

The American Forestry Association.

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In April, 1882, the American Forestry Congress was organized in Cincinnati. The membership with which it began was very small. At that time it was only a year since Congress had made its first special appropriation for forest work under Dr. Hough and the Division of Forestry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture had been established. There were no forest reserves in either the United States or Canada. The separate states had not begun to wake up to the importance of preserving their forest resources and their water sheds, and throughout the country at large the people who knew what forestry is, or had any clear sense of the evils which would follow the wasteful and unthinking destruction of American forests, were few and far between. To-day the association numbers about 1,350 members, and is growing at the rate of several hundred a year. It publishes a monthly magazine, and is co-operating heartily with many vigorous local organizations throughout the country. Nearly fifty million acres of public land have been set aside as forest reserves. In many states forest laws of more or less efficacy have been passed and a number of forest commissions and commissioners are regularly appointed. In the Federal Department of Agriculture the Division of Forestry has already accomplished a great deal, and is monthly increasing its usefulness to the country.

To give an account of the life of the American Forestry Association entirely apart from the history of these eighteen years in the forestry movement at large, would be impossible; partly because the promotion of this movement has been in so large a measure the work of the Association, and partly because the men who passed legislative forms and carried on the campaign of education were at the same time the life of the Association. A brief account of its career as an association is, however, interesting as showing how great and important a part of its history is buried in the larger field of the forestry movement. Considering the Association's object, this is probably the best thing that could be said of it.

At its meeting in Cincinnati, the "American Forestry Congress" did little more than organize itself, elect officers, stir up a good deal of local enthusiasm, and adjourn for what was to be officially recorded as its first meeting, in Montreal. As stated in the original draft of the constitution, the object of the Congress was, "to encourage the protection and planting of forest and ornamental trees, and to promote forest culture." The officers were: President, the Hon. Geo. P. Lorimer, the Commissioner of Agriculture; re-

cording secretary, W. L. DeBeek; corresponding secretary, D. D. Thompson; treasurer, John A. Gano; and a number of vice-presidents from different parts of the country. Mr. Gano declined the office of treasurer, and Mr. Geo. W. Trowbridge, of Glendale, Ohio, was elected to fill his place. The meeting in Montreal in 1882, for which all arrangements were made by Mr. Wm. Little, was most successful. The attendance was large, sixty-three papers were read, the press was much interested, and the membership increased. Without delay or mishap the Congress was launched on its career of usefulness. "The American Forestry Association," an organization which had existed since the seventies, but the activity of which had not been very great, was incorporated in the Congress. This latter did not change its name to the one it now bears for several years.

From this time on the history of the American Forestry Congress, later called the American Forestry Association, is marked by a few events of exceptional prominence, but in the main the immediate work of the Association was that of patient and persistent agitation for results which at the time, it was often difficult to perceive or define. Public opinion had to be stirred up and taught to express itself before reserves and much needed reforms could be obtained. The first thing to do was to get in touch with as many as possible of the people who were interested in the objects of the Association and to bring them into line. To this end two or more meetings were held in different parts of the country every year, and little by little different communities were interested and drawn into the movement for forest preservation. Frequently these meetings resulted in more or less immediate local legislative action: for bills and memorials to the State Legislature were often drafted, endorsed by the Association, and later presented. At one time the Association addressed a letter to the Governors of almost all the States, and at the same time memorialized their Legislatures. Wherever possible the establishment of local forestry associations was encouraged and promoted.

The need of a paid secretary who could give all his time to the work, is often mentioned in the records, but for many years the lack of funds and the difficulty of finding a suitable person, presented obstacles which could not be overcome. However the main thing to do was to circulate as much printed matter as possible, and to stand ready to make the most of any opportunity which might come the Association's way; and by one means or another a great deal was accomplished. At first some local paper or magazine was usually persuaded to publish and distribute records and reports of the meetings and speeches. After a few years, however, the Association began to publish its own

"proceedings." It also undertook to issue a regular bulletin. But of this only three numbers appeared, for the Pennsylvania Association, which later found in Dr. Kittrock a secretary who could give much of his time to its work, had begun to publish its bimonthly journal, *Forest Leaves*, and it was resolved to make that magazine the official organ of the American Association. Later the Association reached the point where it was possible for it to issue a journal of its own. It adopted the *Forester*, which had been founded by Dr. John Gifford in '95, and has issued it monthly since January, 1898. At the same time it abandoned the publication of the "Proceedings."

But the distribution of printed matter was only part of what could be done, and a large field of usefulness remained open to the activity of the Association as such. This was attended to chiefly by the Executive Committee, which, composed of Dr. B. E. Fernow, chief of the Division of Forestry from 1886 to 1893, and a few other men who were most actively interested in the work, accomplished a great deal. The Executive Committee, recently re-christened "The Board of Directors," kept a sharp watch on everything that went on in the country, and lost no opportunity of bringing the Association's support to any worthy object that needed its help, or of throwing its weight against what was bad. At different times it even employed an agent to look out for the progress of plans and projects which the Association had brought into Congress.

Speaking broadly there have been two periods in the Association's activity. These merge into each other so gradually that no dividing line can be drawn; but the distinction is now none the less evident. During the early years the efforts of the leaders of the forestry movement were directed to agitating for forest reserves and to bringing about action of one kind or another in the Federal or State Legislatures. As time went on, however, forest reserves were secured and many laws were passed. Now, although much still remains to be hoped for in the way of legislation, some of it can best be left to individual States, while a new and more difficult task has presented itself, that of turning the ground thus far gained to the best account. In some places the good laws which have been placed on the statute books are practically useless for lack of public opinion to compel their enforcement; everywhere the fire question is one in which popular ignorance and shortsightedness is the main source of evil; the reserves are still misunderstood and maltreated; and lastly the enormous but important work of interesting the private land owner has begun. Under Mr. Gifford Pinchot's leadership the Division of Forestry is turning its energies in the directions thus indicated as much as in