, that the Clemons Tree Farm would set the pace for millions of acres of such lands throughout the State of Washington. He would have been even more accurate if he had left off the last clause—the idea spread throughout the whole United States.

But the conception of the idea, and putting it into practice, as I've said, was earlier—it was conceived first as a management effort; but its public relations aspect wasn't overlooked.
Developments followed rapidly. Great credit must be given to the cooperative spirit which led to the formation of the American Forest Products Industries. Its stated object of stimulating tree growing, encouraging better forestry practices, and promoting public understanding and cooperation, and its functions of certifying "tree farms" and sponsoring "keep green" programs emphasize the awareness of the industry of its community responsibilities. The Tree Farm idea was the ten-strike: As the *Journal of Forestry* said at the time, "Tree Farms mean adequate forest protection, efficient cutting practices, necessary artificial reforestation, and good wood utilization."

Everybody could be a tree farmer. Timber owners who did not aim at perpetual forest crops could still meet the minimum requirements and make their lands
into tree farms.

No step taken by an industry ever did more to change a negative image into a positive one. The epithet of "exploiter", the widespread view that only public authorities practiced forestry, and recollections of the "cut-out, get-out" era—all of these gave way to a favorable and friendly attitude on the part of the public.

Is this happy state of affairs "where we are now?"

Not exactly.

It may be that I am basically pessimistic, but of late I have been concerned with bits and pieces of evidence that we have not quite reached our goals of full understanding.

These are small things--I hesitate to call them brush fires. Some of you may have heard me worry
publicly at the Pacific Logging Congress last fall, when I said I detected a deterioration in the climate of confidence which I had thought had become fairly well established between the private side and the public side of the wood business.

I quoted a news story from the Lewiston Tribune where a vice president of Potlatch said that the industry was being "out-communicated, often misrepresented and vilified."

I said I thought the Public Land Law Review Commission could help the situation—its Staff Director had just told your board and your President (who is on the Advisory Council of that Commission) about its plans.

At the present time lumber prices are high, and good times are always conducive to good relationships. The tree farm idea was born in a period of
relatively good times. The companies could afford to consider the long-term, to spend some money on experimenting, to consider scientific practices. Perhaps now is the best time to really look ahead.

We have no schedule to tell us where we should go next. But we can tell where we've been, where we are, and learn the lessons of history.

I hope it is not too presumptuous of me to use this Silver Anniversary occasion to express the wish or hope that an idea equivalent to the Tree Farms may come along in the next year or two, to give us an impetus for the next 25 years like that we got in 1941.

*Time* magazine last week discussed on facing pages the new Secura Safety Car and Adolph Coors Brewing Company's effort to help in the drive to beautify our Nation's countryside.
The auto industry, the brewing industry, the soap industry, and many others have their own versions of the public relations problems which faced the wood industry when the free farm idea was conceived.

The way an industry reacts when faced with this kind of crisis is easy to criticize from the outside. I have no intention of criticizing. For the purposes of our subject I would like to single out the beer and soap instances, and leave each of you to make your own comparisons about the unfortunate public relations plight of the auto industry.

Let's start with soap. Over the past two decades, synthetic detergents have come into widespread, almost universal use, and have polluted our streams, causing foaming and overfertilization. Polyphosphate detergents, after use, are carried in sewage effluents
into rivers, lakes, and estuaries, where the phosphate is taken up by algae and other aquatic plants.

Some detergents survive for long times because they contain hydrocarbon chains not easily decomposed—"hard" detergents. Other detergents are more readily decomposed by aquatic organisms. They also can be manufactured economically and do as good a job. These are "degradable", or "soft" detergents. They do not accumulate in such high concentrations in the ground water and streams.

At its own instance, and without much fanfare whatever, the soap industry shifted to the degradable type of detergents. Difficulties with foaming will gradually disappear as the older detergents move through the ground water and down the streams.

This, to my unpracticed public relations eye,
is a classic case of "prevention", of getting on top of a situation with technological advances attuned to the requirements of the situation. Such an industry is deserving of credit.

