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REMARKS

OF

SENATOR JOHN L. WILSON,

OF WASHINGTON,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 6, 1897, AND APRIL 4 AND 5, 1898,

ON

THE MODIFICATION AND REPEAL OF THE FORESTRY
RESERVE ORDER OF FEBRUARY 22, 1897.

WASHINGTON.

1898.

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REMARKS
OF
SENATOR JOHN L. WILSON,
OF WASHINGTON,

On the modification and repeal of the forestry reserve order of February 22
1897.

May 6, 1897.

Mr. WILSON. I do not know, Mr. President, that anything can be added to the statements made at the previous session of Congress relative to the withdrawal of February 22, 1897. I can not speak, sir, for reservations and withdrawals made in other States, but I desire to say a single word, and a word only, relative to the withdrawals that have taken place in the State of Washington.

The order made by the President was a drastic one so far as it affected my people. While the Senator from South Dakota [Mr. PETTIGREW] speaks feelingly of the 1,000,000 acres withdrawn in his State, an area of over 8,000,000 acres of land has been withdrawn from settlement and development in the State of Washington—an area larger than the State of Massachusetts and probably twice as large as the State of Connecticut. In one county, while this commission composed of scientific gentlemen was declaring that there were no entries of any sort, an abstract of title was filed with the Secretary of the Interior, showing over 4,600 mineral locations, upon which \$2,000,000 worth of work has already been performed, while one corporation, the Monte Cristo syndicate, has expended in the development of its property and in the building of its railroad over \$4,000,000, an aggregate of over \$6,000,000 in one county in which "there were no entries."

I do not know why the order should have been made as to the State of Washington. All of our rivers flow directly into Puget Sound. The two great rivers of the State—the Skagit and the Columbia—have their sources in British Columbia, and all of the other rivers have a perpetual and everlasting supply, until time shall be no more, from the glaciers of Mount Ranier. In addition to that, Mr. President, we have an annual rainfall in western Washington of 108 inches.

So, Mr. President, it would seem that there was no necessity, so far as preserving the watershed in western Washington is concerned, for this withdrawal. Again, it comes forty-five years too late. All the timber lands of western Washington that are merchantable are within 25 miles of the waters of Puget Sound. The timber lands withdrawn by this order do not contain merchantable timber. They only have their value, if any, for mining purposes. They do not prevent the flow of the water from the melting snow, for the undergrowth of pitch pine that comes up is better for that purpose than the larger timber.

What they do complain of is that their material interests—those things that affect their prosperity and advancement, nay their very existence as Commonwealths—shall be disposed of by the stroke of pen, as though we were mere provinces and not sovereign States of this great Union.

Mr. President, I think this order extremely unfortunate. It would seem that it was impossible for the people west of the Missouri River to develop their own domain and their own country in their own way. We have never had that opportunity. The people who first settled New England came and took thousands of acres of land and developed them as they saw fit, and the people who passed from New England across the Allegheny Mountains and settled in the Mississippi Valley took up their lands at a dollar and a quarter an acre without those restrictions required under the homestead act of 1860. Our people have had to go forward and develop their country by law, and they have observed the law in so far as it has been possible for any citizen to do so. They do not complain of this. It is right and proper and just.

Mr. President, supposing this order is not modified or revoked, what are you going to do about it? We have valuable improvements there; the people have expended large sums of money; they have gone on and developed these mineral locations; they have built villages; they have built railroads; they have done all of these things under the law; they are going to stay there; they are going to use that timber; and what are you going to do about it? What can you do about it?

I recollect very well a few years ago a special agent of the General Land Office came to our town who said he was going over to investigate some timber-land depredations on Badger Mountain. I said to him, "When you get over there, you will find a very beautiful valley of 300,000 acres of land, and you can see that every farmhouse and all the buildings there are built of timber taken from Badger Mountain." I said, "You go to the town of Waterville, with a thousand people, and you will find the courthouse and all the buildings there are built from timber taken from Badger Mountain; and if you think you can get a verdict, you had better try it." He did try it, but he did not succeed. So you will fail on this. We must have the timber to develop those lands. Why should we be everlastingly and eternally harassed and annoyed and bedeviled by these scientific gentlemen from Harvard College?

