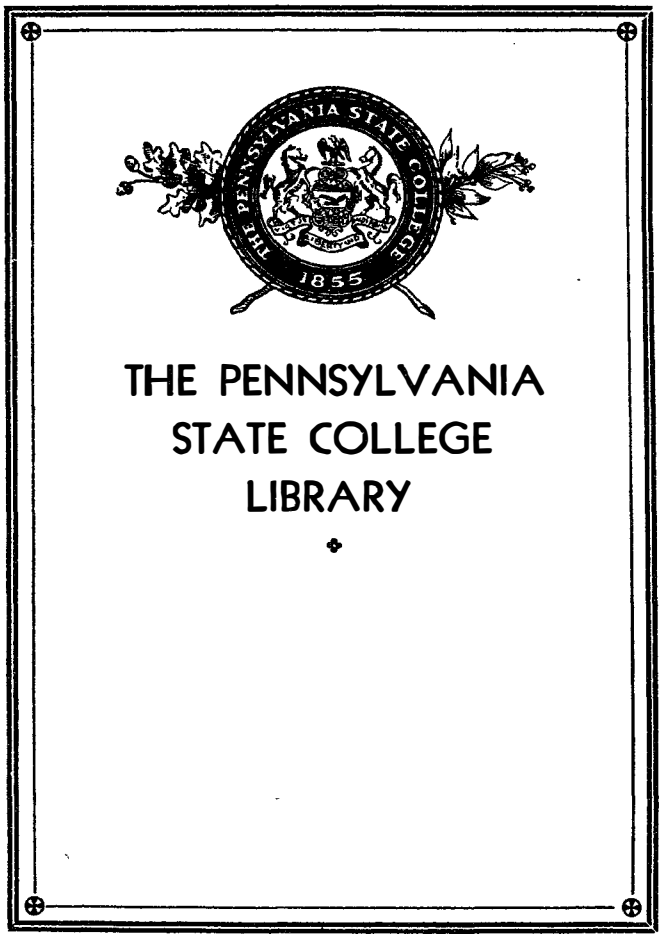

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Cook Forest Park

Story of the Sixteen Year Battle to Save the Last Stand of Historic Penn's Woods. The When, The Why and How of It.

A BRIEF HISTORY COMPILED FROM THE RECORDS BY ONE OF THE MANY THOUSANDS COMPRISING THE GREAT ARMY OF PATRIOTIC CITIZENS WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE THE GIANT PINES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO SEE AND TO ENJOY.

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DEDICATED TO

Hon. John S. Fisher

WITHOUT HIS CONSTANT COOPERATION AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE TRYING YEARS FROM 1910 TO 1925: WITHOUT HIS VIGOROUS STROKES FOR JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY, AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN 1926, THERE WOULD NOT NOW BE THE COOK FOREST PARK.

THE AUTHOR

173156

FOREWORD

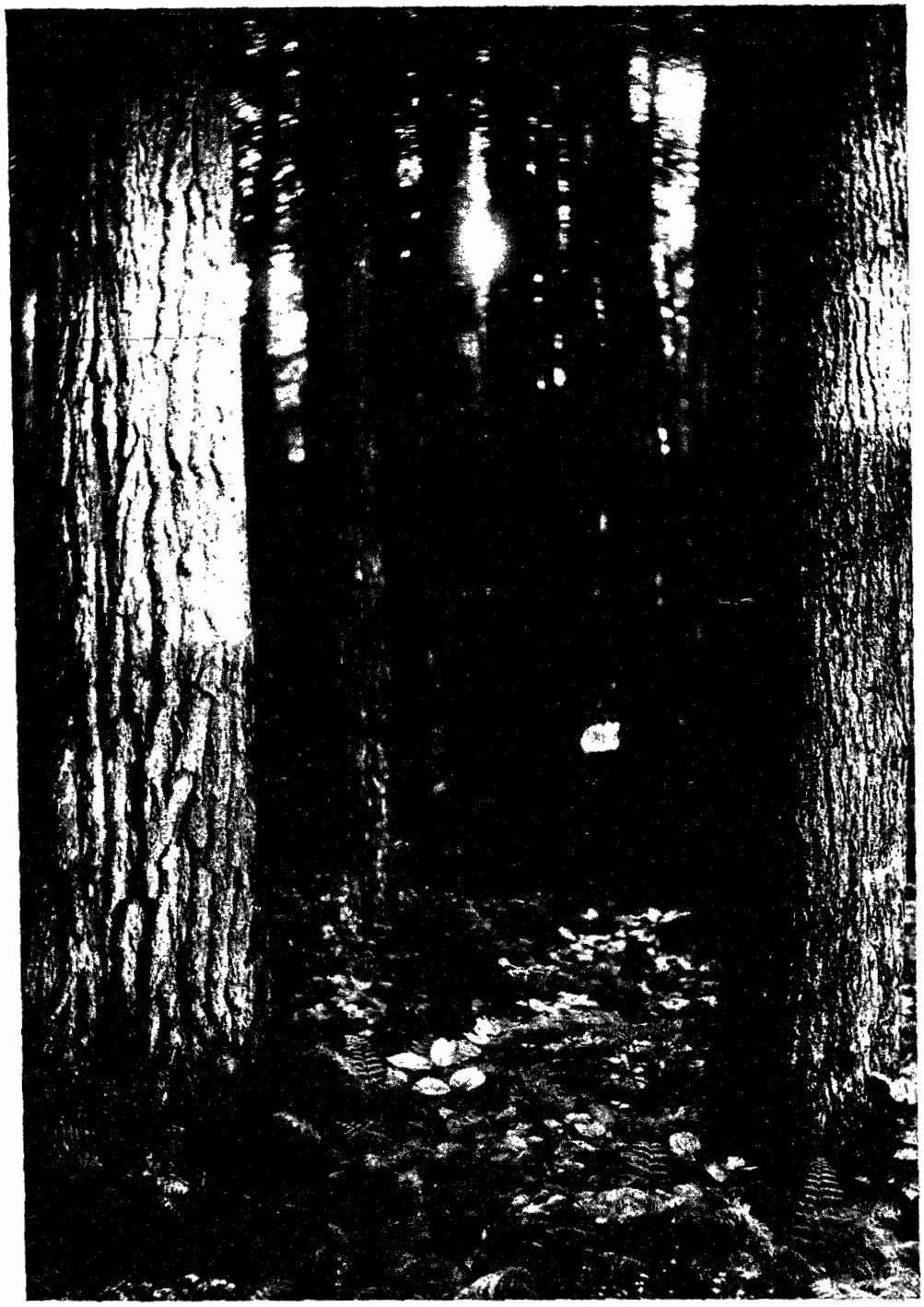
Hundreds of thousands of people come to Cook Forest; they hail from every State,—and from foreign lands; they come to see and to enjoy and to benefit,—they come to pay homage to the God of Nature,—for here Nature is supreme.

"Father, thy hand hath reared these venerable columns, thou didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose all these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun, budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze . . till at last they stood, as now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark, fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold communion with his Maker."

Thousands ask why and how this wonderful forest of towering pines, giant hemlocks and the endless variety of hardwoods in gardens of rhododendron, laurel and ferns, came to be preserved for the recreation, enjoyment and education of all the People for all time. They wonder that such a stand of priceless pine escaped the lumberman's axe when at the very door of America's active market.

It is a hard and harrowing tale. Only the eighteen years of voluminous files,—of letters, messages, reports, surveys, bills, pamphlets and official records, could supply the long and arduous campaign data, for writing the story of Cook Forest Park.

Author of the Cook Forest Park project and in possession of the only connected authentic record of the history of it from the beginning to final consummation, the writer has expended time and labor to assemble the facts in form, that interested parties and future generations may know why and how it all happened.



TREES SAVED FOR THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE WISDOM AND ENERGY OF A FEW MEN

CONTENTS

I	Conservation	7
II	Early Policies	9
III	The Cook Pioneers	11
IV	Starting Cook Forest	12
V	Campaign Begins	15
VI	Records	18
VII	Nineteen Thirteen	26
VIII	World War	41
IX	Private Finance	50
X	Wild Life League	51
XI	Nineteen Fifteen	56
XII	Nineteen Nineteen	71
XIII	Sproul Experiences	75
XIV	State Conservation Council	85
XV	Cook Forest Association	91
XVI	Intensive Work and Failure	93
XVII	Fisher and Success	101
	Recapitulation	108

Chapter I

CONSERVATION

In the early nineteen hundreds the writer was charged with buying up large areas of coal lands and right-of-way for the development of huge mining operations. A small tract which contained virgin timber was needed; it was owned by an estate with thirteen heirs, and they would not grant a right-of-way and he was obliged to buy it personally to prevent a hold-up; and the trees still stand. It was the beginning of the great Conservation movement, for shortly after he had built the Wigwam among these trees, an article appeared in one of the magazines dealing with the wasteful extravagances practiced by the western lumbermen in the big operations of the Pacific coast. Being familiar with both eastern and western lumbering, a letter was addressed to President Theodore Roosevelt calling his attention to the article and insisting that he take a hand in timber waste and stop it. He replied that he did not know what he could do as he had already made two speeches to Lumberman's conventions, and said he would refer the letter to the Department of Forestry for attention,—a division of the Department of Agriculture.

The letter was formally answered by Wm. L. Hall, saying it was a sad condition, but that nothing could be done about it; but his seeming indifference inspired a sharp response in which it was vigorously insisted that the President, because

of his great popularity, take up the subject and make of it a national policy,—this matter of conservation of our woods and waters. Mr. Hall was more interested now, and wrote in reply, that he was sure the President would be willing to do something about if it he knew what to do, and ended his letter with; "would you be kind enough to say specifically just what the President should do?" Here was an invitation to put up or shut up, and several days passed; but coming to the final conclusion that Mr. Hall might have been entirely sincere, the writer prepared and submitted a line of action which, he told him he would adopt if he were the president;—and Mr. Roosevelt did adopt it.

Chapter II

EARLY POLICIES

The adoption of the Roosevelt Conservation Policy was exceeding popular with the American people; in 1908 the President called the governors of the several states to a general national conference on the subject; provision was made for holding national Conservation Congresses, in two of which the writer had the honor to represent the state of Pennsylvania. State branches were organized; the people responded to the new idea with unheard-of enthusiasm throughout the nation.

Pennsylvania was one of the first states to establish a State Conservation Association, headed by Hon. A. B. Farquhar, the great farm-machinery manufacturer, philanthropist and writer, of York, J. Horace McFarland, of Harrisburg, Bishop Darlington, the University of Pennsylvania's dean, and other prominent Philadelphians; Mr. Farquhar being elected its president, and the writer the Secretary-Treasurer, with G. W. Kehr, of Harrisburg, as corresponding secretary; where the regular meetings were held. State-wide publicity of the work and programs resulted in a sizeable organization, which, by 1910 had aroused some public interest toward creating public parks in the state, —all of which may seem to the average reader as irrelative and unimportant to the subject matter, but to understand how and why the Cook estate was ever thought of for park purposes, it is quite necessary to have the outline of what led up to it and the influences at work at the time when

Cook Forest Park was first mentioned. That was in pre-war times when the country was just coming into Big Business rule, to prevent which the President carried the Big Stick and did not hesitate to use it on occasion; it was the day of giant lumber operations, and most of the timber resources had already been exploited in the east, and were now in possession of the great corporations which were fast gathering in what remained in the south and west. The great Cook Estate was one which formerly a century had been well cared for by Anthony Cook its original owner and the title to which was still held by his descendents; It was the only example of practical conservation on a large scale within the state. Here was a sample of what could be done in handling natural resource property when care, common sense and the exercise of intelligence is used in its management. Here was living proof of the arguments advanced for the Roosevelt Conservation policy; here could be preserved an everlasting monument for the guidance of future generations in the care and use of their forests and streams, their bird and animal life as well as for their own education, rest and recreation.

OVERLOOKING THE CLARION RIVER

Chapter III

THE COOK PIONEERS

John Cook took up a tract of land at what is now Cooksburg in 1826; by 1828 he had cleared a small lot and put in crops, built a shanty and moved his family to it over roads which he had to hew out of the unbroken forest. At or near the mouth of Tom's run he built a sawmill, floating his timber in rafts and lumber in barge-boats to market at Pittsburgh, from which point he returned in a canoe laden with supplies. Jno. Cook was the father of seventeen children to his first and second wives. Anthony was born after Cooksburg became the home, and here he succeeded to the management of the property, and raised the family which followed, after his death, to the administration of the vast timber and lumber interests which he had created and so well conducted. For many years the business was continued under the title, A. Cook Sons Company.

Anthony Wayne Cook and Thos. B. a brother, were respectively president and treasurer of the company. They both lived on the property and were the practical and experienced members of the family who had been trained under the watchful guidance of the father; here on the north bank of the Clarion they built beautiful homes, where the only survivor Anthony Wayne, at this writing, still lives with his noted wife the former President General of the national society of the D. A. R., and their son, A. W. Cook Jr.

Chapter IV

STARTING COOK FOREST

It is necessary to give this little sketch of the background in order that the reader may understand how and why the Cook Forest project was conceived, what the Cook Forest is and who were its owners, and particularly to mention the principal man who represented the ownership and, who made possible the saving of this wonderful stand of timber for posterity, viz,—Anthony Wayne Cook. Without his staid solid sense and good judgment backed by dogged perserverance and faith in the lasting good that would come out of it for the public, the Cook Forest never could have been saved; he was so instilled with the principles of his father's teaching with regard to the care of forests, and from the lessons growing out of a century of experience here demonstrated, that he could not and did not yield to the importunities of his co-owners and business advisers, to sell it for manufacture. And so for nearly twenty years he stood firmly by and watched his substance drained away in heavy taxation, interest and constant expense, to save it from the axe that would leave a perpetual scar and a desolation of the forest paradise that his father and his grandfather had lived and prospered in; it is only fair to say of him that he sacrificed a fortune to save these trees for others. At the period when the State project was first considered A. W. Cook was estimated to be worth more than two million dollars,—mostly in timber and lands.

It was a beautiful day, August 21st, 1910 that the writer with a few others were invited to a week-end house-party at the A. W. Cook home.

For the entertainment of his house guests it was the delight of A. W. Cook to load them into automobiles and drive them over the several indifferent highways and byways which were on the estate. In the days of the early style of motor cars and the unimproved earth road it was a real feat to cover twenty or thirty miles of these mountain trails in an afternoon,—and it was one of "A. W.'s" jokes to have his chauffeur discover a defect in operating the car which would require an hour or more to repair; this was to happen at a certain point some two miles from home just where the old trail crossed, that led in the direction of the mill on Tom's Run,—and all the way through the giant pines. Too bad that something had to go wrong with the car so far from home, but to "walk would do them good" Cook would comment, as he led the way into the silent "temple of the gods" and then listen to the exclamations of astonishment that were sure to come from those who followed along the fern-bound path in this fairyland; often there was heard no comment, for in this silent cathedral of the Almighty, it was unuttered. Frequently it was observed that sturdy men could not restrain the tears, at the grandeur and solemnity of their environment

It was during this walk in late August of 1910 that A. W. Cook and the writer sat down on a log to talk about the future fate of the magnificent panorama they saw and felt all about them. The writer said to him; "Cook, no greater crime could

be committed than to destroy this; it shall not be destroyed; it must be saved for humanity's sake." He told him of the work the Pennsylvania Conservation Association was doing and would do to save it, if he would only agree to cooperate. Cook then and there pledged his hearty support,—and his word was good.

Chapter V

CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Immediately the subject was taken up with Mr. Farquhar to urge his attention to the great opportunity for an outstanding job for the Conservation Association; he consented to the undertaking, and shortly followed with a personal visit in which he was accompanied by Mr. McFarland. Both were enthusiastic and joined heartily in spreading the news amongst prominent people and secured their support for the undertaking; Mr. McFarland being then President of the American Civic Association, as well as a publisher, spread valuable propaganda throughout the state; meantime Farquhar with his intimate association with the leading business men and organizations everywhere, did great service in getting public interest aroused. He asked the Governor (Stuart) to investigate the property's suitability for state park purposes,—and within a short time the governor chose S. B. Elliott a member of the Forestry Board, to examine the property and make report. Mr. Elliott responded promptly and met the writer who drove with him the forty miles to Cooksburg where they were transported through the deep snows over the property in a bob-sled in bitter cold weather.

That report, addressed to the writer and Mr. Farquhar, was the first official paper rendered with authority, with regard to the Cook forest becoming a public park, the original of which is in the file. The report was printed and widely circulated. It verified all that had already been said and urged

for it, and recommended its purchase by the state without delay. At the following session of Assembly, a Bill was passed appropriating expense funds and the appointment of a Commission to further examine and report its findings to the Governor.

The price fixed by the owners, with reservation of oil and gas rights was six hundred thousand dollars. The Commission employed expert cruisers to estimate the timber, and after personal investigation by the Commission members, their report endorsed the project and recommended the purchase by the state at the price offered by the Cooks. A Bill was prepared and introduced in the House which was duly referred to the Committee on appropriations,—and there it remained; the Legislature adjourned without action. However, it was whispered around with significant winks, that there was no "inducement" offered by the promoters to secure the passage of the bill,—and therefore members were not greatly interested to dip out so large a sum from the public tax funds when there were no drippings. But that was mere gossip and the promoters of the Forest paid no heed to such idle talk; they accepted the result as something that could not be helped and went on with their work of spreading the gospel of saving the trees. Signs of arousing public interest were evident everywhere; newspapers published the photographs, printed articles and editorials; clubs and societies discussed the subject, passed resolutions and wrote letters in aid of the proposition; surely the next session would pass the bill if the Cooks could be prevailed to wait. And they did wait.