Beer cans (and other types of cans, of course) are a "solid waste." What Adolph Coors has to do with it I'll discuss in a moment, but let me first give you some idea of the magnitude of the problem of solid waste.

Nobody knows exactly how much solid waste is generated in the United States, but from what we know of municipal solid waste, each person "produces" 1600 pounds a year. Forty-five percent of the 250 billion annual pounds of municipal solid waste is paper; metallics constitute eight percent, and glass and ceramics six percent.

Forty-eight billion metal cans, 26 billion bottles
and jars, 65 billion metal and plastic caps and
crowns—these would fall in the solid waste equivalent
to the detergent example of "nondegradable." It will
be obvious to you, of course, that the products of
your own industry are "degradable."

The Coors Company, according to Time, has
initiated a program to buy back empty beer cans and
bottles for one cent apiece, and has earned a Good
Outdoor Manners Association award. Last year,
Coors retrieved 104 million bottles and 13 million
aluminum cans.

Adolph Coors hasn't exactly lost the million
dollars the effort cost. Jumping aboard the bandwagon
of concern about litter and unsightliness is not only
good citizenship, it is good business.

The Coors example is perhaps not apt. As
I said, I do not mean to make value judgments as
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between wood products and competing products of metal or plastic. But in a Department concerned with pollution, with conservation, and with preservation of the quality of our environment, I am entitled, I think, to note that some of the products which compete with wood will be benchmarks for future archeologists. I do not like to see a paper cup along the highway, but I am somewhat consoled to know it will eventually be taken up by the elements and return to its natural cellulose state.

Will the time ever come when you will recover some of the lucrative sash and door business you lost because your product, at the end of its useful life, can be disposed of more easily?

Disposition of solid waste is often by incineration, which reduces the volume which must be carried off--incineration of different materials yields different
kinds of air pollution, and some air pollution is much more dangerous than others. Again, wood comes off well.

Eventually, we are going to have to organize as carefully for waste output as we do for resource input. Collection (reverse distribution), processing (reverse manufacturing), and disposal (reverse resource acquisition) are at primitive levels of organization. Consumer demand and enterprise economics are missing from disposal practices, or were until Mr. Coors had his idea about incentives.

My point here is that concern about the quality of our environment is going to challenge our society and our technology. Natural products--cellulose, natural fibers, etc.--which renew themselves from the sun's energy will have, I predict, a special place in this new drive.
Pressures of pollution and despoliation will continue to increase as our population and standard of living rise. The kinds and intensity of use of our public resources we can tolerate without detriment is not clearly known. We must have research, for without understanding of pollutants, we cannot decide what levels are permissible; without understanding the processes by which environmental impairment occurs, we cannot tell where to concentrate our efforts.

In a way, we stand in both the public and the private sector about where forest management was in 1939 when Mr. Weyerhaeuser wrote to the Chief Forester--we agree on a lot of common objectives, but each looks at the manner in a different way.

So it is fortunate, I think, that President Johnson has put the matter so clearly before the American people:
"Ours is a nation of affluence. But the technology that has permitted our affluence spews out vast quantities of wastes and spent products that pollute our air, poison our waters, and even impair our ability to feed ourselves.

"Pollution now is one of the most pervasive problems of our society. With our numbers increasing, and with our increasing urbanization and industrialization, the flow of pollutants to our air, soils and waters is increasing. This increase is so rapid that our present efforts in managing pollution are barely enough to stay even, surely not enough to make the improvements that are needed."
The President commissioned his Science Advisor to study this matter, and its report on "Restoring the Quality of Our Environment" is already a classic.

I suggest that the American Forest Products Industries "tune into" the Quality of the American Environment in a positive way. You are under attack in this respect, at least not in the terms I've mentioned today, but I know you can contribute. You may find a great national interest in the subject, and a responsiveness to some mutation of the genius of the tree farm idea--something easily understood, something which touches a responsive chord in our ethical instincts, something which matches public and private goals.

I've no idea what this idea could possibly be. But I have such a feeling for this great product of the
land--wood--that I can't resist throwing the subject on the table.

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