I recall, Mr. President, that a great many years ago a very distinguished and very able gentleman from Massachusetts, in a celebrated oration delivered in the city of Boston, spoke of that Western country, and declared that—

By a presumptuous assertion of a disputed claim to worthless territory beyond the Rocky Mountains we have kindled anew on the hearth of our mother country the smothered fires of a hostile strife.

What to-day is that worthless country upon the other side of the Rocky Mountains? It includes all the lands between the Columbia River and 54° 40' north latitude. Had we maintained our position then, the Fraser River would have been an American river, the city of Victoria would have been an American city, and Great Britain would have been impeded in her progress across the continent with her railway. So we do not always learn the facts of that Western country from these talented and learned scientific gentlemen.

I have here the testimony taken before the Secretary of the Interior, including that of Professor Sergeant in regard to their visit to these reservations. Mr. President, if you would read that testimony, if anyone would read that testimony, he would be impressed by the very limited visits made to these reservations. They admit that they had no knowledge, that they hurried through the country in Pullman palace cars, and made no observation of the great injustice they were about to commit against the people of my section. There it is, exhibiting not a single excuse, not a single reason given by these able gentlemen for this withdrawal.

Mr. President, we in the Western country do not desire to do anything that is not proper, that is not right. We only ask for equal and exact justice; we only ask to help develop the Union of the States. We in the West know no North, we know no South, we know no East, we know no West; we know nothing but the Union—and to that we are devoted.

Mr. President, I am of the West. I know something of its possibilities, of its products, and of its people. I have seen what was once considered an arid waste pass from a sea of grasses to great cities, with schools and colleges, civilization and wealth. Suppose these forest reservations had been made years ago, and that these withdrawals had been made in California, would the \$1,500,000,000 of gold have been produced in that State? And let it be remembered that California is as large as New York, Pennsylvania, and all New England.

If such withdrawal had been made in Idaho, would she have contributed her \$200,000,000 of gold and silver to our national wealth? And Idaho is nine times as large as Vermont. Had the mountainous regions of Montana been withdrawn, would she have given us her \$35,000,000 yearly of the precious metals? And Montana is as large as Greece, Italy, and Belgium combined.

All this development throughout these hills and mountains has been by the men who struggle and push forward and locate these mineral claims. All this progress has been made in a country which a few years ago was considered an arid country, and is to-day adding yearly six hundred millions in cereals to the markets of the world. This country, beginning with Dakota on the East, that in 1870 had only seven hundred millions of taxable property, in 1890 had upon the tax lists of their States over \$3,500,000,000 of taxable property. This country, that in 1860 had no railroad, in 1890 had more railroads than all the country east of the Alleghany Mountains had in 1870.

A wonderful development has been made, a wonderful growth has come about. It was not done by silver; it was not done by gold; it was not accomplished by paper money; but it was accomplished by the energy, the industry, the perseverance, the trials, the self-denials of the hardy pioneers who have blazed the pathway of civilization into a magnificent highway and built upon the other side of the Rocky Mountains an empire for you and for me. [Manifestations of applause in the galleries.]

So, Mr. President, I feel deeply interested in this matter. A great blow has been struck at my State, and millions of acres, upon which we were recreating a new prosperity locally, have been withdrawn from the public domain. No man can take from it a stick of timber without being denounced as a thief; no man can go there to develop the mineral resources of Snohomish or King or any of those counties along the line of the Cascade Range; no

great railroad can cross the continent over those mountains, and, as suggested by the Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. SPOONER], no schoolhouse can be erected and no settler can come in.

Mr. President, it is extremely unfortunate that the order of February 23, 1897, was made without consultation with, and without the knowledge of, the people most interested in this section. The order was ghastly in its effect. It does great injustice to thousands of people who have expended their time, their energy, their means in developing the mineral resources of my State under the laws of this country. And now to deprive them, by mere Executive order, of their rights and property will work the gravest hardship to individuals and bankruptcy to whole communities. All we ask is justice. Will this Senate deny us that?