Meantime, with the growing interest of the public there also was growing additional and increased expense for the originator and principal sponsor; trips, speeches, travel fares, printing and more printing, postage, circulars and expensive photograph albums to be made for libraries, clubs and societies,—all of which had to be paid for; always such bills found their way back to the fellows who began the campaign.

Chapter VI

RECORDS

DuBois Daily Express in its issue of January 6th, 1911 contained the first printed article on the subject of acquiring the Cook forest;—and it tells why it was suggested for a public park, and refers to the report which Mr. Elliott was expected to make. A few days later the Elliott report was delivered to the writer who published it in the DuBois Morning Courier in the issue of January 31, 1911. Two hundred extra copies were printed in pamphlet form and distributed to members of the House and Senate and to the various clubs and societies over the state.

At the Session which convened early in 1911 a Bill was prepared and submitted in the senate by Hon. T. M. Kurtz of Jefferson County. The Bill (S. No. 255) provided for the appointment of a legislative Commission to examine and report. The Bill having passed the Senate, it was passed by the House on May 22 and signed by Governor Tener, who appointed Senators Kurtz, Williams and Sones, on the Commission.

From the delivery of the Elliott report in January the files show voluminous correspondence, —letters and telegrams,—with the Governor, members of the Senate and House, Farquhar, McFarland, heads of the many clubs and societies, newspapers and others showing that the writer devoted little less than full time to the Cook Forest project.

The file shows that he made many trips for

conferences to Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, York and elsewhere on that duty,—always at his own expense. Mr. VanValkenburg, then the proprietor of the powerful Philadelphia North American, was appealed to, and he put the whole-hearted support of his paper behind the plan by delegating the noted Leigh Mitchell Hodges to visit the Cooks and write about it for the paper. This work was begun early in 1911 and his able articles followed consistently during the hard struggle of the early years. An issue of February 3, 1913 occupied nearly the whole of the front page and included four excellent photo reproductions of the great pines. It is unnecessary to say that much credit is due the North American and its delightful personal representative Hodges in making the Cook Forest project popular with the people.

Strong efforts were made to introduce and pass a general Park Bill during the 1911 sessions; but the Kurtz Bill succeeded, and time would not permit the Commission to make its report and allow the Bill to take its course through the House and Senate.

To illustrate the rapid progress (in two months) after the Elliott report had been made public, two letters are quoted in full:

A. B. FARQUHAR CO., L'td.
York, Pa. Feb. 20, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. MCCREIGHT:

Thanks for giving me the pleasure of reading your article in the DuBois journal. Just to let you see that the park matter is not allowed to rest, I enclose letter from Mr. McFarland, President of the Civic Association. He is the proper man to push that matter, as his office as President of the American Civic Association gives him high standing. Will follow it up as best we can. Yours very truly, (signed) A. B. Farquhar.

AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Main Office, Washington, D. C.
Office of the President,
Harrisburg, Pa. Feburary 15, 1911.

DEAR MR. FARQUHAR:

I have yours of February 8 received in my absence last week, during which I had the distinct honor to meet President and Mrs. Taft at dinner, in connection with certain senators and members of the Supreme Court, as the guest of Secretary Ballinger.—I wish to draw the Bill for the state park scheme within two days, and then to ask some proper member to introduce it.—unfortunately there is a distinct Niagara emergency at this moment——that may delay matters for a day or two, much as I regret any delay.

Yours truly,

J. Horace McFarland, President

Under date of March 10, 1911 the writer's letter to Mr. McFarland indicates a few of the activities he had already been forced into by reason of the park project:

"It was with great regret that I found you absent from the city on Tuesday and Wednesday for I had hoped to discuss with you the situation of the proposed park bill. I succeeded in seeing many of the legislators and some of the senators, and nearly all of the interested officials or heads of departments as well as the Governor himself, and all that I talked with are in favor of acquiring the Cook lands. Since my return home I have heard of the bill proposed by Senator Kurtz of Jefferson County but unfortunately I did not see him while there and do not know his plan.

Mr. Elliott just called and we have gone over your bill together, and I think you have the ground pretty well covered. Mr. Elliott tells me that you are to have the bill introduced next Monday, and of the talk he had with you for some member to take the matter into the House; North of Jefferson wanted to have the honor, and he would be a good man for it. You might have a talk with him; also I suggest that you see Hoover of Clearfield County, both are organization men. Howard of Cameron is against it, and ought to be seen.—I have seen Mr. Lehman of the Flood Commission,—also Mr. Bigelow, Mr. Magee, Mr. McAfee and Blakely, all of whom have signified approval, and yesterday further talks with J. Frank Torrence of the Board of Charities, Keenan and others who will support it. Mr. Guffy (the Hon. James M. Guffy) told me that he would do everything possible to assist. I missed an engagement with Senator Hall of Elk County, whom I was anxious to get interested."

On the same date a letter to Mr. Lehman:

"Recall that I was to send you copy of my address at the annual banquet of the Acorn Club held last month, and I take pleasure in

fulfilling that obligation. Since our visit at the University Club on Saturday I have canvassed the people at Harrisburg and find almost unanimous verdict in its favor,—and that the bill prepared by Mr. McFarland is to be introduced next Monday. We shall hope for good results.

Yours truly, M. I. McCREIGHT

However, not until nearly a month had passed was the bill finally introduced. Under date of April 28 Mr. Farquhar wrote as follows:

"Mr. McFarland has sent me printed copy of the bill offered in the House for state parks; he says if he had time he could easily get it through. I have urged him to take time."

From my reply dated May 2 is quoted:

"Your letter of the 29 received. I had already seen the bill of Mr. McFarland; Mr. Elliott and I went over it together carefully before it was presented. I had a letter from Representative North saying he had succeeded in getting it reported out of committee favorably and would devote his best energies to getting it through the House promptly".

Mr. North's letter is quoted below:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Office of the Committee of Appropriations
Harrisburg, April 20, 1911.

MR. M. I. McCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.

MY DEAR MR. McCREIGHT:

I herewith enclose copy of bill which is self explanatory. I had the bill reported out of Committee at this morning's session, and the same will be on Monday's First Reading Calendar. Things are looking fairly good but this matter will require careful and judicious management to be successful. I will have my "other eye" on the steering gear.

Very truly yours,

S. TAYLOR NORTH

The reply to Representative North's letter follows:

Your letter of the 20 enclosing copy of the new Park bill, and I am glad that you have been successful getting the bill out of Committee —I have just had a very interesting letter from the Governor on the subject, he is not opposed to acquiring properties for state park purposes. I wish that you would especially urge the Kurtz Bill along for if we get the Commission appointed promptly it will aid materially in getting your Bill through—I am sure that if we get this worked out to a successful conclusion, future generations will point to it as the greatest thing to the credit of the present Administration; when you find that I can be of service to you, don't hesitate to write me.

Yours truly, M. I. McCREIGHT

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Executive Chamber, Harrisburg April 20, 1911

MY DEAR MAJOR:

Your letter of the 18th is just here, and I am very glad to have it. Am quite sure that neither yourself or friends expect of me a positive commitment as to the Cook Estate idea, but I may say sincerely that I am not adverse to the purchase or acceptance through donation, of lands for park purposes for the State. It is my firm belief that upon the completion of our State highways and those roads running into every county, Pennsylvania as a State and in its scenic beauty, will rival the world. At that time, to have some park land would be an additional attraction. I wish you therefore, to feel that I have no prejudices against the acquisition of such lands.

Yours very truly,

JOHN K. TENER.

Two more letters are inserted here since they are the first to be written on the subject of the Cook Forest,—and they were the outgrowth of the association with each other beginning with the adoption by President Roosevelt of the writer's outline policy about which Mr. Farquhar was most enthusiastic. These letters came about from both the writer and Farquhar having been delegates representing Pennsylvania at the St. Paul Congress in the fall of 1910; his letter dated September 23, 1910 was prompted by way of acknowleding a newspaper which the writer had sent him containing his report of the doings of the great St. Paul congress where they had cooperated to secure valued advantages for the home state, in which the Congress decided national plans and policies. The reader will remember that the St. Paul Conservation Congress was one of the greatest national meetings ever held; and President Roosevelt's address was regarded as his most important as was also that delivered by Mr. Taft. James J. Hill's speech was discussed throughout the world; Senator Beveridge made his best oration here,—and

dozens of America's most noted statesmen delivered outstanding speeches,—for here was being ratified the revolutionary principles of the new Conservation Policy,—by the forty or more states and the country's people. It was at this meeting, that General Higby, New York State's noted delegate, demanded of the writer, to authorize him (Higby) to read before the session, the letters of the writer to Mr. Roosevelt and that which followed with Mr. Hall, which proved conclusively that it was M. I. McCreight and not Gifford Pinchot—, as Mr. Roosevelt had stated in his speech, who had conceived the now famous Conservation Policy. However, the writer had already been convinced that Mr. Roosevelt was entirely innocent of any intention to wrongly give credit, since he had likely never seen the files which had grown up in the Forestry Bureau; nor had Mr. Pinchot, then the head of that bureau, ever shown him the letters which had been written Mr. Hall in reply to his request for "specifically what the President should do"—and which was the very plan adopted. The writer felt that it would be wrong to stir up a near national scandal and place Mr. Roosevelt in an embarrassing situation after he had innocently,—at least unknowingly, placed the crown of honor on the wrong head. It was possible to only restrain the valiant old General Higby,—who had read all the letters,—from clearing up the whole matter then and there, by promising him that he could have the files with that exclusive right as he insisted, to make them public at a later date. He died shortly afterward and the letter file has never been made public. Copies

were given Mr. Taft at his solicitation, several years after he retired from the presidency. Mr. Taft's comment to the writer was,—"If I only had possession of this information at the time!"

And with this explanation the reader will better understand the letter of Mr. Farquhar, which was written shortly after our return home from St. Paul:

York, Pa. September 23, 1910

MY DEAR MR. MCCREIGHT:

Much obliged to you for copy of newspaper which you sent. If you have an extra copy to spare, would be pleased to have it. Your report is admirable. You were very kind to me, but am not sure that you overstated the matter. I was in position to serve the interest of the state; to see that its report was read in full, and that Colonel Harvey had the opportunity he wanted before leaving on his train. One of the best things I was able to accomplish, however, was having you on the Resolutions Committee, and getting through the Department of Health Resolution. The Congress was unquestionably an important one. The Proceedings will be interesting and will be largely read.

With cordial regards,

A. B. FARQUHAR

DuBois, Pa., Sept. 27, 1910

HON. A. B. FARQUHAR, York, Pa.
DEAR MR. FARQUHAR:

I have your letter of the 23rd and secured a couple of copies of the Raftsman's Journal containing my report to the Commissioners, which were sent you. I saw the same article in the DuBois Courier and in the Philadelphia North American.

In the matter of practical conservation there happens to be remaining about five thousand acres of the original forest at Cooksburg, in the northeast corner of Jefferson County, which is about the most attractive place I have ever seen in the state. It would be a splendid thing for the State of Pennsylvania to acquire this natural bit of original nature to be held as a State park. The Clarion River flows through the land and there are two or more mineral springs on it. For natural beauty it is not surpassed by anything in the United States. It seems to me that the people of Pennsylvania could not make a better investment, from the financial, ethical, and educational standpoint, than to become possessed of this wonderful estate.

I wish you would think it over and write me your opinion about trying to bring about such a result."

The very next day Mr. Farquhar wrote:

Am very much interested in your letter of the 27 and would cordially approve of the idea of protecting woodland in Jefferson County as a State park. Will take the matter up with the Governor and with my friend Mr. Birkenbine of the Forestry Commission. Thanking you for your letter, I am,

Very truly yours,

A. B. FARQUHAR

Then follow the big file of letters which passed between the writer and Farquhar, McFarland, Elliott, Rothrock, Conklin, Penrose, the Governor and members of the Senate and House, newspapers, magazine publishers, and others of influence over the state, to include all of which letters and reports would make a volume, but would prove that during the years 1910 and 1911 the Cook Forest park plans were so far advanced that the people would tolerate no interruption or alternative.

And so, with the failure of the McFarland General park bill, there was left the Legislative Commission provided by the Kurtz Bill, to make its investigation and report its findings, which were all favorable to the project, and the Cook Forest Bill was assured of passage at the Session of 1913. The only open question was whether or not the Cooks could be prevailed upon to desist from their plan for going on with manufacture to meet their constantly increasing tax bills for the large estate. Interest and tax was a big item, and there was no income except from the cutting and sawing of the big trees,—yet the work so far accomplished toward the State park plan, seemed to justify the sacrifice for two years. With assurance of financial aid in case of need, the Cooks agreed to wait.

Chapter VII

NINETEEN-THIRTEEN

Because of the adjournment of the Legislature without definite provision for the purchase of the forest did not in any degree lessen the activities of the sponsors; instead, the campaign was carried on with the same intensity throughout 1912 in preparation for the next Session. The Commission's report was now available and was widely circulated. The subject was kept prominently before the clubs and societies and data furnished them for debates and passing of suitable resolutions. Dinners were held, conferences and special meetings to discuss the various ways for handling the property when it came into possession of the state, and to carry on the needed publicity.

A. W. Cook, as a member of the Duquesne Club at Pittsburgh where he had extended acquaintance with prominent Pittsburgers, was able to disseminate a good deal of up-to-date information about the progress of the work that had been done and the plans for the future; and he furnished a collection of photographs by artists sent to the forest for the purpose, showing the giant pines and the beauties of the place. In due time these pictures and the persistent newspaper references to the proposed state park idea began to attract the attention of the business men, industrialists, capitalists and managers.

On Mr. Cook's invitation some of these gentlemen went to Cooksburg to see for themselves what

SUNLIGHT AND SHADOWS CREATE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN IMPRESSIONS

this park idea might really mean. In the fall of 1912 the writer was asked to meet a party of these guests for a week-end conference at the Cook home. Among them were Thomas Liggett, John M. Phillips and John Nicholson. The usual trip around the property was made, and every one of these gentlemen became enthusiastic boosters,—and they stuck faithfully to the end. Form of the proposed Bill to be submitted was discussed and its outline agreed upon; Liggett offered to have it prepared on their return to Pittsburgh.

To show the spirit of cooperation, one of the first letters in the file of 1913 is that of Mr. Liggett and it is copied herewith in full.

THOMAS LIGGETT
Diamond Bank Building
Pittsburgh, Pa. January 11, 1913

MAJ. M. I. MCCREIGHT:

DEAR SIR: I don't know what committee will have the park bill, probably Forestry,—you no doubt know, but whatever it is, would it not be good to get after some of the Committee on Committees and see if we can't get the right fellows placed?—you have no doubt seen Senator Kurtz and have his suggestions,—if you care to come here I will be glad to go with you to see Powell, Alter, Allen or any of them you have in mind—or I will go see them alone—just let me know what you want me to do and I will try to do it.

Sincerely yours,

THOS. LIGGETT

On January 30, 1913, I wrote Mr. Liggett as follows:

"Immediately upon receipt of your letter enclosing outline of Bill for the Cook property I called Mr. Elliott to spend the afternoon with me; he took with him the Bill and returned to me this morning with his suggested changes. I enclose his letter together with the Bill and typewritten notes of his proposed modifications."

Meantime there was enormous work to do for the sponsors everywhere; the option to the state, for the property had to be agreed upon and reduced to legal form,—title papers, surveys, estimates, originals of the many resolutions listed and filed; newspaper clippings, maps, photo albums

and endless other details for use of the members of the legislatures,—and along with it all, a concerted publicity campaign from the newspapers over the state. A letter dated the 4th, February 1913 addressed to Leigh Mitchell Hodges will indicate what that meant—

DEAR HODGES:

"I was delighted to see the Cook Conservation matter spread out over the front page of the North American, when I picked it up to read at dinner last night. You surely gave the project a battering-ram boost and sent it a long way toward success. I hear the Cook park idea is popular everywhere. I just completed a large portfolio or album of the Cook Forest pictures which I think you will appreciate seeing, and will bring it with me for that purpose next trip east."

The Bill was introduced in the house by Representative North and immediately he proposed a special delegation comprising members of the Senate and House, to inspect the property by way of assuring prompt passage of the Bill; they would expect the promoters of the bill to pay the expenses. There was no money,—never had been and never would be for the payment of any bills—something had to be done. A letter to Representative North dated April 29th will show how and what was done to finance the political joy ride:

"In reference to making the trip to Cooksburg, a meeting was held at the Duquesne Club, Pittsburgh, last Saturday at which sufficient funds were pledged to furnish mileage for your delegation to Brookville and return. This was subscribed by the Allegheny County Boy Scouts of America and their friends. Was assumed that as many as twenty members of your Committee would accept invitation to go. I wish you would advise me the date and number of persons in the party so that we may have a few days in which to assemble a sufficient number of automobiles at Brookville. There is great enthusiasm at Pittsburgh

over the prospect of getting the Cook Estate reserve; the Hon. Erasmus Wilson said they had selected Cooksburg for the Boy Scout outing this year."

