

Squandering Our Heritage

By GIFFORD PINCHOT

THE people of these United States are the most wasteful in the world—wasteful in living, wasteful in manufacturing, and wasteful in their failure to conserve our natural resources. Ever since the white man set foot upon American soil he has been destroying forests and making no effective provision for their renewal. The early settlements were built chiefly in the Eastern valleys, which were covered with unbroken stands of hardwood forest. In these valleys the early pioneers found the best agricultural land, which they had to clear in order to make it available for farming purposes—a practice which became so general that it was accepted as normal and necessary. As a result we have today almost endless miles of barren mountain slopes which are producing no crop of any value. Of the 822,000,000 original acres—matchless miles of virgin forest—only 137,000,000 now remain, and our total forest area, good, bad, and indifferent, amounts to but little more than half of what we once had—463,000,000 acres to be exact. Of these 137,000,000 are still virgin forest; 112,000,000 are of second growth, saw timber size; 133,000,000 are also of second growth, but below saw timber size; and 81,000,000 have been cut over without restocking. This shows the deplorable condition of what we have left. The aggregate area of this 81,000,000 acre desert is equivalent to the combined forest areas of Germany, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal. And this is not the whole story of our unproductive forest land, for there is in addition an enormous area upon which the growth of real timber is so small in amount and so inferior in quality that its commercial value is negligible.

Then another enormous difficulty is that the source of raw material for the wood-using industries has shifted until the distance between markets and forests is now in many cases so great as to make shipping prohibitive, or at least unduly costly and uncertain because of an unsettled labor situation, inadequate railroad facilities, and congested shipping conditions.

The real significance of the present forest situation may be set forth most vividly by considering for a moment the present condition of the newsprint industry. The beginning was in 1840 when Keller patented his process in Germany for a wood-pulp grinding machine. The process was not, however, placed upon a commercial basis until 1854, and it was introduced into the United States by Warner Miller as late as 1866. Since then the growth of the industry in America has been prodigious. Within a half century it has developed from practically nothing until in 1900 two million cords were consumed and six million in 1919. The amount of pulpwood used annually if stacked upon an acre would make a solid pile over four miles high.

The estimated value of the paper products derived from pulp is at present about \$780,000,000, made up according to the War Industries Board as follows: newsprint papers, \$136,000,000; book paper, \$125,000,000; paper boards, \$156,000,000; fine writing paper, \$142,000,000; wrapping paper, \$89,000,000, and all other miscellaneous paper, \$132,000,000. The annual per capita consumption of newsprint is now at least 33 pounds, of all kinds of paper about 100 pounds, and there is no basis for assuming that it will be materially

less in the near future. Our country was self-supporting in newsprint as late as 1909—a decade later we were dependent upon foreign supplies to the extent of two-thirds of our newsprint or the raw material from which it is manufactured. It seems to be true that the present newsprint shortage goes back fundamentally to overcentralization of the industry during its formative period, and to overcutting and neglect of the pulp-producing lands of the Northeast and the Lake States. As late as 1904, for example, most of the Wisconsin pulp mills found their supplies within the State. About ten years later it became necessary for the same mills to procure considerable quantities of wood from a distance of 700 to 750 miles and some wood is now being shipped to the Wisconsin mills from a distance of 1,000 to 1,200 miles. Furthermore, it is clear that in the not distant future they must go farther yet. The lumber industry is necessarily and decidedly migratory. It must move from place to place, always following the supply of raw material. But the economic conditions of the pulp industry are different. There the initial investment is so heavy that it prohibits a migratory existence, and requires the transportation of raw materials from remote regions.

Forest depletion in America has reached a critical stage, which is, unfortunately, not realized by the public in general. People still think that conditions can be remedied in a few months—an entirely incorrect and untenable point of view. There appears to be little hope of relieving our newsprint and other paper shortage by any possible increase of importation. The pulpwood resources of Canada have been grossly overestimated, and the utmost possible importations from Europe will do little more than temporarily alleviate the existing situation. There is greater hope in the development of untouched native supplies—immense supplies in the national forests of the West which are still almost wholly undeveloped. The Tongass National Forest in southeastern Alaska has about seventy billion board feet of material suitable for pulpwood in a narrow belt along the coast with adequate waterpower and excellent sites available for the location of mills. But the forests of the West and Alaska cannot supply all the demands of the future. Neither would it be wise, even if it were possible, to localize the industry in the West and Alaska. Increased production on the severely cut and continuously burned lands of the East will not only prolong the life of the existing mills but help stabilize the industry by restoring our endless mountain waste to productivity. Idle mountain land has no place in a well-balanced economic system. It is an economic crime to maintain unproductive wastes when—if handled properly—the cut-over forest lands would yield a continuous flow of products to benefit us and future generations.

The first step in the restoration of these profligate wastes is the stopping of forest fires, which are the most formidable foe of our forests. It is our business, as well as our civic duty, to give our forests adequate protection and provide for a systematic and scientific renewal of a forest growth on all soil mainly valuable for growing trees. Increased production is, however, not a solution unless it stop the stupid waste of raw material in the process of manufacture.

Shortage and the high price of wood and woodpulp affect the whole nation. The restoration of thrifty forests to our unproductive hillsides is the only thoroughgoing remedy for a scarcity which is already serious and may soon become critical. We must have wood, and since we can get it nowhere else, we must grow it at home.