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Mr. WILSON. I shall be glad if I can have the attention of the Senator from Iowa for one moment before he takes his seat, not to occupy the attention of the Senate long. I do not wish to be placed in a position rather collectively which I have not occupied.

It is true that we met at the Department of the Interior. I never saw the original amendment until it was stated that it was agreed upon by substantially all, nor did I see the proposed change in the original amendment. I never saw the proposed change until it was shown to me yesterday afternoon by the Senator from South Dakota. It goes a little further, I will state frankly, than the conversations which took place at the Department of the Interior would perhaps warrant. While I think personally a great mistake has been made as to my State, while I think the order ought to be abrogated entirely, yet we are so unfortunately situated that we have to take what we can get.

If the same condition of affairs prevailed in the State of Iowa, there would be a riot. They would have another Shay's rebellion in that State if the same condition of affairs prevailed there that exists in my State.

Mr. ALLISON. Will the Senator allow me to interrupt him?

Mr. WILSON. With great pleasure.

Mr. ALLISON. Does not the Senator know that there is now in process of execution orders which are intended—whether or not they will accomplish that result I do not know, because I have not seen them—to relieve his State of all the difficulties which he has so well portrayed here to-day? Are not the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Interior in sympathy with his views upon the subject?

Mr. WILSON. I think that is true. I am satisfied that the President is in entire sympathy with me. I am satisfied that so is the Secretary of the Interior, who, in my judgment, although I have had only a brief experience with him, is one of the ablest and best men who have ever occupied that position, and I am glad to bear testimony to that fact. I thought at the time he was nominated for that high and honorable position that it was not a good thing to have a man from Manhattan Island, and I am glad to say that I have been agreeably disappointed in that respect.

I am not here to coerce anybody. I can not coerce anybody. It is not in my power to coerce nor have I any power to coerce the President of the United States or the Secretary of the Interior. What I wish is some relief. I am satisfied that the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations is anxious to give us relief. I

think he wants to keep the letter and the spirit of the contract. He says the amendment now offered was not nominated in the original bond. Is that true?

Mr. ALLISON. It has been amended.

Mr. WILSON. That is a different amendment. We want relief; we must have relief; and I am willing, so far as concerns the State that is most interested, to take what we in the West always have to do—what we can get.

* * * * *

Mr. WILSON. May I ask the Senator from Delaware a question?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. WILSON. I have a good deal of faith in the judgment of the Senator from Delaware. It is practically admitted that there was but a slight examination of those forestry reservations by the scientific commission.

Mr. GRAY. I do not know about that. The Senator may know. I only assume that a body of men of that character would perform their duty. They may, however, have neglected it.

Mr. WILSON. They said in their report, and before the Secretary of the Interior, that they had a limited time to make the examination, that they had visited the land offices—and I will try to put the exact testimony into the RECORD, as I have it upon my desk—and made inquiry of individuals, and then had reported that their time was limited. Why make a forestry reservation in the State which I in part represent when we do not need to preserve the water? We have more water in that western slope, as the Senator knows, than we can take care of. We have an annual rainfall, as I said a while ago, of 108 inches.

The two great rivers of the State can not be protected by the forests, because they have their sources in British Columbia. All the other rivers which flow directly into Puget Sound have their sources from glaciers. The only river that they said ought to have a supply of water is the Yakima River, on the eastern slope. When we irrigate on the eastern side, at the time we need water for irrigation, I should like to say, we have an abundant supply, millions of gallons of it going to waste. So there is absolutely no necessity for such a sweeping remedy as that of the Executive order of February 22.