And then the file holds a penciled note from A. W. Cook dated at Pittsburgh saying to see Dave Taylor and have him get the supervisors to drag the roads so that there might be a fair chance for the Harrisburg delegation to get through safely over the seventeen miles of rough dirt roads. On arrival of the "special" Pullman train it was met at Brookville station by a line of automobiles drafted for the purpose, from Brookville, Clarion, Punxsutawney and DuBois; first stop for breakfast at the New Commercial to which point the itemized bill shows, sleepers, fares, cigars, incidentals and meals had reached $244.15. The motorists succeeded in making the trip to the Cook home without serious interruption or injury to any of the royal participants. Here the party rested for a time, and then some of the members most interested joined in the drive through the trails on the property; a few got out of the cars and walked through the big timber with which they were duly impressed. Of the thirty officials, however, a majority seemed to be far more concerned to remain near the Cook mansion where it was announced luncheon would be served at 1 o'clock. When Mrs. Cook's delightful lunch had been disposed of the official party buzzed with plans for returning so that each of them could fill other dates they had made at various points in the territory, on personal business,—and politics.

The bill for the expenses is dated June 3,—audited by Hon. Henry I. Wilson. It totals $482.07. The Boy Scouts and friends sent a

substantial share and with what we could gather up locally we were able to meet all but $32.07, which like most other costs that were constantly accumulating fell to the writer. Letters of May 6 and June 28 show that Liggett collected and remitted $170 toward the bill.

The sum total of the results from the Legislative party's visit may be set forth in the next letter which is found in the file. It is quoted below in full:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Harrisburg, Pa. May 27, 1913

MR. M. I. MCCREIGHT
DuBois, Pa.
MY DEAR SIR:

"Upon the solicitation of Mr. H. E. Campbell, Pittsburgh, I voted for the Cook Forest Bill which was defeated Monday evening. I feel if the friends of this bill had done the good work that yourself and Mr. Campbell endeavored to do, the passage of the Bill would have been accomplished."

Very truly yours,
THOS. P. GEARY

Like all great moves for the general good, there were parties who could not or would not be convinced that so large a project as the purchase of Cook Forest would be negotiated without personal gain to some one in the form of commission, or just plain graft. The Cook forest matter was no exception; and the insidious whispering was evident in many directions. There were also those who, from a business standpoint, wholly free from sentimental considerations, held that the future generations should, as they themselves had done,—take what comes. They argued that the manufacture of this timber would contribute as much for their welfare as to preserve it for their education and pleasure. And there were those who held

that it was not worth the price asked for it by the Cooks. And then, too, there were the charitable institutions constantly calling for state aid far beyond the revenues to supply them. They set up a cry against the Cook forest proposition.

On March 15th an article appeared in the Oil City Derrick opposing the purchase of the Cook lands for state park purposes which attracted wide comment and had much to do with the legislative defeat of the Bill, for its editor Pat Boyle ranked high in newspaperdom then.

My letter to friend Boyle dated March 18, 1913 is incorporated herein, with his reply. They give a vivid picture of the question.

March 18th, 1913

HON. P. C. BOYLE,
Oil City, Pa.
DEAR FRIEND BOYLE:

I was deeply disappointed to read your editorial of the 15th, regarding the Cook Estate. I cannot believe you are rightly informed about it or the article would not have been permitted to appear in your paper. Impressions can be drawn from it that simply graft and all manner of crookedness on the part of those interested in its success. It would lead the impartial reader to believe that the property is not worth its price and that an organization was formed for the purpose of making a sale of it to the state—and of course a private profit therefrom; that it is cutover land and worth for such a purpose only just what other lands are which can be purchased in Vanango, Forest and Potter counties at $10 or $20 per acre.

The whole project is belittled and its supporters made to appear as selfish, irresponsible, unpatriotic men who know not their own minds and were incompetent to judge of the needs of themselves or to read the signs of the times.

The editorial I refer to is such as would be expected to emanate from some cheap yellow journal that sought only the favor of the Socialist or the notoriety of opposition for Opposition's sake; but to read it in a paper of the sane, conservative and sensible type is depressing to say the least.

The article deserves consideration. Anything in the Oil City Derrick deserves notice,—and that is why I feel so keenly the cruel criticism it implies; if not directly, certainly indirectly.

If it were not that I hold P. C. Boyle in the highest esteem, I would feel like hunting him with a shotgun. It is because I know him

to be a big, broad-gauged, liberal and tolerant, patriotic citizen,—and because I know that he is misinformed and has made an honest error that I undertake to meet him in a similar spirit, and address him thus:

1—I first proposed this Cook park idea,—and if it is wrong in fact and in principle I shall accept the responsibility for it. I also proposed the Conservation Policy which President Roosevelt adopted and carried into effect. If the general conservation policy is wrong in fact and in principle, the responsibility is mine also, and I shall accept it.

2—I am not seeking personal notoriety for either. I expended my own money and energies on both; I was profited by neither and do not expect to be. Both are the embodiment of a principle I stand for and will fight for. It is the directing of this generation back into the path of sane and sensible use of our natural resources from which the last generation has strayed so far.

3—Out of all the vast forests that once covered the face of the Commonwealth of which we are all justly proud,—the old patriarchs on the Cook Estate stand alone to tell the story of what gave us the beautiful name "Pennsylvania"—Penn's Woods. I saw an opporunity to have and hand on to future generations—justly theirs—one small remnant of the thing that most of all went to make the Keystone State deservedly famous.

4—You would discredit the proposition because there is sentiment in it. There is sentiment in it, and there is business in it. You say that the people cannot spend the money for it because we need it to contribute to Insane asylums, Hospitals, and Sanitariums; we must build roads. I answer, aye. The dear people can pay for a thirteen million dollar capitol; they can pay an additional two million dollars for increasing that building's back yard in order that the outlook is more pleasing to the eye of our self-sacrificing officeholders,—but to contribute a penny apiece for a seven-thousand acre forest for the health and enjoyment of the common people is too much. Ah, Indeed!

5—And you would make it appear that the state would have to expend twelve hundred thousand dollars to make it a park before it would be of service to the people. If that were so I should not advocate its purchase; if it were to be ruined by the expenditure of money upon it I would not care to see it preserved. It is not contemplated in the Bill that any money shall be spent in improving it, for it cannot be improved; no man has yet improved upon the work of God in the creation of virgin forests, and will not.

You fail, utterly to grasp the meaning or the purpose of the Cook park idea.

6—The national government has established great areas of natural parks throughout the west,—breathing places for the people—inaccessible it is true to nearly all—yet the policy is approved by all the people, even if few receive the benefits. Is it, therefore, unreasonable and "sentimental" on the part of the great state of Pennsylvania to grasp the last opportunity to set apart for the use and benefit of her people a small area where all the people of the east,—fifty millions of them—can enjoy what is denied them in the west?

7—If it were not for my high regard for your integrity and personal worth I should lose my temper, for you say that a campaign for "selling" the Cook land has been carefully organized. I am charitable enough to believe you do not mean that. If with malice of forethought, you made such a statement to me, I should not hesitate to reply and say that you lie.

I personally expended considerable money and a lot of time to get this Cook Park idea before the people. I secured the best authorities in the land to go and inspect it. Through the kindly interest of former Governor Stuart, Hon. S. B. Elliott of the Forestry Department examined it and made such an enthusiastic report about it that the last Assembly passed a Bill providing for a Commission to make an exhaustive report upon it with a view to its purchase and preservation. That Commission was composed of Senators Sones of Williamsport, an authority on timber and lumbering, Senator Kurtz, also a practical lumberman, and the Hon. George Williams of Tioga County. They had two years in which to make their examination; they employed the best expert cruisers to estimate the timber; three of them. They incorporated their findings in a report to the present legislature and recommended its purchase by the state for a park and forest reserve.

There was no attempt on the part of the Cooks or others to "sell" the property to the state. The Legislative Committee asked the Cooks for a price and obtained it.

I think I state the truth when I say that the members of the Commission were greatly surprised to secure a price much less than was expected. It was a great surprise to me I assure you, and it is well understood by those best informed, that the commercial value of the property is well over a million. Therefore the state is not investing money in "sentiment".

Can the people of Pennsylvania afford to own seven thousand acres of native virgin forest area when it can be obtained for less than its actual commercial value?

I answer for the great majority of the common people who believe in the principles of conservation; for the Forestry Association of Pennsylvania which has endorsed and approved its purchase; for the conscientious and able Forest Reserve Commission which is supporting it; for the State Game Commission which is contending for the preservation of the native wild birds, game and fishes; for the Historical Society of Philadelphia which has volunteered its hearty support; for the National Civic and Conservation Associations which are fighting for it; for the State sportsmen and the able journal which has lent its continued aid, and for the able and unbiased work of the Governor's Commission whose integrity no one has a right to question,—whose members are unanimous in their recommendation for its purchase. I also speak for many of the most progressive and influential newspapers throughout the state;—and I should like to yet include the worthy Oil City Derrick. I answer for all these, and now that he is dead, I answer for the Father of Yosemite and of Niagara parks—the pioneer of U. S. Geologic Survey,—Hon Jas. T. Gardiner, who declared that he knew of nothing in the whole United States its equal for the purpose,

and that he would be willing to devote the remainder of his life to accomplish its salvation.

These are the people whom you would charge with lack of intelligence; these are some of the folks whom you would assist your so-called Progressive representative to pronounce incompetent. I answer for those who have seen and know what they propose to buy; You speak for those who never saw the place and probably were not sufficiently interested in the public welfare to inquire about it.

You are, I belive, fair minded; you are patriotic I know; you are conservative; you believe in sane and practical conservation and you are honest. All this I claim for myself and you must concede it to me. I have told you the facts about the Cook project; you can verify them, and when you do, you must discover also, that there is no graft; there is no commission or personal profit in it for anyone. It is a purely patriotic and wholly meritorious movement, and is fully justified from every standpoint.

Your editorial is full of insinuations and is prepared as if purposely to create false and misleading impressions; you owe it to yourself and to the public and to me to correct them.

I want you to investigate the facts as they relate to the Cook park idea; learn the whole story about it. If you will do this and then decide that it is not a good thing to advocate, I shall be content; if you find that your continued opposition is justified, I am sure you will be less reckless with statements that appear in print about it in the Derrick.

With assurance of my kindest personal regard, and without prejudice toward you as an editor who sometimes lets others write for him, I am,

Yours truly,

M. I. MCCREIGHT

Oil City, March 22, 1913

MAJ. I. MCCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR MAJOR:

I have your esteemed letter of the 18th and carefully note the contents. In reply, with renewed assurance of our distinguished consideration, I beg to say; to all public questions there are two sides appealing with more or less force, to the average bystander. In the earnest advocacy of your cause I have no doubt of your personal sincerity. On my part I claim the same motive for myself. I assure you there is nothing personal in my views.

As a Commissioner of Public Charities I am brought into intimate contact with demands upon the state for aid. These demands far exceed the revenue. In the consideration of the demands for aid before our Board we had constant reminders from the Authorities at Harrisburg of the necessity of observing the most stringent economy; with result that not one dollar was recommended to private charities for repairs, buildings or improvement. $20,000 tentatively recommended for new buildings for your DuBois Hospital was subsequently recalled upon one of the aforsesaid hints from above. This rule was applied

all over the state. I send by separate cover a copy of our preliminary report that you may see for yourself; also enclosed herewith is Chm. North's report to the Legislature, and it does not specifically include the sums recommended by our Board for Charities and Correction, the sick, insane and evil doers amounting the twelve million. Upon this statement I rest my case.

With renewed assurance of continued regard, I remain,

Cordially yours,

P. C. BOYLE

Resolution Pennsylvania Forestry Association passed and sent to the writer follows:

M. I. MCCREIGHT.
DuBois, Pa.
MY DEAR SIR:

"Your telegram of the 10 to Dr. J. T. Rothrock—the following resolution was passed at our last Council meeting: 'Whereas, there is now offered to the State for public purpose, at less than market value, a certain tract of land bordering on the Clarion River and known as the Cook tract which contains more than seven thousand acres, much of which is densely covered with virgin timber, and Whereas, the saving of this timber for proper utilization, is in the line of work to which this association is pledged, and would be a distinct help to large water-flow conditions, and Whereas, the said tract is by its topographical features eminently fitted for a public outing ground of great sanitary and scenic value, Therefore, be it resolved by the Council of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association that its ownership by the Commonwealth is very desirable, and we recommend its purchase".

Yours truly,

F. L. BITLER, Recording Secretary

PHILADELPHIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Montgomery Ave. and 17th St.,
Philadelphia, Pa. February 24, 1913

MR. M. I. MCCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

Inclosed please find copy of resolution passed at the last meeting of the Philadelphia Natural History Society, held Feb. 20, 1913.

Very truly,

Carl Boyer, Corresponding Secretary

"The Philadelphia Natural History Society having learned that a 7200 acre forest has been offered for sale by the executors of the Cook Estate, and that this piece of white pine forest is unrivalled in the State of Pennsylvania for the size of its trees which are unexcelled for beauty of form and growth.

"Resolved, that the Philadelphia Natural History Society considers that it would be an error in state policy to destroy such a forest

which should be kept by the State for all time as a forest and public park, and be it further

"Resolved, that all urge upon the State Legislature now in session assembled, that the bill of M. I. McCREIGHT of DuBois, Pa. be adopted providing for the purchase of this land by the State of Pennsylvania, —situated at the junction of Jefferson, Clarion and Forest Counties,— and that immediate action on this measure should be taken so as to preserve for the people of the state a piece of Nature which will in the immediate future, draw thousands of nature lovers from all parts of the country to see a stretch of primeval forest untouched by fire or by the axe."

With adjournment of the 1913 Session the sponsors of the Bill, the members in the Senate and House who had been promising its certain passage, —now excused themselves on the ground that there were not sufficient funds available in the public reach to take it over, but gave the usual assurance that it would be provided for at the next session. But a wise politician called the writer aside and told him that if he expected the bill to be passed, he should employ an attorney, and provide some cash for him to work with; he indicated fifty thousand dollars as about the right amount that it would take. The gentleman is since deceased,— and there was no witness.

But with all this discouragement the work of preparing for the next session went forward; the people were behind it and would ultimately compel obedience from the politicians.

What was a far more formidable question with the writer and his big army of supporters, was how to hold the property from manufacture for another two years. Already two years of big tax bills and the enormous interest charges had accumulated, a large item for anyone however rich,—and now there had to be faced another two years of equally large or greater debt to be discharged; or

give up and let the forest be cut down for the income to meet tax and interest. Either some new financing had to be done at once or the whole matter given up as a failure. As always, the job was referred to the chief advocate, for solution. A hundred and fifty thousand dollars was required to carry through to the next session. A majority of the associate owners were determined to abandon the negotiations for state purchase. The faithful A. W. Cook stood firmly for saving the trees,—and he threw his influence with the friends who had worked so hard to get the legislation for the park. A conference of the bankers was held; plans were discussed to finance the company until the State would act, for at the time there was little doubt in their own or the general public's mind that the ultimate outcome would be successful,—but it was clear that the local bankers would have to take a leading part in any financing.

And during the summer and fall a plan for raising $150,000 was worked out by A. W. Cook, the writer, D. L. Taylor and H. B. Powell, the proceeds for which was to liquidate floating bills of the estate, taxes, and to take over the holdings of other members of the firm who were unwilling to wait longer or chance their interests with the State.

To furnish so large a sum it was necessary to audit accounts and re-estimate the timber and check over legal titles and other phases of the corporation's affairs. As the story of the Cook forest would not be complete otherwise, herein is included the report of the expert cruiser dated November 3, 1913; it shows the kinds and quantity of merchantable trees then on the property.

THE COUNTY NATIONAL BANK.
Clearfield, Pa. Nov. 5, 1913

DEPOSIT NATIONAL BANK,
DuBois, Pa.
GENTLEMEN:

Enclosed you will find report of Mr. McMasters on the Cook timber. You will notice that he brings his estimate up to that which the owners had.

Nothing has been done in the preparation of the mortgage, as yet. Shall I tell Mr. Woodward to go ahead with it? Please let me know by telephone tomorrow morning, 6th inst. I expect to leave home at 1 o'clock. Very truly yours,

H. R. POWELL, President

THE COUNTY NATIONAL BANK
Clearfield, Pa. Nov. 3, 1913

TO THE DEPOSIT NATIONAL BANK OF DUBOIS, DUBOIS, PA. ,
THE BROOKVILLE TITLE & TRUST CO., BROOKVILLE, PA.,
THE COUNTY NATIONAL BANK OF CLEARFIELD, CLEARFIELD, PA.
GENTLEMEN:

After spending nine or ten days on the timber tract of A. Cook Sons Company, Inc., for the purpose of verifying the estimates of the timber which have heretofore been made, I beg to report as follows:

There is in the property a total of 7200 acres. The timber stands on about 5700 acres, estimated as follows:

Hemlock	30,000,000 feet
White pine	9,000,000 feet
Second growth white pine	3,000,000 feet
Oak, chestnut, cherry and ash	9,000,000 feet
Birch, beech and maple	4,000,000 feet
TOTAL	55,000,000 feet
Railroad ties	30,000
Pit posts	175,000
Chemical and pulp wood	125,000 cords
Hemlock bark	15,000 cords

The pine, hemlock, oak and chestnut are No. 1 timber. Balance of hardwood is above the average of hardwood.

The character of the land for stocking purposes is fine. The timber can all be brought to the mill without an uphill haul, but in the case of one or two draughts the haul would be somewhat shorter on a slight uphill grade. The timber is located on water courses, all leading to the mill. In the operations which have heretofore been conducted on the property, the timber farthest from the mill has been cut. The property is unique in this last particular—one generally finds that the timber closest to the mill is cut first.