The Chilean Elections

By CHARLES E. CHAPMAN

BY a majority of one, the electoral vote finally standing 177 to 176, Arturo Alessandri, the Liberal Alliance candidate, has been declared President of Chile. When the popular election was held the vote for presidential electors stood 179 for Alessandri and 175 for Barros Borgoño, the candidate of the National Union, but the final decision as to who should be the next president lay with a Court of Honor formed with the consent of both parties to pass on the qualifications of the electors. This Court decided in favor of Alessandri by a vote of five to two, and the Chilean Congress has accordingly proclaimed him president, and has ended an election which was the greatest and most significant that ever took place in Chile.

In the Constitution of 1833, the fundamental document of Chile, there is the following statement: "There is no privileged class in Chile." Justice requires one to say that there has been a steady and notable social advance in Chilean affairs since that sentence was written, but candor compels one to add that it never was and is not yet representative of the truth. There has always been a more or less dominant aristocracy in Chile, made up largely of the great land-owners and the church. For many years they were the directing force in all branches of Chilean life. The first great break from traditional influences came during the presidency of Balmaceda, toward the close of the nineteenth century. Meeting with tremendous opposition in his efforts for reform, Balmaceda illegally assumed dictatorial powers. There followed the revolution of 1891, in which Balmaceda was defeated, committing suicide rather than surrender to his opponents.

Balmaceda's reforms, many of which were aimed against the church, have since his death in great part been attained, but it is not precisely on their account that he stands out as a great figure in Chilean history. Rather it is because he is looked upon as the martyr in the fight on behalf of the masses. Their cause has made great strides since 1891. The Conservatives, the traditionalist party in Chilean politics, are no longer dominant, though they have heretofore held the balance of power—and may yet. The Liberals are now the most numerous element, but they have split into four groups: Liberals proper (*Doctrinarios*); Liberal Democrats (or Balmacedists); Nationals; and Nationalists. The Liberals, however, are no longer the chosen prophets of the people. Two new parties have appeared, one of which, the Radical, has pushed forward so rapidly that it is now the most numerous single group in Chilean politics. The Radicals represent what was until recent years a new element in Chilean society. They contain the bulk of the fast-growing, educated "middle class." They are the party of the youth of Chile, standing for social and political reforms which are not at all "radical," as that word is understood in the United States, but more in line with what North Americans would term "progressive." They are bitter enemies of the traditionalist elements, and are greatly feared by the church. A second party, the Democrats, is made up mainly of laborers, whose radicalism is more extreme than that of the Radicals. They had not heretofore attained to any considerable power, but the importance of their role in the recent election cannot be denied. There are also

some other insignificant groups—Socialists, for example.

Straight through and across these groups there is another line of cleavage, made necessary by the cabinet system and the election of a president both of which demand a majority. Thus there has sprung into being what amounts to two parties, the National Union and the Liberal Alliance. Both have their origin in the Liberal party. Strangely enough, some members of a single group may belong to the Alliance and others to the Union. Most of the Liberals, however, lined up with the Union. The real strength of the Alliance was the Radical party. The Democrats and Socialists were also enthusiastic supporters of the Alliance. On the other hand, the Conservatives threw their weight to the Union. Both candidates for the presidency—Señor Alessandri and Barros Borgoño—were not only Liberals, but also *Doctrinarios*, belonging, that is, to the same group, but the real battle was between the Radicals and Conservatives, as personified in the opposing candidates.

A natural query on the part of North Americans would be: What were the issues in the recent campaign? A study of the two platforms would lead one to believe that there were none, for both proclaimed the same things, differing only in phraseology and in degree. Thus, both came out strongly for educational reform, emphasizing the same needs; both stood for the protection of national products; and both called for legislation on behalf of the workingman. And yet there is a profound difference between the two parties, though it is mainly psychological and exists to a great extent in the minds of each with respect to the other. The Union holds that its members are the "true Chileans," not opposed to reforms, but wishing to advance toward them at a safe and sure pace. The Alliance considers the Unionists reactionaries, opposed to any and all reform, lest it injure their selfish interests, and its own members to be progressives, standing for a hastening of internal reforms. The Union regards them as dangerous innovators, ready to ruin the country to vent their spite on the church and the aristocracy.

These feelings found perfect expression in the two candidates. Barros is the type of man who would appeal to certain elements of the better educated classes. Member of an old Chilean family which has produced one of the greatest historians in Hispanic-American historiography (Barros Arana), he, too, has won distinction as historian and man of letters; for years he was a professor in the University of Chile; his political achievements have been more than usually notable, especially in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs; and to round out a long, varied, and successful career, he is at present one of the leading figures in the most powerful banking institution of the country. Nor can it be claimed that he is an out-and-out reactionary. Indeed, his nomination displeased the Conservatives, because in the past he has advocated reforms that were unwelcome to the church; before they would join the Union they exacted certain pledges from him. Barros is therefore a figure that commands respect. But he does not possess the divine fire that wins the multitude.

Alessandri is just the opposite kind of man. He is a new man, of Italian descent, a self-made man, and a young man for a Hispanic-American presidential candidate, for he is only in the forties. For some twenty years he has been well-known as a lawyer and politician. As Deputy, Senator, and Cabinet Minister, he has won a reputation for fearlessness and for moving oratory, such that he is known popularly as