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Mr. WILSON. In the meantime, before the Senator takes his seat, will he allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. WILSON. A remark was brought out relative to the scientific commission, which possibly places me in a wrong position regarding its members. I do not want to say anything unkind or unjust or ungenerous to those gentlemen. Far be it from my intention to do so; but I want to place in the RECORD, along the line of my interruption of the Senator from Delaware, the testimony of Professor Sergeant, where Commissioner Hermann asked him if he visited the reservations. Professor Sergeant's reply was:

We visited a great many of these territories. We did not go around the boundaries of all of them. We got all the information we could by talking with people; also from the land office. We tried to leave out lands upon which claims have been established. We mention the number of approved claims in each reservation and they are comparatively small. You know it was impossible to travel over all that country in one summer.

That is the part we are criticising. In one county we have 4,500 mineral locations, upon which \$2,000,000 worth of work has been done.

Professor Sergeant says—and we agree with him in that line; I want to do him justice; I do not want to do anybody injustice—

My idea is to allow the approving of mining claims in the forest reservations anywhere. The idea is not to stop mining, but to improve and encourage it.

But the method and manner in which this order was made entirely destroys it in our judgment. Therefore he is with us in seeking to correct that order.

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Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I, in common with several of the Western Senators, regret that the Senator from Maryland [Mr. GORMAN] made the point of order upon this amendment. It is a well-known fact, which has been circulated broadcast throughout the West, that we were to have relief upon the sundry civil bill, and there are many reasons why the people of the West should have relief. Among others that I overlooked this morning is the fact that in the reservation in the State of Washington already 157,000 acres of land have been selected by the State in its grant of land for educational purposes. Another very serious question that will ultimately arise, unless some relief is afforded, is that a vast amount of litigation will occur over the odd sections within the 40-mile strip on each side of the Northern Pacific Railroad in relation to its grant.

I think it has been always held and construed by the courts that the grant of the Northern Pacific was a grant in present and attached eo instanti from Lake Superior to Puget Sound. Consequently there will be much litigation, much harassment over this part of the question. Whether our State will have to go and select its land in some other portion of the State than where those 157,000 acres already selected for educational purposes are located is another question. There may be a little difference here, but I think the consensus of a majority is that we should have some relief.

I am not one of those who want to criticise what is called the "inner circle," or the Appropriations Committee. I have received at their hands much favor, for which the distinguished chairman has my most profound consideration. I think they are doing the best they can. I think, perhaps, we ought to give a little ourselves. I do not like to give anything. I am from the West [laughter], and I should like to take all that is in sight and ask for more. I find that is quite prevalent in legislative matters in this part of the country also; but we can not, it seems, do so. Can not there be some little compromise that will relieve us all?

The President, I am satisfied, wants to give us relief, and the Senator from Maryland—I doubt if he has any law upon the statute books of Maryland relative to the growth and encouragement of timber, as to which he is so solicitous about us, who have plenty of it—ought to withdraw his point of order and let the original amendment, favored by most of us, go through and afford the relief that we are especially entitled to. If we can not do that, if we are forced to join issues with our Eastern friends, who are so extremely solicitous for our happiness and our prosperity, and our growth and development, who control our incomings and our outgoings with such a delightful liberality upon their part, we

shall have to fight it out and protect our own constituents and do the best we can. But the Western contingent is in favor of a little bit of compromise.

All legislation, as has often been said, is a compromise; and I, for one, do not want to drop the bone while I am crossing this river. [Laughter.] I want my constituents to have some relief. I should like to repeal the entire order relative to reservations, but I am afraid we can not do that. Therefore, I would be glad to have the Senator from Maryland, who has given me such delightful attention when I have been appealing to him [laughter], withdraw his point of order. He is taking such a profound interest in this matter, and is listening to the debate pro and con with that eagerness and with that solicitude that he does upon all occasions, that I think he might withdraw his point of order. I am satisfied that he has not heard a single part of the request I have made, and therefore I will renew it, and see if he can not yield to it.

Mr. GORMAN. I will state that I heard the greater portion of the request the Senator from Washington has made with such great force, and I am delighted to hear him.