I did not find any trees showing fire scars. So far as I could determine, there have been no burns on the property at all.

It has been developed by streams, township and other roads.

This condition is favorable, not only to fire protection, but to reduce the cost of stocking, to the minimum.

I did not examine the mills which consist of a single band sawmill and a planing mill, the latter located about one mile distant from the former, with a graded tramroad intervening. The mill property appeared to be in good condition. They claim that they cut about 30,000 feet per day on the mill. I should think the output could be increased 40 to 50%.

Respectfully submitted,

V. M. MASTERS, Estimator

Owing to slight difference of a technical nature which Mr. Cook did not care to concede to Mr. Powell, the entire bond issue of $150,000 was underwritten by Mr. Taylor's institution, the Brookville Title and Trust Company, and the Deposit National Bank of DuBois, of which the writer was president; and so the park project was again saved for another two years. Financial conditions at this time, were not attractive for large ventures; the banking world was trying to find a way to establish a Central Federal bank of issue to meet the periodical currency stringency, and had generally approved the plan proposed by Senator Aldrich, but the 1912 elections had placed President Wilson in office and the Democrat party was not favorable to a single Federal bank, and had devised plans for a series of bank-owned regional institutions to take over the management of the national currency and credits. As the President of the Central Pennsylvania Bankers Association, the writer was appointed a delegate to the Committee of "Three hundred" of America's principal bank officials, which met in Chicago in the fruitless effort to forestall the regional system of twelve separate private-owned banks provided for in the Glass-Owen bill then being debated. As a consequence the Cook Forest file for the

latter part of 1913 indicates an attitude of growing preparedness, the usual widening of the campaign of education through the sportsmen's various leagues and clubs, schools, lodges and churches, so as to be in readiness for the next meeting of the Assembly in 1915.

CHAPTER VIII

WORLD WAR

With the outbreak of the terrible world war confusion reigned; but the records show that more and more people came to investigate the forest park matter and to see the big trees; they invariably went home to champion the cause. Memorandums show that an expert 'movie picture' artist was to make 1500 feet of reel to cost $400.

A note from "A. W. C." dated August 18 says that a party of Pittsburgh bankers would be at the 'City of Big Trees' tomorrow and would come on to DuBois next day.

From "Tom" Liggett is a letter which shows for itself and is quoted:

November 20, 1914

MAJ. M. I. MCCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

I am in receipt of an invitation to a luncheon at the Harrisburg Club on next Wednesday to be held by the Executive Committee of the State Conservation Association, and at which, I understand the question of whether the Association will get squarely behind the Cook Park proposition, or not, will be decided. Will you please advise me by return mail as to whether you expect to be there, and, so far as possible, as to what you understand to be the attitude of the members of the Executive Committee, and oblige,

Very respectfully yours,

THOS. LIGGETT

To this letter is attached the reply as follows:

DEAR TOM:

I was tied up in Chicago at the time of the Executive Committee meeting at Harrisburg, but I am advised by Mr. Kehr that your good work there decided the policy of the Conservation Association, which is to vigorously support the Cook Forest legislation.

I was in Pittsburgh and called a number of places to see you but was unable to make the connection. I think the first and most impor-

THE PA STATE COLLEGE

tant thing to be done now is to get the governor—elect to understand and appreciate the proposition. You, together with Nicholson and Phillips are the men to do it.

Yours truly, M. I. McCREIGHT

The file for 1915 is so big that if all its contents were included, there would be several volumes instead of one. A new governor had been elected, and many new members to the Senate and House. Martin G. Brumbaugh is Chief Executive, and he has drastic ideas about consolidating all the departments having to do with forests, water, game, fish and parks. Times are hard; revenues diminished; war is on,—and the new governor is not familiar with the Cook Forest project; altogether, the prospect for favorable legislation is not bright.

Having appealed to the new Governor for his support for the coming campaign with the Senate and House, the following letter dated April 8, 1915 from the Executive Chamber shows that he would at least, give the matter attention:

MR. M. I. McCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

"The Governor has asked me to thank you for your letter of April 3rd, and to say that he will give careful consideration to your suggestions."

Very truly yours,
J. S. HIATT, Private Secretary

From one of the new members is a letter which indicated the status of the Cook park matter:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Harrisburg, Pa. February 10, 1915

MR. M. I. McCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

"Will you see to getting the Cook Bill arranged to present to the House of Representatives for the taking over of the Cook tract at this

ANOTHER BEAUTY SPOT WHEN FLOWERS ARE IN BLOOM

session. It seems in the last Bill there were some parts that were objectionable and some of those could be kept out this time? I have been talking with a number of the members and they all seem to be favorable to taking it over at this time. Get this through as soon as possible so we can get it before the House."

Very truly,

G. MILTON ALCORN

Under date of the 11th of February is another from a member of the Senate:

"Answering your favor of the 4th, beg to say I have been trying to get our people interested in the Cook Forest proposition, have been talking it ever since the session opened. I didn't get much encouragement though, as the State is short of money. If you will draw up a Bill or have a Bill drawn appropriating the money to purchase the Cook property, I will be glad to introduce it and will do all I can to help get it through. I have been hoping Mr. Cook would be down here this session, but up to date have not seen him. Let me know how the Cooks feel about this etc. You can write me to Harrisburg, I will return there Monday."

Yours very truly,

H. A. THOMPSON

February 6th

Secretary Kehr Writes:

"I am sorry—we have not made very much progress on our plans to participate in the present session of the Legislature, but Mr. Farquhar has been trying to arrange a conference with Governor Brumbaugh for almost a month—it appears that the proposed conference will occur during the next couple of weeks."

On March 22, Kehr wrote to enclose letters from members of the Executive Committee and Mr. Liggett regarding their conclusions after the conference with the Governor, from which excerpts are quoted:

From Dr. Drinker:

"I have been paying a great deal of attention to the matter of the Governor's idea of consolidation of the Conservation departments and I am greatly in hopes that he will take full time for consideration of this bill before committing himself to it. As to the Cook Park proposition, while I have thought it a good thing for the state to acquire it—I think Mr. McFarland is a good deal better judge."

From McFarland:

"I think we ought to meet and discuss very carefully and thoughtfully the tendency of the Governor's new Conservation Bill; why

could not Mr. McCreight secure the proposition for a Bill for the Cook tract upon which we could (the various organizations) unite? I think you ought to suggest this to him."

Farquhar said in his letter:

"No new bills will be introduced (they say)—and there won't be time to handle near all the old ones. The revenues have fallen off, and they are not going to incur any new expense. They advise—such measures as the Cook tract be held over for better times. There would be no possibility, I think, of getting such a bill through, or certainly not past the Governor this year. They haven't the money. Have copies of letters, from Dr. Drinker and Mr. McCreight,—personally I think the Governor's plan (consolidation) would be very much to the interest of conservation—it is not our interest to oppose it."

From Liggett's letter:

"In discussing the Cook Park bill today, a gentleman suggested to me that—Governor Brumbaugh seemed to be favorably disposed toward the proposition, but in as much as he had in mind a Conservation Commission which would take in agriculture, forestry, game and fish and water supply, it was his thought to defer any action in this matter until it might be determined whether this Commission would be created;—will you advise me if you can, as to what is the present status of the Cook Park matter, and also what you think is the attitude of the Governor with reference to it; if anything is done in the way of introducing a bill, I imagine it will have to be done before April 1st which is not very far away—I will say—frankly that I have no faith—in the governor's ability to create a Commission—or in its workings if created."

The Bill for the purchase of the property was introduced by Representative Brosius of Jefferson County, after careful analysis and conference with others supporting the movement; it was drawn by Mr. C. Z. Gordon, attorney for the Cooks, at the original offer in fee including some four hundred additional acreage, since acquired, and including the gas and oil which had formerly been reserved, totalling eight hundred thousand dollars, payable, in installments as follows; $300,000 on the first of September 1915; $250,000 July 1st 1916 and $250,000 July 1st, 1917. Letters and messages were sent to all the active workers at once urging their vigorous cooperation. Senator Penrose was

appealed to and promised help. The file contains responses from many of those who had been appealed to, some of which are quoted to show how the prospects for the third effort with the legislature was progressing. April 16th a telegram from Alcorn advised that the bill already reported out of Committee, was slated for a public hearing on the 20th. Farquhar was compelled to keep an engagement previously made with government officials at Washington, and enclosed a written statement to be read before the Committee at the hearing; it is quoted in full:

"I had expected to be with you in person Tuesday afternoon, but a call to Washington at 2:30 made it impossible. In company with Mr. McFarland, President of the American Civic Association, I visited the Cook tract about two years ago, spending more than a day walking and riding over it. I believe it is unquestionably the most beautiful specimen of white pine forest we have left in the state. The Clarion River winds through it, and its scenic features are wonderfully attractive; do not recollect ever seeing anything more beautiful. There is a high hill upon this property from whence the view of the winding river and magnificent forest spread out below is superb. There is no question but the owners of the property could make much more money by cutting the timber down than selling the tract to the State at the price offered, but it has been in the family for many years and for sentimental reasons they would rather make a sacrifice to have it preserved. The property moreover, has great mineral value, an abundant flow of natural gas. If the State can spare the money, there is no doubt but what the investment would be wise."

A. B. FARQUHAR,
President of Pennsylvania Conservation Association.

Dated April 19th is a letter from McFarland, advising that he would attend the meeting, and to show how opposition was constantly being discovered in unexpected places a part of this letter is quoted:

"Incidentally, I ought to tell you that through Bishop Darlington who got after me in opposition to the Cook proposition, I have come in contact and acquaintance with Mr. Henry W. Shoemaker, of the ALTOONA TRIBUNE. He was presumed to be the man interested in

showing that a certain Wheeler tract was better than the Cook tract. It has proved that nothing of the sort is true, and he is to go to the Governor with me as soon as we can get an appointment, to propose a very interesting scheme for financing the Cook tract as a State park."

Many other letters from the file indicate enthusiasm,—and a few show doubt and discouragement. Representative North, who had charge of the Bill in the previous session, was faithful and used his best influence with his associates in House and Senate. From Mr. Liggett a letter dated the 18th:

"I have yours of the 17th in which you advise me that the Cook Forest Bill will be held up for public hearing next Tuesday (tomorrow) afternoon at 3:30. I am awfully sorry that this bill comes up at this time. From today until Thursday, Phillips, Nicholson and I are practically leading the campaign that we have here to raise $50,000, for the Boy Scouts—if there are further hearings we will be glad to come. This present meeting is going to be rather unfortunate because it will probably appear that the Pittsburgh people are not interested in it;—but I have no doubt that between Mr. McFarland, yourself and others who are interested in the matter, the case will be presented quite as well as though we were present."

From Dr. Rothrock (Forest Commission)—a letter dated the 19th we quote:

"Absolutely impossible for me to be in Harrisburg on the 20th; business of importance, keeps me here (West Chester—home). So far as answering the Governor's inquiries concerning the Cook tract, I could be of no use; for I have never seen it or been invited to see it; as a witness, therefore, I could be of no service beyond saying that I am in favor of the State acquiring every acre of forest land that it can purchase at a reasonable price, and particularly if the land possesses so many advantages as the Cook tract is said to."

COMMERCIAL TRUST BUILDING
Nos. 601-5
Philadelphia, Pa. April 20, 1915

DEAR MAJOR:

"I have yours of the 14th. Later in the spring, if I should be up in your part of the State, I shall be glad to visit the Cook Forest with you. Just now I am closely confined to Philadelphia and cannot get away. I have no doubt it is a very interesting and valuable tract, and I shall look into the suggestion of the State acquiring the same on the lines indicated by you."

Yours sincerely,

BOIES PENROSE

NEW WILLARD
Washington, D. C. April 23, 1915

"MAJOR: I hope you will be at Harrisburg Monday evening. Time is so short we will have to move fast as we are the only ones to get anything done if it can be done. Come down and we will see what there is to it.—A. W. Cook."

THE COMMONWEALTH
(Pencil note) Harrisburg. Pa.

MAJOR: The Governor told Brosius to do nothing further until first of week; would see the chairman of each Committee. Said he was very much interested and would like to see the bill pass.—A. W. C."

THE BOLTON
(Pencil note) Harrisburg, Pa. 7:30 P.M.

"I expect to remain in City over night; understand you and Joe have gone to Gettysburg to cool off from the exciting fight, and will return this evening; want to see you before you leave.—A.W.C."

DR. J. T. ROTHROCK,
West Chester, Pa.
DEAR MR. ROTHROCK:

Mr. Kehr handed me your letter at Harrisburg while at the Committee hearing of the Cook Park Bill. I was not aware that you never had seen the Cook property, and I think you have missed one of the greatest treats of your life that you have not been there to enjoy that magnificent forest. I am sure that if I had the right I should have invited you but I think you would be highly welcomed at Mr. Cook's place,—I have great hopes that the Legislature might pass the Bill,—and am confident the Governor feels so;—it is his intention to visit Cooks and I hope it will be convenient for you to go at the same time,—and thus settle for good the preservation of this splendid monument to coming generations." Yours truly, M. I. McCreight

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MAJOR MCCREIGHT Cooksburg, May 17
DEAR SIR:

Wish you would send me 2 or 3 copies of the DuBois Daily Express Saturday, May 15, 1915; I want the article they have in about the Governor and the Cook tract; want this to keep for different reasons, —also that I think it is a false report as to the Governor's attitude."

A. W. COOK.

A. W. COOK, May 19, 1951

"Went to the Express office and got the three remaining copies and sent them to you last night. I was quite surprised to read the article; I called attention of the editor to the mistake and contrary opinion expressed; he explained that he copied it from a Clarion paper". Note:—This item was traced to Clarion parties,—enemies of Cook, in an effort to spread injurious propaganda.

The State Forestry Association annual meeting to be held at Foxburg latter part of June at which many prominent people from over the State would be present, offered a chance for them to see and to learn about the Cook forest program, and to discuss the pending legislation as part of its convention program. Excerpts from a few letters will show the status of the matter as the legislature drew to a close in the 1915 campaign to save the trees. It was a long five years and terribly expensive and strenuous ones for the writer. Quotations from these letters are used merely to show that the sentiment was well and widely established in favor of the state park idea. Robt. S. Conklin, Commissioner of Forestry came to DuBois expecting to see the writer and visit the forest. On the way to the State meeting at Foxburg, he wrote June 28th:

"Sorry that we did not meet you. In coming back from Cooksburg, we came over the southern route",

From Dr. Rothrock who was with him came this letter dated July 2.

"I have long wanted to see the Cook tract; the one thing which impressed me most in the part we saw, was that the timber is coming into its prime rather than declining after its prime—quite apart from its timber value and from what it holds of oil and gas, I believe a portion of our primitive forest is of quite as much importance as an historical, educational feature as is the preservation of any other record of earlier times which we gather into museum or preserve in our literature. We gather our remaining wild animals into zoological gardens in order that our children may gain instruction from them. Why not make forest preserving a part of the educational plan? We must take them where we find them for we cannot wait two or three centuries to produce them. With great respect, cordially yours, J. T. Rothrock."

This expression from the man who was recognized as the highest authority on forestry in the country,—the man who was known everywhere as the 'Father of Forestry'—was a welcome

opinion and one which more than ever justified all that had been claimed for the giant project. However, it is not sufficient to decide the Legislature already confronted with a depleted Treasury and dwindling income, and the Bill failed; not because of insufficient support or an indifference on the part of the public and the State, but solely from the lack of finances. The World War was a matter of serious moment in the minds and affairs of all the people; they were wondering when it would end,—and there were those who predicted that the United States would be forced into it.

CHAPTER IX

PRIVATE FINANCE

DuBois, July 17, 1915

MR. A. W. COOK,
Cooksburg, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

As Governor Brumbaugh indicated that he was deeply interested in the preservation of the Cook Forest, and since the Legislature failed to provide means for its purchase—it occurs to me that before you conclude finally to cut down those wonderful trees, that another effort should be made to save them for future generations. I feel that there are a sufficient number of responsible business men and wholesome true Americans in the State of Pennsylvania who would be willing to join together to purchase the property. It is humiliating to think that all of the people together cannot afford to own this splendid investment, yet I am not willing to believe that among her citizens, there are not enough patriotic men with both sentiment and means to provide for the purchase. I understand that Governor Brumbaugh is to be in this territory and I suggest that you invite him to Cooksburg for a conference. You could have interested parties from Pittsburgh and other sections come there to discuss the matter. Kindly let me know what you think of this suggestion.

Yours truly,

M. I. MCCREIGHT

And his reply follows:

Cooksburg, July 23, 1915

"Your favor of a few days ago received. In regard to position of the Cook tract, whatever is done in regard to preserving this timber will have to be done immediately. I suggest you see what people you can and write others to find out whether they would or will interest themselves in matter of helping to buy the property—I am going to Pittsburgh today and will be at the Schenley for a few days.

