

109. Address to SPNHF annual meeting --- not dated (probably 1915)
Copy found in the appendices of the Bahros thesis document, beginning on page 109.

Hon. John W. Weeks.

Mr. President, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have been honored many times by invitations from this association to attend its annual convention, but until today have been unable to accept such an invitation. I come now because I am living in this neighborhood, and it was convenient and my pleasure to do so.

I have been interested in forestry and interested in the forestry which relates to this neighborhood for fifty-five years. Now, I have told you my age. I was not born in these mountains without inheriting a sentiment for them, as well as a utilitarian desire, which cannot be found, I think, in any other place.

I took up this work when I went to Congress, because I was in the position which most young congressmen find themselves in; that is to say, when you enter Congress you find there experts on almost every subject, men who know more about almost every public question than you know yourself, and the new member almost invariably wonders why he is there and what he is going to do to make his being there worth while, so I looked about,--I was in that position. I had been in active business life, and I found that there had been a bill introduced several terms, perhaps for ten or fifteen or twenty years, providing for forestry protection in the White Mountains. That naturally attracted my attention and ended by my making it a large part of my work for several sessions of Congress until the law was passed in 1908, I think.

I am not going to discuss the forestry question in detail, certainly not in a technical way, because Mr. Ayres your Secretary, in inviting me, said: "We simply want to have you present, and we will not ask you to break up your vacation by making an address." He intimated that he wished to have me re-dedicate myself to the forestry service, especially as the appropriations had run out.

I want to tell you a little something about the passage of the first bill, and what I think will be necessary in order to get further legislation. It was not passed by one man or any half dozen men. I could enumerate for a considerable time those who devoted special attention and talents to this desire which was in everyone's mind.

Former Governor Guild of our state lately gone to his reward, the President at one time of the National Association, gave to it an enthusiasm and an industry which can hardly be equaled. The President of this Association, Governor Rollins, has given to it an unlimited amount of time and attention. Without going through a long list, I want to assure you that there has been no more devoted or intelligent friend of forestry in the United States than has Mr. Ayres who has been connected with this work since I have been interested in it. I need not tell you the time he has devoted to it, but I can say that time has been devoted with intelligence and with a character of industry which has been a very vital and potent element in bringing about the results which have been obtained.

In my second term in Congress, when Mr. Cannon was speaker, he said to me one day that he wanted to appoint me a member of the Committee on Agriculture. I said: "I am a banker. I am not a farmer at all now, and I have not any particular farming interests in my district. Furthermore I know that there are a great many men who want to go on that committee, and I think you ought to appoint some other man." He said; "You and I want to have business men on that committee, and I especially want it because there are a great number of enthusiastic specialists already connected with the Agricultural Department doing good work, I think, and I want to be sure they are not spending money which ought not to be spent and if you and some other business men will go on the committee, we may be able to find that out." "Well," I said: "Mr. Cannon, I am in favor of certain legislation which you are supposed to be opposed to and which may and probably will come before that committee." He said: "I suppose you mean forestry, don't you?" I said: "I mean forestry for one thing." "Well," he said, "I want to say this to you, that if you will go on that committee and can prepare a bill which you as a business man are willing to support, I will do the best I can to get consideration for it in the House."

I am saying this of the Speaker because I know that his activities in opposition to this legislation have been very severely condemned by every friend of the forestry service, and I want to say further that after two years having prepared a bill which I believed was sound and which I was willing to support, Mr. Cannon kept his agreement, recognized me when the bill came from the committee, and in that way I was enabled to get it passed through the House by a majority of seven, he doing the unusual thing of directing the Clerk to call his name at the end of the roll call and voting on the bill. We could not have passed the White Mountain forestry bill in that Congress or any other Congress. It was a practical proposition legislatively. We had to tie up with other things. The constitutional lawyers of Congress--and every lawyer who goes to Congress is a constitutional lawyer --- said that it was not constitutional, the kind of bills that had been presented and the kind of bill which I thought would

do at first; so we had to find a constitutional reason, and the constitutional reason which we finally seized on was the relation between forestry and stream flow.