Mr. WILSON. The Senator from Maryland does me honor overmuch; but I am afraid I have made the usual impression upon the Senator from Maryland that I, unfortunately, always make. He does not seem to be hastening with that speed which would delight me to withdraw his point of order [laughter] and let us adopt that which was agreed upon by all parties, by the Secretary of the Interior, by and with the understanding of the Chief Executive, and by everybody throughout all the Western domain, that we shall have some relief. I think the Senator from Iowa nearest me [Mr. ALLISON] would like to see that adopted. He wants to give us relief.

* * * * *

April 4, 1898.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, I shall not occupy the attention of the Senate more than a moment. This question was pretty thoroughly discussed in the last Congress. The conditions that prevail in the State that I in part represent are of such a character that I am constrained, however high my esteem may be for the Secretary of the Interior, if it comes to a vote to vote for the committee amendment.

One or two observations by the Senator from New Hampshire might be answered by the statement that in the forestry reserves now many of the settlers are abandoning their homes. Settlements are made in advance of surveys, and new settlers will not go into a new country and settle there unless they can have the hope that their friends and relatives can follow them and settle around them.

An examination of this map [exhibiting] will show that in the State of Washington they have erected around the State almost what might be called a Spanish trocha. In the Olympic Forestry Reservation we have 2,188,000 acres withdrawn from settlement. In the county of Klamath, a county organized and fully equipped, they have withdrawn over 900,000 acres of the 1,000,000 which constitute that county. In the county of Jefferson, on Puget Sound, they have withdrawn 84 per cent of all the land in the county.

Mr. MASON. I wish to ask the Senator from Washington a question for information. Under what process do they withdraw the land? Will the Senator explain it?

Mr. WILSON. It is done under an act of Congress authorizing the President of the United States to withdraw certain timber lands, Government lands, for the purpose designated in the act, to be known as forest reserves. It was an act passed, I think, in 1890. I am not certain as to the date.

Mr. PETTIGREW. March 7, 1891.

Mr. WILSON. The act was passed in 1891. We had before that act one reservation in our State. We now have three, known as the Washington, the Pacific, and the Olympic, and they comprise an area larger than the State of Massachusetts. In the Washington Forestry Reserve, when the debate was in Congress a year or so ago, I showed that we had over 5,000 mineral locations, upon which \$2,000,000 worth of work had already been done. By proper examination they could take the Olympic Forest Reserve and make a reservation there of from \$00,000 to 1,000,000 acres and probably not affect any settlers or anybody.

I am told that sometimes these reservations are made for the purpose of reserving the water supply. This could not possibly have been the reason for the reservations in western Washington, as we have an annual rainfall on the western side of the Cascade range that averages about 82 inches per annum, and in some places in the Olympic Forest Reserve it is even greater than that, so that a reservation of the watershed was hardly necessary. In the Washington Forestry Reserve all of our streams are supplied from the glaciers, and it was not necessary in that respect. The Pacific Forestry Reserve would have been all right under the original withdrawal, as some of the water rights on the eastern side of the mountain are used for irrigation purposes.

Mr. STEWART. Could they not adopt a plan that would reserve the reservoir sites and use the water for irrigating purposes?

Mr. WILSON. Oh, no; you can not affect the irrigation in that section of the country at all, because in the season of the year when you desire water for irrigating purposes we have the largest supply of water. The water is not low on the eastern side of the mountains until September and October. All the streams are full in the months of May, June, and July, when water is used for irrigation purposes. Therefore the withdrawal of the forestry reserves does not in any manner affect the water supply so far as those reservations are concerned.

Mr. STEWART. The Senator from Colorado stated that they wanted to use water for irrigating purposes in the mountains connected with a reservation and they would not let them use it for that purpose, and would not allow them to go there. I have heard complaints of that kind in regard to several other places. The idea of reserving it to preserve the water and not use the water, it seems to me, shows how intelligently the matter is managed by people in this part of the country who know nothing about the situation out there.

Mr. WILSON. I had hoped to have a letter here and have it read from a citizen who is a resident within the forestry reserve in Klamath County; but I did not think the subject would come up to-day, and I shall take opportunity to present it to-morrow.