Yours Respectfully,

A. W. COOK

Chapter X

WILD LIFE LEAGUE

While the writer, backed with active support of the officers and members of the Pennsylvania Conservation Association, was busily pressing the Cook park legislation, a number of Pittsburgh's prominent men, headed by Mr. Liggett formed an organization for state-wide activity to which they gave the name Wild Life League. In his letter dated May 19th Mr. Liggett set forth the aims and objects of the league and asked the writer to become a contributing member and help with building it up to an estimate of fifteen thousand members; it was to hold a big convention in the fall. Quoted from Mr. Liggett's letter of May 19:

"The Wild Life League of Pennsylvania has for its objects the putting together of sportsmen, fishermen and lovers of the out of doors so that a better understanding can he had as to the necessities and popular demand for meeting these necessities, thus making it more possible to procure proper legislation and regulation of matters of conservation"——"The officers and directors are as follows; President, R. T. Brown, Ellwood City; Vice President, Dr. H. M. Beck, Wilkes-Barre; Treasurer, J. C. Southerland, Washington, Pa.; Recording Secretary, John P. Reiff, Norristown; Field Secretary, James B. Sansom, Pittsburgh. Directors; Chas. H. Seaton, Uniontown; S. C. Bowen, Altoona, M. A. Riley, Ellwood City; Dr. E. H. Green, Mill Creek; H. E. Brooks, Pittsburgh; E. A. Weimer, Lebanon and Wayne W. Bleakley, Franklin."

Again on May 29 Mr. Liggett wrote urging attention to his former letter; it was responded to on June 9th with the solicited contribution. This was acknowledged in a letter of length telling of the progress being made in building up the league's membership,—and from it is quoted a paragraph which indicated that he had in mind future help for the Cook Forest matter:

"The League is going to have its annual meeting at Conneaut Lake early in September. That is an awfully good place because there is good fishing and other outdoor opportunities. I have suggested to Mr. Cook that we get together an exhibit in the way of an album, and probably some lantern slides, so that when the meeting takes place we can have the Cook woods illustrated and get the League started to work on it, if possible."

Copy of a statement of the financial condition of the Cook Sons Co., and a draught of a contract shows that a meeting was held at the Seventh Avenue Hotel, Pittsburgh at which it was planned to buy out the interests of T. B. Cook and the two sisters representing the one-half interest in the property. A. W. Cook was to take over their interests and the purchase to be financed by him with the aid of D. L. Taylor and the writer. The memorandum is dated October 28th, 1915.

Mention was made in a former chapter, of the correspondence to inaugurate the Roosevelt Conservation Policy, and furnishing of copies of it to Ex-President Taft. For some unknown reason the letters which show the Taft incident, were misplaced in the file, and they turn up out of order in the October record. As it bears on a matter of national importance, they are inserted here in full:

DuBois, Pa. July 8, 1915

HON. WM. H. TAFT,
New Haven, Conn.
MY DEAR MR. TAFT:

On the train returning from the Bankers Convention at Cape May last month you will recall my promise to send you my file relating to the origin of the Roosevelt Conservation Policy.

Beginning with the first, on September 25, 1906 to Mr. Roosevelt, the letters and replies have been copied and indexed for your convenience to and including the Arbor Day Proclamation of April 16, 1907. A study of the correspondence shows that neither Mr. Roosevelt nor Mr. Pinchot had any serious thought of Conservation as a public question and it seems to prove conclusively that neither of them had in mind making of it a great National Policy until practically forced upon them.

After Pinchot had fully absorbed the idea from the letter of November 6th, of which he writes: "I have thought very carefully over the plan which you proposed"—he evidently presented it to President Roosevelt as his own—the meeting of Governors was called, and proclamations for withdrawal of timbered public lands agreed upon, and many of them issued. But the campaign of education called for a response from Mr. Roosevelt to my invitation to speak in the Public Schools of DuBois. Mr. Pinchot diplomatically avoided informing Mr. Roosevelt of the existence of the invitation and letters,—by proposing the Arbor Day proclamations instead. Subsequent correspondence and relations with Pinchot on this and other subjects fully justified me in this conclusion.

As I told you when discussing the subject, it is now a matter of great regret that I was so indifferent as to let the matter pass when public agitation was so violent. If I had furnished you this information at the time of Pinchot's dismissal it might have been of value to you. If it proves of any interest to you now I shall be glad; if of sufficient historic value to justify your making use of the original letters they may serve to correct a mistaken public understanding. With great regard,

Yours truly,

M. I. McCREIGHT

WILLIAM H. TAFT
New Haven, Conn.
Pointe-au-Pic, Canada July 12th, 1915

MY DEAR MR. McCREIGHT:

I thank you sincerely for remembering your kind promise to send me the correspondence between you and Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Pinchot on the subject of conservation. I shall put it in my file for future use.

Sincerely yours,

WM. H. TAFT

The initial meeting of the Wild Life League was held according to schedule. A considerable crowd gathered at the Conneaut Lake park and enjoyed the fishing and boating and held formal meetings and passed resolutions; a small audience assembled to hear speeches and see the lantern slides displayed showing the beauties of the Cook woods. Here general and special committees were appointed to work for the upbuilding of the League with a view to consolidating all sportsmen's associations into one state-wide organization—the Wild Life League.

One of these special committees was charged with the duty of continuing the effort to save the Cook Forest.

It was established to carry out a resolution of the Board of Directors previously adopted as follows:

"Whereas, Pennsylvania has within its boundaries a natural attraction in the Cook Estate, which will shortly be of National importance as the 'Big Tree Park' of the eastern United States, if it is made possible to preserve its forests; with which object in view, the property has been heretofore investigated by the direction of the State for the purpose of a General State Park and forest and game preserve, for the use and benefit of all the people, and under authority of such investigation the project has been recommended for such purposes, but by reason of insufficient revenues, the state has failed to acquire title to it, and there is imminent danger of the big trees on said estate being cut down and marketed, therefore,

Be it Resolved, That the Wild Life League shall endeavor, in conjunction with the State and National Conservation organizations and individuals, to form an association, or organization for the purchase of Cook's Forest by the state, and to that end, hereby authorizes the President of the League to appoint a Committee of three of its members, with authority and direction to cooperate with committees of other associations and with individuals in preparing and carrying out plans for acquiring title to and control of, said Cook estate; to preserve its great natural attractions and usefulness to the people under such proper regulations as the association acquiring it may adopt."

No better statement of the activities planned for that committee can now be made than to incorporate the letter of the Chairman addressed to the President and members under date of November 3 as follows:

November 3, 1915

MR. R. T. BROWN, President,
Wild Life League,
Ellwood City, Pa.

DEAR SIR:

The Wild League at its annual meeting appointed a committee to cooperate with committees from other and similar organizations for acquiring the Cook Forest. That Committee consists of the following named:

M. I. McCreight, Thos. Liggett, J. H. Nicholson, H. H. Brosius, Hon. H. I. Wilson, Hon. H. H. Arnold, Hon. E. A. Weimer, Hon. Jos. E. Phillips.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors the subject was dis-

cussed and the committee urged to act. Accordingly your chairman together with the Field Secretary and certain members interested in the work devoted most of the past week to meetings with the owners of the property and the discussion of plans for the taking over of the property by the Wild Life League.

During these interviews it was found that negotiations have been under way for some time for disposing of the timber by the Cooks,—and in fact these negotiations are substantially closed with parties who will manufacture the same without delay.

One of the suggested schemes was to sell sufficient Life Memberships in the League to raise the fund of $600,000.00 required, which would mean 24,000 such memberships, and it was thought that the more than three thousand members might each agree to dispose of eight on the average in which case it would be concluded wholly by and within the League's membership. This plan at first glance might seem impracticable and probably would not succeed, as many of the League members would not cooperate, but with the aid of other organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, the Daughters of the Revolution, The Forestry Association, The Conservation Association, and very many prominent individuals who would subscribe liberally, the project appears less formidable. Two such individuals volunteer subscriptions amounting to $15,000 is a beginning.

It was also suggested that the memberships so sold could be secured in the form of first mortgage bonds on the property or in the nature of preferred stock of the League, so that in the event of the State taking it over in the future, the funds would be repaid to these membership or bond holders. Such bonds or membership certificates would be non interest-bearing.

As the Cooks are determined to bring the matter to a conclusion without further delay and are well on with their plans to sell the property, it is imperative that something be done promptly if this magnificant estate is to be saved.

As chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose, I submit such suggested plans as have so far been made, for the careful consideration of the members, with the request that each reply promptly, advising for or against a full meeting of the committee for going forward with this or some plan, to be held within the next weeks.

Yours truly,

Copies to:

Thos. Liggett, 1st National Bank, Pittsburgh
J. H. Nicholson, Carnegie Bldg., Pittsburgh
H. H. Brosius, Brookville, Pa.
H. I. Wilson, Big Run, Pa.
H. H. Arnold, Clarion, Pa.
Jos. E. Phillips, Clearfield, Pa.
R. T. Brown, President Wild Life League, Ellwood City, Pa.

CHAPTER XI

NINETEEN FIFTEEN

Now begins a new kind of campaign. Mr. Liggett and his associates had started what seemed to be destined to grow into a large and powerful agent for good in handling state-wide matters of a non-political nature. Buying the Cook forest was one of the things the Wild Life League might properly do. The directors had adopted such a policy and formed a committee to work to that end; the Chairman sent out official letters to the members setting forth the call to duty.

The only response to that call came from John H. Nicholson. His letter dated November 8 is one of such sound common sense and logic that it is well worth the reader's time to give it more than a glance.

MR. M. I. MCCREIGHT,
DuBois, Pa.

1712 Frick Building,
Pittsburgh, Pa., Nov. 8, 1915

DEAR SIR:

I am in receipt of your favor of November 3rd, giving a brief outline of the proposed plan of co-operation of the Wild Life League and other organizations to raise $600,000 for acquiring of the Cook Forest tract.

You have requested my consideration and advice on this subject, and I have carefully read your letter with a view to passing judgment. My conclusions in brief are as follows:—The Wild Life League is a new organization and not well advertised throughout all portions of the state, and, while the future of the League is very bright, it will be some years before they have identified themselves with men of sufficient means to carry such a project to a successful conclusion. The League during the next few years will have a great deal of publicity work to do, and this work will have to be concentrated on building up and thoroughly establishing its own organization. If the League were to take up a proposition of the size and extent of the purchase of the Cook Forest, I believe it would, in a measure, militate against the growth of the League itself in so far as members are concerned, and that is the vital part of its future existence. There is a serious question raised in my mind as to whether the League as an organization would get

very far with the plan of actively participating in raising of money for the purchase of the Cook Forest.

Personally, I would very much like to see the Cook Forest preserved and handed down to posterity as a State Park. My first inclination after reading your letter was to approve the plan suggested, but after more thorough consideration I have definitely come to the conclusion, in my own mind, that the plan as outlined,—in so far as the League itself is concerned,—would not succeed.

I assume, of course, you want my business judgment in the matter and not a sentimental one. It would be unfortunate if a scheme of this kind were started and not carried out to a successful conclusion. If the plan would fail it would only result in complications, not only for the Cook heirs, but for the League itself. I have not gone into details in this matter, as I assume you are not particularly interested in same, but only in my conclusions. Referring specifically to the last paragraph of your letter, asking if I advise for a full meeting of the Committee: in view of the opinion given above, I do not see how it would accomplish anything. However, if you desire to call a meeting of the Committee and I receive sufficient notice in advance and am in town, I shall be glad to attend.

Yours very truly,

J. H. NICHOLSON

MR. JOHN F. SHAW: DuBois, Pa.November 22nd, 1915

DEAR SIR:

At a meeting of the Directors of the Wild Life League of Pennsylvania held at Pittsburgh, Saturday the 19th, the Secretary Mr. Sansom, made a report on the subject of the Cook Forest which the Committee had referred to him, in regard to Mr. Harry Davis managing a campaign for funds through the African animal pictures.

Mr. Sansom stated that Mr. Davis was enthusiastic on such a plan and would gladly contribute his organization work as well as all his commissions in the State of Pennsylvania to further the project; his idea was that much of the advertising as well as rentals could be had free for so splendid a purpose. I also understand that the Lady McKenzie Co., would contribute its interest in all Pennsylvania if the League were to lend its cooperation to the plan. Directors of the League appreciate, however, the magnitude of the undertaking;—the large amount of work and expense involved in raising more than half a million dollars, but if the Cook Estate owners can be prevailed upon to cancel the present arrangement to sell, and will grant the option for the timber and land, reserving the gas and oil, and permit the League to assume the mortgage now on the premises amounting to $250,000 we would be required to raise only $350,000 now to get title. The mortgage could be discharged through the next six or eight years it has to run, by the League. These terms, I think, could be obtained if we could be assured that the League would undertake to raise the money. I feel confident, since the last meeting, that it would follow Mr. Davis' recommendations in this respect. Mr. Sansom told of the claim resting against the pictures, which Mr. Davis seemed to think, would have to be discharged before they could be used, and this is a

bar to getting a prompt decision of the men of the League to go forward on Mr. Davis' suggestion. You stated that you had discussed with Mr. Joyce his release of the claim, and that he was willing to turn them over for use on payment of a stated sum and costs.—I think you should see Mr. Joyce and have him properly understand the facts, when he should be willing to cooperate,—if Mr. Joyce will let Mr. Davis put the plan into immediate operation and take the first earnings in liquidation of his claims, no doubt his debt would be paid promptly, and the League could soon begin to receive some benefit.

Yours truly,

M. I. McCREIGHT

DuBois, Pa.
November, 23rd, 1915

MR. JOHN F. SHAW,
DuBois, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

In reply to your request for definite suggestion about what Mr. Joyce might be desired to do to further the plans of the Wild Life League in preserving the Cook forest it would be the purpose of the League to buy the entire tract excepting the gas and oil, and hold the same until the state can devise means to raise the revenues to warrant the appropriation for it when it would be turned over to the state at its cost for the use and benefit of the public forever as a forest reserve and the propagation of wild life. This the state has been willing to do at all times and would have done at the last session except for the lack of funds.

Even in the event the state does not purchase the property, it would still be preserved and maintained by the League for similar uses and benefits since the funds being raised by popular subscription it could not be otherwise.

As it is impossible to assemble the Committee to formally discuss with you the details of any arrangement you might make with Mr. Joyce he will have to determine his action from what you will be able to tell him.

The Committee is composed of the following gentlemen: Mr. R. T. Brown, U. S. Steel Co., Ellwood City, Mr. John H. Nicholson, U. S. Steel Co., Frick Building, Pittsburgh; Mr. Thos. Liggett, Real Estate, Pittsburgh; Hon H. H. Brocius, Hon. Henry I. Wilson, Hon. Jos. E. Phillips, members of the Legislature, Senator H. H. Arnold and Hon. E. A. Weimer, of Lebanon, Pa. Mr. Brown is president of the Wild Life League. I am chairman of the above committee as well as chairman of the Forestry Committee of the League.

The Committee on the preservation of the Cook forest was made by special resolution at the annual state meeting at Conneaut Lake; for your information I am also an originator of and member of the Executive Committee and Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Conservation Association and you have seen the evidence that I am the originator of the so-called Roosevelt Conservation Policies.

My own mental picture of Mr. Joyce is that he is a big man, and big men see and do big things, and the saving of the Cook trees is one

In Which Trout Abound

of the big things in this generation to be done, and if Mr. Joyce could understand the real facts as they exist now he could see a rare opportunity.

With his aid and cooperation the forest can be saved; as it now stands he must be the Big Man.

Yours truly,

M. I. McCREIGHT

Then came the banquet at the Monongahela House in the early part of December. All the directors of the League and other sportsmen's organizations officials and their members and invited guests were expected to be present for a general conference, and to decide on what to do with Mr. Davis' plan for raising funds through the then noted African Game pictures held for debts, by Wm. B. Joyce, President of the National Life Insurance Co. These films had been made in the Big Game district of British East Africa by E. M. Shelly noted big game hunter, under the supervision of Grace McKenzie; the capital for the expedition, having been advanced to a considerable extent, by Mr. Joyce. Shaw had interested Mr. Davis in considering the film-show as he (Davis) then was one of the country's leading theatre managers; and just when a pre-view of the famous picture was being started, Mr. Davis met the writer, Frank Hahne and W. H. Cannon in front of his theater and invited the three to come inside and see the film run. Mr. Davis introduced the owners; 'Lady' McKenzie and the noted Shelly, and the exhibition proceeded. Mr. Davis incidentally remarked to them that the writer was the "the Cook Forest Man" and told them of the plans to preserve the big trees for a public park,—and then followed their suggestion that, through the exhibition of the wonderful pictures,

Mr. Davis could readily raise the money to take over the Cook tract, in cooperation with the Wild Life League. The Monongahela House meeting, therefore, had among other matters of importance, the proposition for using the African picture, through Mr. Davis, to help finance their programs then under discussion for acquiring the Cook tract for the public. The big dinner was a great success; everyone was enthusiastic on seeing the big-game film and urged going forward with the plan as outlined by Sansom in his speech at the banquet table. He told of the $36,000 which had to be raised to get the picture released by Joyce; the answering sentiment was that it could be raised.

Meantime Shaw was trying to get Joyce's consent to release the film on liberal terms; but he wrote that Joyce was adamant; only the cash would be considered. A letter from Shelly, who had accompanied Shaw to negotiate with Joyce, told the same story, and he asked "how much money each member would subscribe to a fund to buy Joyce out"—as that was the only way to success.—"Mr. Brown thinks we should get the New York end of the business settled up at once."

From A. W. Cook: "I absolutely think this the last chance to save the trees from the axe; this meeting (the Dinner of December 4) will have to show up facts and results and strictly business to save the trees".

