

A PROCLAMATION.

In proclaiming American Forest Week, I desire to bring to the attention of all our people the danger that comes from the neglect of our forests.

For several years the Nation has observed Forest Protection Week. It is fitting that this observance be enlarged. We have too freely spent the rich and magnificent gift that nature bestowed on us. In our eagerness to use that gift we have stripped our forests; we have permitted fires to lay waste and devour them; we have all too often destroyed the young growth and the seed from which new forests might spring. And though we already feel the first grip of timber shortage, we have barely begun to save and restore.

We have passed the pioneer stage and are no longer excusable for continuing this unwise dissipation of a great resource. To the Nation it means the lack of an elemental necessity and the waste of keeping idle or only partly productive nearly one-fourth of our soil. To our forest-using industries it means unstable investments, the depletion of forest capital, the disbanding of established enterprises, and the decline of one of our most important industrial groups.

Our forests ought to be put to work and kept at work. I do not minimize the obstacles that have to be met, nor the difficulty of changing old ideas and practices. We must all put our hands to this common task. It is not enough that the Federal, State, and local governments take the lead. There must be a change in our national attitude. Our industries, our landowners, our farmers, all our citizens must learn to treat our forests as crops, to be used but also to be renewed. We must learn to tend our woodlands as carefully as we tend our farms.

Let us apply to this creative task the boundless energy and skill we have so long spent in harvesting the free gifts of nature. The forests of the future must be started to-day. Our children are dependent on our course. We are bound by a solemn obligation from which no evasion and no subterfuge will relieve us. Unless we fulfill our sacred responsibility to unborn generations, unless we use with gratitude and with restraint the generous and kindly gifts of Divine Providence, we shall prove ourselves unworthy guardians of a heritage we hold in trust.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CALVIN COOLIDGE, President of the United States, do recommend to the Governors of the various States to designate and set apart the week of April 27-May 3, inclusive, 1925, as American Forest Week, and, wherever practicable and not in conflict with State law or accepted customs, to celebrate Arbor Day within that week. And I urge public officials, public and business associations, industrial leaders, forest owners, editors, educators, and all patriotic citizens to unite in the common task of forest conservation and renewal.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this twenty-first day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred [SEAL] and twenty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and forty-ninth.

CALVIN COOLIDGE