There is another matter in connection with this subject, and at the proper time I shall move to recede from the committee amend-

ment. If these forestry reserves are to be preserved, there must be some authority under the Secretary of the Interior to designate the men who are to be employed. You must lodge that authority somewhere. If we are to have forestry reserves, and if we are to employ men to put out forest fires and to guard the reservations, we certainly do not want to be restrained by having to hunt up a civil-service man to engage in that occupation.

I think that the committee amendment ought to be receded from in view of the fact that there is small employment for those men. It is only for three or four or five months during the year. They will not be employed during the winter. Their employment is not necessary then. There ought to be a place where they could be designated quickly and certainly. It seems to me that if the item for the protection and administration of forestry reserves is to go into the bill, the authority should be lodged with the Secretary of the Interior to designate the men who are to take charge of them. Therefore at the proper time and with the consent of the chairman of the committee, I shall move that the Senate recede from the amendment in line 21, on page 67.

I hope that the amendment brought in by the committee may be agreed to, and that at some time in the future in making these reservations they may be designated with a due regard for the settlers of the various States and the welfare of commerce.

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April 5, 1898.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, on yesterday when this matter was under discussion I had called attention to the condition of affairs prevailing in the Olympic Forestry Reservation and to the fact that 82 per cent of the land in Clallam County had been withdrawn from settlement. I stated that I had received a letter from a gentleman residing within the Olympic Forestry Reservation which I desired to present to the Senate to-day. I read the same for the information of our New England friends. It seems to throw about as much light on the conditions prevailing in those forestry reservations as anything I can present. This letter is written March 23, 1898, from Quillayute, Wash., a portion of the lands which have been surveyed in the Olympic Forestry Reservation, lying contiguous and adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. This gentleman writes to me that the people there are very much interested in whatever legislation may take place in regard to this matter. He says:

We already understand that the settler does not lose his claim unless he abandons it; but although the land already filed upon is not wrested from the homesteader, it is nevertheless rendered more or less valueless by the isolation that the reserve entails. As the reserve now stands our people are practically imprisoned, their property in a sense confiscated by being rendered almost valueless.

Reservation barriers have arrested development, and our communities are as completely isolated as if quarantined on account of some malignant disease. Thus thousands of families are deprived of making homes upon the rich areas of agricultural land that should, as it seems to us, be open to settlement, and especially that this land was once opened—twenty-four townships in Clallam County alone having been surveyed and quite extensively settled upon. Therefore many of our people have left and are still leaving their homes and investments in despair and because they see the hope of progress killed.

It gives me pain when I meet people who have in good faith settled here and there, and in not a few instances somewhat remote from the older communities in order that they might have the more room for friend and kindred, and in some cases the dear old parents, who were soon to follow from

the Western, Middle, or New England States, or even from over the sea—it gives me pain to find that the purposes of their hearts and hands have been broken off and that they with sad hearts are abandoning their little all, which has been gathered by years of hard and unremitting toil. These poor citizens of our country, when asked to stay by the homestead and await future and fuller developments, answer with a forlorn look.

To do so is only to be left behind prison walls in a country from which our kindred and friends who would live among us and help to develop the country are barred from entering. Had the commission done its duty, and nothing but its duty, it might have been quite different. The members of that commission are no doubt good men and competent, but in the case of the Olympic reserve I have abundant and good reason for believing they did not do the work assigned them thoroughly. I am satisfied they learned little and saw less of our agricultural area; without doubt there were over 2,000,000 acres of this reserve upon which they never set foot at all.

We all sincerely hope and trust that some action may be taken by the Congress of the United States, so that a grateful people will be able to rejoice.

Sincerely, yours,

R. W. FLETCHER,

Parsonage, Quillayute, Washington.

I think this gentleman is the Methodist pastor at Quillayute, a little hamlet that is now located within the Olympic forest reserve. No words that I could utter would add anything to what has been said in this communication addressed to me. I should have liked to have had it yesterday, in order that the Senate might have had the full benefit of the situation which not only prevails in that reserve but throughout the section I have the honor in part to represent.

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