From McFarland: "Mr. Elliott was in my office yesterday;—he had been trying to see the Governor but, as in case of most matters that are of real public importance, it is found impossible. The Governor is seeing anybody, I think, who has an

axe to grind and who can grind an axe, but we who are thinking only of Pennsylvania are of no importance. I should like very much to attend the meeting of which you speak,—but I simply cannot be there.—Don't you think, after all, that somebody else ought to do some of these things? You are at least as capable as I am, if not more so, and I know Mr. Farquhar would justify me in assuming his perrogatives and naming you to make the big noise." (This letter is dated December 2 and refers, evidently, to an invitation to the December 4 dinner).

As chairman of the League Forest Committee, a letter dated December 14 was addressed to L. H. Rogers, Attorney, Lady Mackenzie Film Company, New York as follows:

"After a conference with yourself and Mr. Joyce in which the —raising of funds through the Wild Life League in conjunction with Mr. Harry Davis of Pittsburgh, by the use of the African Game pictures, I am led to believe that Mr. Joyce's cooperation would be extended. Further, our conference with Mr. Straus, who I understand represents the larger creditors, and his assurance they would cooperate in the furtherance of this plan, provided the Wild Life League would make a definite proposition to purchase the accounts payable, amounting to $9,218.24. We are assured that $3,500 in cash will accomplish the purchase of these accounts, and that the remaining provisional indebtedness, such as officers' salaries and the contingent liability of the territorial rights will be in control of Mr. Davis and will not require any immediate outlay, and may be compromised at nominal terms at a later date. I am to understand that the attorneys representing the Creditors' Committee, together with yourself, will work in harmony and complete the negotiations so that Mr. Davis may have full charge and control of the entire property of the corporation not later than January 15, 1916.

As the representative of the Committee I would be willing to recommend the raising of this fund by the League, provided, that we are assured on the part of Mr. Joyce, that he will cooperate with the movement and permit Mr. Davis to work out the affairs of the company; —liquidating, of course, the indebtedness represented by the note of Mr. Joyce himself. We should have assurance that an extension of time will be granted beyond the maturity of his note in case the proceeds of the business have not fully met his obligation."

DuBois, Pa.
December 16, 1915

HON. WILLIAM A. CLARK,
Exchange Place, New York.
DEAR SENATOR CLARK:

"After our interview at the Pennsylvania Society Dinner regarding the Cook Park, and your suggestion that you would be pleased to look into the matter;—I left with Mr. Dodson a large album of photographs and sufficient data to satisfy you as to whether or not you would be interested in the project; am confident that when you are in possession of all the facts, you will be willing to lend your support to this movement."

Yours truly,

M. I. MCCREIGHT

From T. B. Cook, December 20, 1915:

DEAR MR. MCCREIGHT:

"Since our meeting in Brookville the other night, I have thought of your bond proposition with the view of the Wild Life League contemplating taking over the property. The more I think of it the more feasible, or likely, the proposition seems to be;—while I was not in the humor—to subscribe anything toward the picture business, since further considering, it looks pretty narrow-gauged on my part not to help go through with it, so I have made up my mind to contribute what you think might be right for me to do.—I want you to write to J. H. Cook, 207 Lumberman's Building, Portland, Oregon, Mrs. Ida M. Calvin, 2642 Kenwood Avenue, Los Angeles, California, Mrs. C. C. Ross, Clarion, stating to them what you propose to do."

Yours very respectfully,

T. B. COOK

DuBois, Pa.
December 20, 1915

MR. R. T. BROWN,
Ellwood, Pa.
DEAR MR. BROWN:

"I saw Sansom, Nicholson and Phillips as they passed through on their way to the hunting camp, and Mr. Sansom asked me to forward to you the subscription which we started for the African pictures and Harry Davis. The paper which I enclose contains subscriptions for $2,500 and I have been unable to get a single moment to try to get a name. I enclose the same to you together with copies of agreement,—to be executed between the Lady Mackenzie Film Co., and the League and Harry Davis.—Mr. Sansom said you told him to write Attorney Lewis H. Rogers accepting the proposition of the film company. I think we now have succeeded in gathering the loose ends of this difficult proposition together in such way that it ought to go forward without further delay."

Yours truly,

M. I. MCCREIGHT, Chairman Com.

Many letters and sheafs of telegrams clutter the file,—and relate mostly to details and technicalities of the complicated situation between Joyce and the Film Company,—each day turning up some new difficulty or revision of program by the various attorneys connected with the negotiations. Copies of letters of December 23rd show that the contracts had been finally put in for execution between the League, the Film Co., and Mr. Davis; but Sansom advised that "men who would have to be interested"—had found fault with some of the provisions in the proposed bonds to be issued to take over the Cook tract,—and the funds to be raised to secure the pictures for Davis, instead of being raised and paid in by subscriptions, ought to be borrowed in bank loan.

And so, like always happens in a many-man movement for the general good,—when it came to signing on the dotted line there was a sudden drop in enthusiasm; delay was popular; a meeting of the directors must be called; it was called for the 28. At this meeting objections to the Cook contract and bond-issue seemed to have disappeared but to obviate the need for signing up for the sum needed to release the pictures viz,—$9,218.—so that Mr. Davis could begin earning money, a resolution was passed by the Board authorizing the President and Treasurer to borrow $10,000 for that purpose. There was a unanimous vote for the resolution to borrow, but then the writer suggested that no bank would make such a loan on the unsecured note of the League, and would require an under-writing of it by responsible men. This underwriting was prepared, dated December

29 and bears the following signatures only; Frank K. Brown, Brookville, $1000, M. I. McCreight, $1000, J. H. Pentz of DuBois, $1000, C. C. Hoover, $1000, Jas. B. Sansom, $500. In a letter from Sansom dated January 2 he says that he had secured President Brown for $1000, and director Riley for $500.—which with his own pledge of $500 would make a total of $2,000 from Pittsburgh; and he hoped that all the details would be completed for final submission to the Board at next meeting January 8.

In my letter to Mr. Rogers following his telephone call on January 14th is quoted:

"Mr. Sansom called me to know what progress was being made—after our talk;—I told him you were writing Mr. Davis fully. Mr. Sansom agreed to see Mr. Davis tomorrow after the receipt of your legal brief;—to get his agreement to go forward with the matter. If Mr. Davis agrees to proceed—it would be necessary to buy the accounts—which would require raising of the funds first;—we felt that would be a short job, but—should not be paid over until the discharge of the Receiver—and have Mr. Davis appointed instead."

This letter was followed by one on the 17th to Rogers quoting from which one may see new complications arising:

"I told Mr. Sansom to see Davis and learn from him just what the understanding was as to proceeding to raise the funds to release the pictures, and if there was any change as to Mr. Davis taking charge of them. Mr. Sansom was unable to see Mr. Davis. This morning I got in touch with him and learned the result of his meeting with Davis after you had met him. Sansom gave me to understand that you had agreed with Joyce to extend his note for one year by endorsement of a responsible party, and by intimation, that I was to be that endorser. I told him that I had no such understanding;—later I got Mr. Davis on the 'phone; he told me he had talked with you while in New York, and that you had given him to understand that such an arrangement had been agreed to or would be agreed to.—While I would do all I can, as I have heretofore always done to get the matter out of trouble, it would be entirely unreasonable for me to agree to make myself responsible for so great a sum, for the benefit of the public and Mr. Joyce. Mr. Davis said he expected to be in New York again Wednesday,—and come to some definite conclusion and definite understanding about what was to be done."

Under date of January 30 formal letters were sent out in an appeal for subscriptions to the proposed bond issue to finance the purchase of the Cook tract. And there the Wild Life League's great project died a natural death. Nicholson's prophecy came true.

The World War was taking the attention of the Captains of Industry, and the more prominent businessmen and manufacturers. The months of the year remaining, was mostly devoted to holding the Cook tract owners from cutting and manufacturing the timber; there was much dissatisfaction manifested amongst the heirs about the way the legislature had behaved and caused them so much loss and inconvenience. However, the financing that had been furnished to carry the property, was, together with the argument that timber would increase in value, sufficient to keep the continued influence of A. W. Cook favorable to waiting. And more than all else, the public clamor for the completion of the park project, was growing louder every day; more and more the people insisted the park scheme be concluded; more than five years had passed since they had approved its purchase for public use, and they demanded it be done. There was assurance from every front, that the next Legislature would be forced to complete the negotiations, if only the Cooks would wait. Once more they waited.

At the fall annual meeting of the Wild Life League, the resolution presented by the writer stands for the best description of the situation that can be found in the files of that time. Excerpts on the Cook Forest matter are quoted:

"Last year the Convention appointed a Committee to find a way for its purchase, and, during the winter some progress was made through tentative plans laid before your Board of Directors from time to time, and approved. Complications entered into negotiations and delays occurred, until the option on the property expired; as the State revenues were sadly short it was impossible to get cooperation from the Legislature, and the effort was abandoned until a more opportune time.

"The property is still in its virgin state and some prompt and efficient action might yet save it. Opinion throughout the State seems to be unanimous for preserving this wonderful estate; every organization, association and league, having for its object the general public good, has endorsed the project;—the best authorities and men of prominence favor it; the Women's clubs, Boy Scouts and out-door folks hope for it, sportsmen everywhere are for it; no influence can be found against it that counts. Dr. Rothrock, the pioneer in forestry writes; 'I think we are all agreed the State should have it'. Is the Wild Life League big enough to call on the next legislature for the appropriation, and secure it?

"Dr. Elliott, recently appointed with special comment on his recognized qualification on forest matters, has been the champion of the Cook forest purchase for years; he says it would be 'nothing short of a crime to permit its destruction'. J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association says 'public sentiment is for it almost, if not wholly, unanimous'.

"Heretofore the work of trying to save the big pines has rested upon one or two, or at best, a few men,—who have devoted their time and money and a prodigious amount of work, without hope of return. Such a project is one of great magnitude; too much for a few men to carry when based wholly upon philanthropy. The Committee recognizes the importance of a prompt and vigorous move; and probably no other organization could exert more influence upon the legislature than can the thousands of members of the League".

And so the coming of the next session of legislature was awaited with more than usual interest. Meantime societies, clubs and branch leagues kept the park question alive by discussions, speeches and the passing of resolutions. The State Conservation Association was, as always, the leader in active support of Cook Forest legislation. The meeting of its Executive Board at the home of Bishop Darlington, Harrisburg, on March 22, 1917 passed a series of resolutions in aid of the Governor's programs for consolidating the various departments dealing with fish, game and forestry,—

and finally concluded these resolutions with: "That we recommend the immediate purchase by the State, of the Cook lands".

A letter dated Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia, from A. W. Cook shows in what state of mind he was in, and the trouble he was having to keep the trees alive:

"Major: I will be in this section until Sunday evening or Monday A.M.—then stop at Harrisburg for couple days. In regard to the Cook park proposition, if anything is going to be done it must be started. I held the thing off yesterday as our people seemed to be bound to pass a resolution to give other people an option for purchase; this I cannot hold only a very few days as another meeting will be called perhaps in two weeks. Went to the Wild Life League meeting Saturday for a few minutes only three there; Sansom, Brown, and other parties do not remember name. They did not know anything; neither did they know whether Magee or Denny O'Neil had seen the Governor; did not have anything encouraging to say. Brown talked a little of the idea of having the next annual meeting of the league at Cooksburg. I told him they would have to come prepared to take care of their own gang. I did not say anything to discourage them about the timber. But this is absolutely the last legislature that will get a whack at buying. I don't know what about my going to see the Governor. Perhaps it would be the worst thing to do. But our people have to know that there are good prospects of the State's buying. To delay longer now is the last chance to act. Wire me Commonwealth Hotel whether you are coming down, on receipt of this. Legislature meets next Monday, 12th. This I consider the last warning. Respectfully, A. W. Cook."
"Over; You might as well; but if you are on the ground we might be able to satisfy ourselves that we have done our damndest."

The file contains a tentative draught of the bill; it provided for 7500 acres and included two tracts lying within the boundry of the Cook lands; there were no reservations; and a Commission of five was to be appointed by the Governor to administer the park. Early in May the newspapers began a campaign; the North American of May 6 had special articles and photo illustrations; the Pittsburgh Gazette-Times, Post and Dispatch all had very impressive illustrations and display matter insisting on prompt action by the legislature,

—indeed nearly if not all the papers took up the fight in dead earnest. The Dispatch of that date says: "House Bill 1469, the Cook Forest purchase bill, is in the Appropriations Committee of the House, and will probably be subject to a hearing next week; high hopes of passage, and assurance is now being given that if the money can possibly be found to provide for it, the Bill will be passed."

War was declared in April; the writer was "drafted" by the President to serve in the Selective Draft system for raising the army, the heavy responsibility of which office prevented personal work on the Cook Bill at Harrisburg. However, Farquhar and McFarland for the Conservation Association and Sansom with the aid of Liggett did what was possible to further the Bill's progress to the point where it was widely predicted of sure passage; the House voted for it 163, with but 12 votes against it,—and we were sure of the support of Senators, Penrose, Crow, Vare and other leaders, as a consequence there was joy in the ranks of the promoters.

Here was substantial proof of the popularity of the forest project amongst the people of the State; their direct representatives had voted almost unanimously for the bill. But there was yet the Senate to hear from; and there were sinister influences at work there. Big Politics was then in power, and Big Politics had not been 'seen' to the satisfaction of the party dictators,—and so the Bill was held in the Senate; the Chairman, Buckman, seemed unwilling to heed the voice of the people; pleas and arguments of friends of the measure were of no avail notwithstanding the

avowed favor and approval of the actual leaders. The Bill hung fire in the hands of the Buckman Committee until the adjournment of the Session. Again the writer was told that the mistake had been made in not employing a 'special attorney to grease the skids'—but he was, as always, unconvinced.

A quotation from a letter from Liggett throws a ray of light on that, "Tuesday night, when I heard what had happened, knowing that the Senate would be in session all night, I sent a rush telegram to Crow as follows:

"A real estate man here named Young wrote Cook assuring him the Cook Park would go through if he was protected in commission for himself and the party with the pull. He was turned down. Now I understand the Park bill is smothered. Is there any way you can smoke it out? The Senate should know this so they can learn whether they have a Judas in their ranks or not.

"The week before the Senate adjourned Frank Lanahan got a telegram from Senator Penrose stating that he would do all that he could to help the Bill through—the people are going to know as nearly as I can tell them, just what kind of a bunch we have at Harrisburg."

And so the 1917 session died with the Cook Forest Bill, a very live 'corpse' still on the operating table.

The World War was taking our young men; it was interfering with our agriculture and industry; training camps were preparing for the grand expedition to battle in foreign lands; few had time or the inspiration to renew the fight for the park project. The Cooks suddenly learned that the demand for lumber had shifted south and west.

War in Europe took all the time and attention of the writer; as clerk of Local Board No. 2 his duties kept him days including Sundays, and nights to midnight, in the war-office. A. W. Cook, as the owner of large tracts of western timber

lands, was occupied in that field, as was the brother J. H. Cook also a western lumberman, while T. B. Cook, another member of the firm was busily occupied in other directions, so that the whole Cook park project lay dormant through the year 1918.

Liggett was a leader in the Liberty Bond campaigns using all his time and ability in the patriotic war service,—as were most of all the other park boosters; no one had time or disposition to abandon war work to revive the forest scheme, which to conclude now, was impractical if not altogether impossible.

Chapter XI

NINETEEN NINETEEN

November saw the end of the war and was followed by more confusion than the war itself if disruption of business and human relationship could make it so. Months followed before any move was made toward reviving the forest plans. However, our good old friend from York, was on the job as usual. His letter of July 2nd shows that he had been in consultation with the Governor, now a new one, in the person of Hon. W. C. Sproul, former senator, and who had always been a hearty supporter of the Cook project.

Mr. Farquhar's letter, together with the reply of the Governor are inserted herein.

M. I. McCreight, Esq., York, Pa., July 2, 1919.
DuBois, Pa.

My dear Major McCreight:

I enclose you a letter from our Governor (which please kindly return when through with it,) which I am sure will please you. You will see he is in favor of the Cook tract. Am in correspondence with him about that, and we are going to make it an issue for the next legislature. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but you have held on so long that I am sure you will not give it up when prospect of success is approaching.

Am just off to the Pacific Coast for a few weeks' visit among my old friends there. Expect to be back about the middle of August.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) A. B. Farquhar

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Executive Department
The Governor Harrisburg

June 30th, 1919

Mr. A. B. Farquhar,
York, Pa.

Dear Mr. Farquhar:

Yours in regard to the Cook Forest is at hand, as well as your later letter. I am very much interested in the Cook Forest proposition

and we tried hard to find means to purchase it. For some reason or other there is great opposition to the plan in the particular neighborhood and with our financial margin very narrow the Appropriation Committee could not see its way to take up the purchase this year.

I left Harrisburg on Friday for home and am absolutely played out and will not be back in Harrisburg until about the 7th or 8th of July, when I expect to remain there pretty constantly for a time until I get the legislation disposed of.

I hope you have a nice trip to the Coast and will look forward to seeing you when you get back. I agree with you fully regarding the attitude of some of the leaders of our party toward the League of Nations.

With regards, I am,
Very sincerely,
(Signed) WM. C. SPROUL

The latter part of 1919 and the year 1920 were strenuous times. The deflation period was on; loans of financial institutions were ordered liquidated; farmers and stockmen were the first victims of the financial squeeze enforced by the Federal Reserve Board and the banks. The Government had expended fabulous sums in propaganda to drive the farmers and cattlemen to raise more food,—more and more food, in the form of meats, grains, fats and leather, to win the war.

Patriots of the front ranks always, these folks obeyed manfully; they accepted the freely-granted credits of the banks; loans inspired by the banks, the Government and the Federal Reserve Board and banks,—to buy more land, to raise more grain; to hurry on and increase production,—so that we could win the war. They won the war!

But, now that the war was over,—and before post-war adjustments could be made,—these army-subsistence-providers, were called upon to settle; the credit machinery was suddenly reversed; the giant, bank-owned Federal Reserve System,—now no longer being fed on federal funds,—became

a colossal Collection Agency,—on its own account.

The panic of 1920 and its flood of wreckage was comparable only, to the wreck and ruin of the war itself. Nearly all of the thirty million people who toiled on farms and ranches hard and faithfully to maintain the Military, and to feed the starving Europeans, were ruthlessly sacrificed. Hundreds of banks failed and there was gloom in the grain and cattle country.

The writer made a tour of the devastated west (1920) covering the northern tier of states to the coast and back over the central section. The havoc wrought by the sudden, unwise and wholly unnecessary, forcing of these war-expanded debts, was pathetic to see. It was one more of many of America's needless catastrophes.

Governor Sproul had put off the Cook tract purchase for the 1919 session, but promised to join in a serious effort to put it over at the next session. (See letter to Farquhar).

However, there was doubt in the mind of the writer, as well as in the minds of the Cooks, after so many discouragements; they had so often been 'tipped off' by the knowing ones, that there must be something put in the political 'kitty' before the Bill for so large a sum could be expected to pass.

The 1921 Session was well under way; there had been no Cook Forest Bill offered; members of the House and Senate wondered why, but the Cooks had been busy with other things,—A. W. had sold some of his western holdings—had bought out troublesome associates, and he was not now so pressed for action,—and the timber

values were likely to increase, and the forest continued to grow; gas too, was more valuable and production increasing.

EXTENDING OVER HUNDREDS OF ACRES COOK FOREST IS PENNSYLVANIA'S ONLY REMAINING VIRGIN TIMBER

Chapter XIII

SPROUL EXPERIENCES

The writer was in Harrisburg to secure some data relating to state roads, the promotion of which he was interested as Secretary of a local road association. After completing the errand at the office of the Highway Chief, considerable time was remaining until his train was due. To fill in the time a visit was made to the House, then in session. At once several of the Cook forest supporters gathered around to ask why there was no Cook Park Bill; the reply to which was, in effect, that there was no use trying to get a bill through when there was no profit in it for anyone; it had been tried many times, always with the same result,—and they were through trying.

Lest the reader may not remember, it happened that Gifford Pinchot was now the Commissioner of Forestry in the Sproul Administration; appointed to prevent interference with bigger party politics and politicians, it was said. His office was in the opposite end of the capitol—upper floor. With this explanation we revert to what was going on back of the rail in the House chamber, where the crowd was increasing about the writer to learn why the Cook forest matter was not before them. Finding that there was no legislative move toward reviving the long-years' campaign to save the big trees, there was general consternation amongst the faithful legislators; they insisted that the forest must be taken over and said that everything was in readiness now to pass the measure; there was no

doubt whatever that it would succeed this time, practically unanimously; they had canvassed the House and Senate and said they were sure of success this time.

Asked if Forest Commissioner Pinchot would favor it, the members replied that he would, and that the Governor would see to its successful outcome in any event; but, one member interjected; "Let's go up and see Pinchot right now"—and several more members were called to join in the visit at the Commissioner's office upstairs. When the delegation reached Mr. Pinchot's office there was standing room only for them and they lined up around the walls, told their errand and demanded to know where he stood on the Cook park matter.

The genial official rose from his chair and raised his arms by way of emphasis and declared that he was "for the Cook Forest park,—provided the Governor favored it"—he would go along with the Governor,—"Yes sir, gentlemen, I am for the forests everytime". It was satisfactory to the delegation,—and now they said they would go direct to the Governor's office and settle the whole thing while they were together,—and the Commissioner must go right along with them,—and he agreed. The delegation filed out of the office,—twenty or more,—the writer last but one, with Pinchot bringing up the rear. They filled the Governor's ante-room, waiting the few minutes for the dismissal of a conference in which the Governor was then engaged.

The long line passed through the door of the Governor's private office,—all but Pinchot. Just

as the writer stepped over the threshold, Pinchot suddenly left the line and disappeard; he was not with the delegation when it came to face the Governor. However, the rest of the party lined up around the wall and a spokesman asked the Governor where he stood regarding the Cook Forest plan; he told him the men who always been for it, were still for it and they had everything set to pass the bill; and now they demanded to know if he would go along. He declared unequivocally and with emphasis that he was for taking over the Cook forest; as he had always had been. Then turning to the writer, he said: "Mac. why can't we get Cooks to let us take this big property in sections so that it will not take so much money all at one time, to pay for it?—Suppose we take over, say 2000 acres this year and then the rest in pieces each year until it is all taken; we can get the section with big trees first so as to be sure of saving them and thus, by dividing the property, it will be easily met with say,—$250,000 or $300,000 each term;—suppose you go back and get them to make that kind of a proposition and we will get right behind it and put it over". The writer replied that he did not know whether such a plan could be worked out as that would involve measuring out the exact acreage and estimating the stumpage on it and fixing a price at stumpage rates for the timber which might stand on the acreage selected. "Very good" said the Governor,—"that is just the way to go about it; is that satisfactory to you gentlemen?'' A member replied for the delegation, saying "Yes, just so we get it and get it now." The

writer told the Governor he would consult with the owners and try to get such a proposition for him. The story of the interview was repeated to A. W. Cook; he was urged to give the Governor such an option, and try once more to see what came of it; he was not enthusiastic about it.

Two or three weeks later Cook drove to the writer's home and handed to him the option formulated by his attorney, C. Z. Gordon. After examining it carefully and finding that it complied exactly with the Governor's request; leaving the selection of acreage entirely to the Governor, and fixing a reasonable market price for timber of the various merchantable kinds, to be estimated by the Governor's own expert cruisers; providing a nominal charge for the land,—and no charge whatever for the small timber. Mr. Cook proposed that the writer take it to Harrisburg and deliver it to the Governor in person. This was no time to protest, and so the trip was made; the Governor said he would attend to it at once.

Two days later a letter came from the Governor acknowledging receipt of the option and saying that he had referred it to the Forestry Commission for consideration and advice.

Two more days went by; a telegram from Mr. Pinchot to the writer asking his presence at a meeting of the Forestry Commission at ten o'clock next day. Another trip to Harrisburg. The Board was in session; and the Chairman said: "Mr. McCreight we would like you to tell us about the Cook Forest proposition". Before the Chairman, on the table, lay the option which was delivered but a few days before to the Governor the writer

replied: "Mr. Pinchot, there in front of you is the Cook option; it contains all I know about the proposition that is now before the Legislature; it is in the name of the Governor; it contains exactly the terms and conditions which the Governor dictated. If you will read it to your Board it will explain better than I can, just what you are to consider by request of the Governor. As to describing the physical features of the forest itself, you have a far better authority at the table beside you in the person of Dr. Rothrock. He can tell you about it." "Yes, yes, that's so" Pinchot replied. "Suppose you come back here at noon and we will then tell you what our verdict is."

Having already had the pledge of Pinchot to the deleagtion from the House and Senate, and also the written approval and endorsements of Dr. Rothrock and other members of the Board, the writer felt quite free from further political disaster; and to fill in the time to noon, went to look in on the doings of the House. No sooner had he leaned against the rear railing of the Legislative Hall than a coatless member from near the Speaker's desk, came up the aisle and asked in a low voice: "are you McCreight?" Answered in the affirmative, he said "I would like to see you privately"— and led the way back to the upper lobby where no one else was present; on a marble seat they sat down together. Without ceremony or explanation the legislator said: "What's the price of the Cook tract." The writer told him that the price had always been six hundred thousand, with gas and oil reserved, but now a new option was in the hands of the Governor which permitted him to

take it in sections subject to fixed prices for stumpage, and presumed that would be the way it would be purchased.

The interrogator then said: "That is no way to buy it; the state should take it all; and now if you want that bill to be passed you just put in the Bill for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and there won't be any delays". "But" the writer protested, "the price is only six hundred thousand—why a bill for a hundred and fifty thousand more than it costs?" "See here" the man replied, "you are a business man, ain't you? Do you think you're going to get that much money out of the till without leaving something for the party fund?—if you do you might as well forget it and go home." Asked just who he was and what he represented, the coatless man said he was a member of the House and managed the 'slush funds.' Then, picking up his hat, the writer answered that there was nothing more to say; that he would go home,—and left.

It was still a half hour until the Commission's verdict was to be heard at Pinchot's office; the time was spent in pacing the main hall in deep meditation; wondering just what this private interview incident might mean; surely nothing could happen now to defeat the project; the park plan was so well determined upon by the leaders; so well supported by all the people, that it was now surely safe from defeat by the grafters.

Approaching the door of the Forestry Chairman's office, Pinchot was there with upraised hand and a broad grin on his countenance: he called out; "I'm sorry McCreight, we voted against your

Cook Forest proposition". "That's surprising! I thought you had pledged your unqualified support for it just the other day,—what happened?—Please tell me just why you voted against it; you know it is not my proposition; it is the people's project,—I am only one of nearly ten millions who are interested; but I would like to know a little about what happened and why,—can you tell me?" They had stepped into the room and stood beside the table: "Why, yes, we turned it down because Mr. Elliott was opposed to it—and Doctor Rothrock was not in favor of it, and voted against it." The writer was amazed at such subterfuge; it was unbelievable that one in the responsible position of a State Forestry Commissioner would try to justify such action on such grounds. "And" said the writer to him,—"you know that Mr. Elliott made the first official report on the Cook tract,—and that he wrote and spoke,—even delivered lectures over the State in support of it; and you know also that Dr. Rothrock has urgently recommended its purchase by the state for park purposes; that is not the reason." And the writer picked up his hat from the table and left.

Disappointment, discouragement, disgust!—this was the frame of mind of the writer as he boarded the train for home. In the final analysis of the Pinchot attempt at deception there was but one answer; he had gained his advancement, from a clerk in the forestry bureau of the Department of Agriculture, through false credit for 'originating' the Roosevelt Conservation Policy and as the writer was the victim, it would never do for him

to further a project that might lead to historical research; the success of the Cook Forest movement might bring its sponsor too much into the limelight and inspire inquiries that might lead to discovering the real author of the Roosevelt policy; ah! that would never do. So long as Pinchot held state office in Pennsylvania, there would be no chance for Cook Forest Park legislation, that was clear.

In the file is the carbon of a letter dated April 6, 1921 to Governor Sproul. A few quotations from it:

"Wishing to be of service to you, at the request of Mr. Pinchot, I appeared before the Forestry Commission yesterday where the Cook proposition was being considered. After the meeting was over,—Mr. Pinchot told me that the Commission had voted against it, 'because Mr. Elliott had opposed the project'—that is evidence of gross ignorance,—or deliberate slander.

"There was no disposition on the part of the Cooks, or anyone else to take up with the Legislature the purchase of the forest at this time, until I happened in the Hall of the House some weeks ago on other business, when several members inquired why the Bill was not before the House. At their request, I accompanied a delegation to Mr. Pinchot,—and they were assured of the hearty cooperation of the Department, if the Governor favored it; they visited you to learn what your attitude would be;—it was at your request that I secured the proposition you now have,—and which was before the Commission yesterday.

"There is no disposition to embarrass you; neither do I want to be embarrassed with further loss of time and money in trying to do a good thing for the people of Pennsylvania, if I am 'up against' an unknown and unknowable quantity;—to have this last effort to save the big pines, end up in this ridiculous fashion, is embarrassing to us all; therefore in justice to yourself, to the Cooks, to me and to the public, it is incumbent upon us to go through with it or call it off. If for any reason, you decide to not go forward with the project, please notify me and the option will be withdrawn".

Within a day or two, on discussing the writer's experiences at Harrisburg, the totally disgusted Mr. Cook directed the withdrawal of his option to the Governor forthwith.

The Governor's reply was prompt and to the point; among other contents was this:

"There are various features about the Cook forest proposition which, I do not believe will commend themselves to you, and which I shall be glad to explain to you when I see you,—we should like to own the Cook tract, but the proposition they make is one which neither the Forestry Department nor myself could approve."

Responding to which the writer's reply said:

(April 11) "To add to the amazing things that happen, there have been two more amazing things come to me this morning. To add to the ridiculous statement of the Forestry Commission, last week, declining to recommend the Cook forest purchase for the reason it had been opposed by Elliott, when as a matter of fact he was its best champion; this morning mail brings two letters;—one says it discloses to you some features,—'which you will explain when you see me',—and the other letter tells me that you told a certain party 'that the State was not considering the purchase of the Cook tract at all.'

"I regret very much that you did not tell me this when the (Cook) matter was discussed; it would have saved very considerable expense to me and a lot of work and upset plans for the Cooks. You gave me to understand it was a matter wholly of revenue, since which the new revenue measures were passed, and I supposed that was all that you waited for; If you had no intention to seriously consider the matter you should have told me then."

And so ended the 1921 fiasco. Eleven years of strenuous work and fully ten thousand dollars expended for the experience; it was to learn that practical politics was—and still is—a 'racket'—and that common sense, common honesty and conservation, do not count with politicians. It had been well demonstrated that the Administration would spend the public tax money only where there was both political power and private profit. It was proven that if the Cook woods was to be saved for the people now, it would have to be done by popular subscription.

The disheartening results from the 1921 Sproul-Pinchot perfidous blocking of further chance to save the forest through legislative purchase, roused wide-spread sentiment for acquiring it through

public subscription. Such a course was advocated by Mr. Liggett. But this method had already been tried by the Wild Life League formerly sponsored and largely built by the efforts of Mr. Liggett, however, it had been organized, not particularly to promote the Cook park idea, but to formulate better laws and regulations for game, fish and the general conserving of natural resources, purification of streams etc., and its existence in no way tended to eliminate the many other organizations of similar nature. Rather it increased the rivalry of older sportsmen's associations of large memberships in the eastern and central sections, so as to increase rather than to diminish cross-purpose and confusion in the work of all. That was clearly apparent when it undertook to assume the leadership in purchase of the Cook tract in 1915-16. Now we must again refer to the activities of the President of the State Conservation Association and record what the original Pennsylvania State organization did toward making conservation a real and permanent State question that ultimately led to establishing parks and the purchase of great areas of state forest and game lands.

Chapter XIV

STATE CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Always a close counsellor to all Presidents from Lincoln down, as well as to all the State's governors and other officials, Mr. Farquhar had canvassed his friends and many members of the various societies, associations and clubs with the purpose of uniting their power by creating the State Conservation Council, to which all existing organizations would elect representatives, these delegates in turn to elect officers and directors, the actions of which Board would bind all to a common policy.

And in this program Farquhar secured the cooperation of Dean R. L. Watts, of State College, who called a conference of heads of departments of Forestry, Game and Fish, and a number of heads of game and fish associations as well as the President and several leading State College officials, for discussing the subject. This meeting was held at the University Club on January 30, 1922.

The idea met with general approval and a general call for a State-wide meet was scheduled for March 30 and 31, 1922 at State College. This convention showed representation of nearly two hundred thousand members of state-wide organizations, besides thirteen district and county sportsmen's clubs and Conservation Associations with memberships running into thousands. Dean Watts presided, and speeches were made by President Thomas, Florence Dibert, of the State Federation of Pennsylvania Women, Maj. R. Y. Stuart and

Dr. J. T. Rothrock. A motion prevailed to organize the State Conservation Council and a Committee was appointed to prepare by-laws and report at the session next day. The Chair appointed Judge A. S. Heck, David Pritchard, Henry W. Shoemaker, M. I. McCreight, John M. Phillips, Dr. Henry S. Drinker and Guy Hoover. Important resolutions were adopted providing approval of greatly widened activity on the part of the State toward purchase of forest lands and providing for forest protection, better regulation of fish and game laws. The meeting then adjourned until next day.

Meeting of the 31st was devoted to discussion of a State-wide policy and included many speeches from prominent men and women; to the adoption of a constitution and by-laws and election of officers, viz, President, Dean R. L. Watts. Vice presidents: Florence Dibert, R. T. Brown and David Pritchard. Treasurer, M. I. McCreight. Secretary, J. A. Ferguson. Mr. Farquhar was called on, and told of his acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln and recited his Gettysburg address, at which the audience rose in token of appreciation.

The writer announced that he would turn over to the Council the fund of about $500 which was then the Treasury of the State Conservation Association on which a vote of thanks was passed expressive of appreciation to the State Conservation Association. The final act of the session was the adoption of a resolution favoring the general policy for establishing and developing of State Parks, monuments and the protection of wild birds and flowers.

Besides the files, showing the work of the

Council, there are a great many papers relating to the proposed damming of the waters of the Clarion River by power promoters. Clippings indicate public anxiety about what effect that might have on the Cook Forest park plans.

The file discloses that the Public Service Commission on November 14th, 1922 approved application of Clarion River Power Company to amend its charter providing for additional source of water and water power.

Copy of the minutes of the Council held on October 5 reveals the names of the Executive Committee viz,—the meeting was held at the Chamber of Commerce, Harrisburg, and there were present;—Watts, Byers, Evans, Fox, Speer, Pritchard, Hoover, Barndt and Ferguson.

Nearly the whole file of latter 1922 is filled with correspondence covering protests of western counties to prevent exploitation of the Clarion by the promoters of power dams which would if carried out, destroy the program for Cook Forest park. That controversy, also interfered with the Cooks selling the property, as a consequence, there was little accomplished toward reaching a conclusion of the park campaign. However, it was election year; business was very much disturbed by railroad and coal-mine strikes; discontent grew and with a party split Pinchot carried the gubernatorial election. This result was unlooked for generally; and for those who had worked so long and faithfully to save the Cook woods, it was a surrender of hope for legislation for saving the woods for the people. Though posing as the people's champion in all that related to forests and conservation, Pinchot had

never visited the Cook forest, nor did he ever indicate the least interest in it or to aid in what he could not help knowing was the wish of the people to have it preserved for a public park. His deceitful conduct in the last year's legislative effort was sufficient warning to the friends of the Cook project, to save themselves further negotiations with the Administration, now that he was at its head.

Therefore, in latter 1922 and early in 1923, we find Liggett active toward the organization of a new special organization which he designed to work solely for the park project,—and so four more long years of the Pinchot administration had to be suffered without any result; and now we open the file for 1923 and follow with the data which it discloses, largely the ideas, plans and progress of the work of Liggett in association with Mr. S. Y. Ramage of Oil City, a man of vision as also of great means, who had recently visited the place and become deeply concerned to see it preserved for the benefit of all the people.

For a basis to gain the confidence of people who must become interested financially, the Conservation Council lent its influence by passing the following resolution:

"Whereas, careful investigation proves it impossible to arrange for the purchase of the Cook Forest tract by the State or by the Federal Government; and we deem it a public calamity if this last remaining stand of virgin pine forest east of the Great Plains were destroyed: Resolved, that we strongly recommend the plan of the Cook Forest Association dedicated to the preservation of this remnant of Penn's Woods, and pledge ourselves to its support and urge the citizens to cooperate in this project worthy of the combined efforts of all organizations of the State,"

Practically all of the other organizations having

to do with out-doors, had already passed strong resolutions of endorsement as has been shown. Some forty or more of the former active workers were named as 'sponsors', and preliminary literature printed for use in a campaign for subscriptions, in which the plans and terms of purchase were set forth in general outline. The organization was named the Cook Forest Association, Franklin, Pa., and was managed by the following officers and directors: President, S. Y. Ramage; Vice president, Taylor Allderdice; Treasurer, Benjamin Page; Secretary, J. R. Swift. The directors comprised the following: Homer D. Williams, Henry M. Brackenridge, Howard H. McClintic, Thos. Liggett John M. Phillips. The Union Trust Co., of Pittsburgh was appointed to be the Depositary and Trustee.

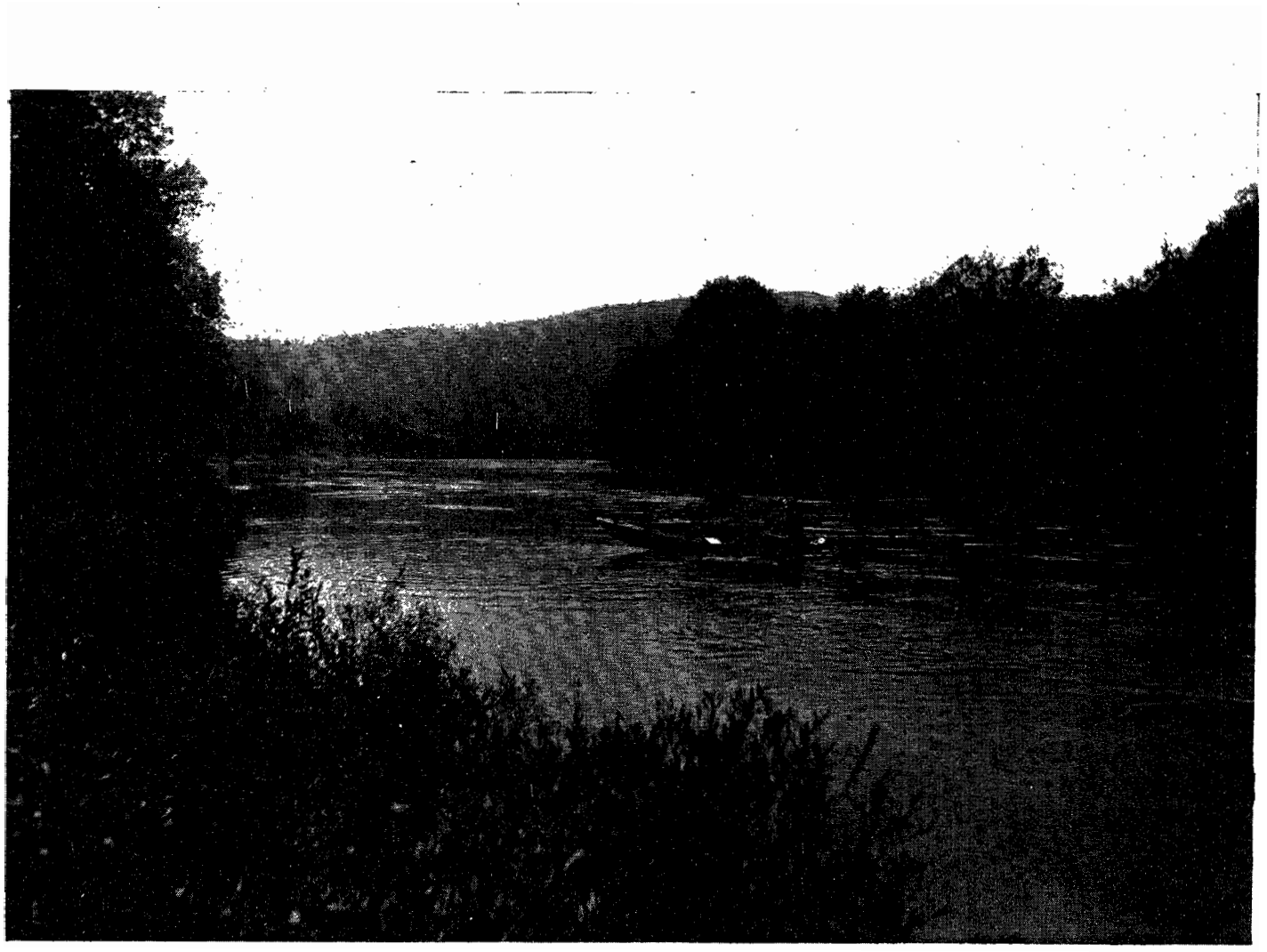
Mr. Liggett's letter to the writer dated June 21st: "I think we have finally gotten 'Cook Forest' onto a workable plan. We are going ahead without really having the money in the bank, to open the old homestead, get out our literature and road signs, preparatory to securing the underwriting syndicate which will take over the legal title to the property.—The expense of carrying the whole scheme we figure, will be about twenty thousand dollars and that will be a part of the underwriting money—we are going to the people for this money, backed by all sorts of endorsements, as you know". From Hotel LaSalle, Chicago, dated May 19 is a letter from A. W. Cook: "Had a letter from Ramage before leaving Pittsburgh stating they had a meeting fixed for next Tuesday on the Cook park situation—I certainly hope you

will be present and get this thing thoroughly organized—the matter cannot be delayed and I cannot see any reason why the trees can't be saved."

The subscription form provided that the first $10,000 should be a preliminary funds—"to defray the expenses in connection with preparation of suitable literature, secretarial and clerical salaries, creating facilities for visiting the park and in otherwise promoting the project."

As the writer together with Mr. Taylor and a Pittsburgh banker had financed the Estate several years before in order that it could be carried along, it became a serious problem now to meet the maturing mortgage; the proposed underwriting was not assured; times were hard. T. B. Cook wrote from Kingman, Arizona in July, notifying the Association that he could wait no longer and cancelled further negotiations; banks were crowding for settlement. Then in early September the writer was obliged to go to Austria and France, and on his return in November, was confronted with more entanglements in the Cook affair which required strenuous work to unravel so that the Cook Forest promoters could proceed.

As the end of 1923 drew to a close there were slowly coming in more substantial contributions; a letter in the file shows that the writer had secured some three thousand dollars toward the underwriting when needed, however there also was voluminous correspondence with the Government about the defaulted Cook bonds being carried to await the underwriting.



On The Clarion River Flowing Placidly Through Cook Forest

CHAPTER XV

COOK FOREST ASSOCIATION

With the opening of 1924 the campaign was started; and as stated by A. W. Cook in his letter of January 16, they "are pleased with the progress". Out of a mass of correspondence one letter dated August 21st from Liggett will give the reader an idea how things stood on that date as he saw things:

"DEAR MAJOR:

Just back from another trip to Cook Forest—the interest seems to grow pretty fast—some person should be there all the while. My guess is about ⅓ of the underwriting is accounted for and there are quite a lot of contributions in—I don't know how many. Sorry to hear your people have the 'blues' so badly—Clarion and DuBois on coal and Oil City on oil—the gang just seems to be licked to a standstill—hope they will be feeling better soon—they must have the blues even the sportsmen haven't got pep enough to take an interest in pollution but just the same the sun will shine again—and that in the rather near future."

Sincerely,

THOS. LIGGETT

Three months later—November 24, Liggett writes:

"I note what you say about the bank-examiner and the bonds—the trouble Mr. Ramage and I have is to commercialize its popularity—Brookville underwrote the $15,000, that was assigned to them and then stopped. Clarion has never gotten one half of its $10,000 and seems to be asleep.

"The trouble is that Ramage and I cannot go everywhere at the same time, and it is not at all encouraging to the fellow whom we approach in Pittsburgh to become an underwriter for any considerable amount, if he asks what are the people in the neighborhood doing, to be obliged to tell him they are doing nothing, except to get revenue out of the people who come to see the forest".—Very sincerely, Thos. Liggett.

The reply is dated Nov. 28:

"It is the same with the Cook Forest that it always has been and will be, with everything regarding welfare business. My own experience of more than ten years with the Cook Forest was that I had all the bills

to pay, and with the exception of your help and Phillips', had most of the work to do; the job was too big for me to continue to pay for and devote so much time to, and I finally gave it up after Pinchot proved himself in the Sproul Administration. The thing has cost me well on to $10,000 in cash besides ten years of hard work; I am criticised for doing too much—don't want you to understand—that I have lost interest—as I told you before, I consider that I have paid more than my share of money toward the Cook Forest project but I am willing still to do what I can to forward the present plan. You ask how many of the Cook bonds we hold and I find the amount is $25,000, —and will have to have attention before the next visit of the bank-examiner which is now due."

A lot more correspondence shows that there was grave danger arising from the constant criticisms from prospective subscribers, about the pollution of the Clarion by the Johnsonburg Paper Mills, which was a standing detriment to the success of the Forest park project. The letters show that, by the close of 1924 a considerable campaign was in progress toward having the State intercede to abolish this nuisance.

Chapter XVI

INTENSIVE WORK AND FAILURE

With the opening of the year 1925 there was evidence of little progress having been made. A circular letter typed and mailed from Cooksburg over the signature of A. W. Cook and dated July 10th, calls attention to the expiration of the extension period granted in March by the Brookville Title and Trust Company, Trustee.

August 19th, 1925 Liggett wrote:

"Dear Major McCreight: We had a meeting Monday and determined to start on an intensive campaign to raise the money—we have made a sort of tentative arrangement with Ketchum-McLeod and Grove of Pittsburgh, to act as campaign managers; we figure that we could put it across at a cost of probably not in excess of $25,000 or $30,000,—and call for 50% of it now; we figure that by the time we have spent the $15,000 that we will have either a success or a failure."

August 27th Liggett writes:

"We are all ready to start a drive to raise the money; have come to the conclusion that the right thing to do is to raise not only enough to buy the property, but to fix it up as a finished park proposition, before it is deeded to the State. I sent T. B. Cook a telegram asking him to answer the Brookville Title and Trust Co.,—no answer has come,—notwithstanding—it is not my intention to stop—advertising,—promoting and accepting contributions to the Cook Forest Association—it looks very much to me as if we were not going to have the full cooperation of the Brookville crowd, and the majority interests until A. W. Cook buys that majority interest,—and then it will be more questionable than now".

Following the above date strenuous efforts were made to negotiate a Commercial sale of the property,—to be manufactured. The summer passed with much uncertainty as to the future fate of the trees. But A. W. Cook stood firm—his faith though shaken was so persistent and time proved his wisdom, for with the opening of the new year things took on a more hopeful outlook.

As the file for 1926 is opened it reveals copies of the beautiful brochure and the printed form for the underwriting together with various circulars, post-cards and folders, used in the advertising and soliciting campaigns of Cook Forest Association. The years 1922-3-4-5 having passed without any definite conclusion of the long and wearisome struggle to save the trees, one may gather accurate conception of the difficulties best by reading the letters,—a few of which are included. Mr. Liggett writes on January 26, 1926:

"We have just finished the folder and I am enclosing a copy of it to you—for your inspection. We are beginning to send these out now, and I want to call your attention to the fact that next Sunday's issue of the Pittsburgh Press, January 31 will feature Cook Forest, etc."

Again on May 4th:

"As you know, the present plan on contributions is that they will go to the Union Trust Company with the name and address of the contributors, and unless the purpose of the Association is made possible, through sufficient number of contributions, they will be returned,—of course there are quite a lot of these smaller amounts now in the custody of the Trust Company,—we will have to come to a campaign to finish it.—From Franklin to Clearfield and Punxsutawney, $200,000 ought to be considered reasonable for their contribution.—The objective is $800,000 so that we may be able to fix up the property before it goes over to the State."

On June 10th Liggett's letter refers to some underwriting subscriptions which I had secured under the original plan some two years before:

"That plan has been abandoned as too complicated and too slow; what we are doing now is the collection of subscriptions that are passing into the hands of the Union Trust Company of Pittsburgh, custodian of the purchase fund, against the time when we will have enough to put into effect the objective of the Association."

On August 13th, 1926 circular letters were sent out headed Cook Forest Campaign, Brookville, Pennsylvania stating that a fund of $800,000 was needed and asking for contributions of $5, $25, $50,

$100 or more. The letters were signed Cook Forest Association, Thos. Liggett, Secretary.

On August 24th another circular letter was sent out from the same office but somewhat different in form, copy of which is reproduced:

COOK FOREST ASSOCIATION
Campaign
Brookville, Pennsylvania

August 24th, 1926

DEAR FRIEND:

You, no doubt, received the literature and letter telling about the need to save Cook Forest and have given it careful consideration.

It is impossible, of course, for us to call on you personally, asking for your subscription, and we believe that you will not let the cause suffer because this letter must take the place of a personal interview.

People elsewhere are anxiously waiting to know what the residents of Northwestern Pennsylvania are going to contribute before they do their full share. Already these people have subscribed approximately $50,000.00 and many of your neighbors have sent in their subscriptions. Won't you do the same?

We are enclosing a subscription card with a return envelope. As stated in the last letter, your contribution may be just $5.00, which represents the purchase price of a tree; or $10.00, which represents the value of a camping site; or $100.00 which represents the purchase price of an acre of these beautiful trees. What we want most is your best to help make this cause a success.

As soon as your subscription has been received, we shall send you a certificate of membership in the Cook Forest Association, which will give you the satisfaction of having had a share in the enterprise which will bring great pleasure to thousands of people in our State in the coming years.

This is our last appeal to you because within a very short time, if a sufficient amount of subscriptions is not secured, a decision may have to be reached to surrender Cook Forest, with all its beautiful timber, to the axe.

Yours very truly,
COOK FOREST ASSOCIATION,
Thos. Liggett, Secretary

On the completion of the foregoing record the writer visited Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Cook for the purpose of verifying dates of certain happenings heretofore mentioned,—on July 31, 1934. From the Guest Book at the Cook mansion it was found that the signature of the Hon. S. B. Elliott and the writer are under date of January 1st, 1911,

indicating that his report has been 'surveyed' in the last days of 1910 as noted therein. In the column for 'remarks' was found inscribed as a New Years Greeting by the writer:

"In the game of Life,—like a game of ball.—
one can only play his part;
the double-base hit, home-run, or a fall
depends very much on the heart."

The house-party at which the writer first mentioned the idea of preserving the forest for a State park, was found to be under the date of August 21, 1910, showing the lapse of more than four months of intensive campaigning before consent of Governor Stuart was obtained for the official inspection of the property by Elliott.

On October 22, 1911 the project and property were investigated officially by the visit of A. B. Farquhar and J. Horace McFarland on the part of the Pennsylvania Conservation Association, accompanied by the writer and D. L. Taylor. The Guest Book for that date shows in its 'remarks' column, the following verse opposite the writer's signature:

"Then here's my observation:—
that the Cook Conservation
will sometime materialize—
for big Men of the nation
have the realization
that Cooks have the ONLY prize".

The same month the writer succeeded in having the noted geologist and engineer James T. Gardiner of New York, visit the forest and express his opinion about the State forest park proposition.

Mr. Gardiner's experience as a member of the first U. S. Geological survey; the leader in Niagara Falls park development and his great work in

establishing New York's famed Central Park, made his help in furthering the plans for Cook Forest park of very great value.

On the 16th, October 1912, appear the names of Thos. Liggett, Taylor Allderdice and John H. Nicholson, along with those of D. L. Taylor, C. Z. Gordon and the writer; from that date forward the Cook Forest project had the approval of these gentlemen, together with their many friends and associates throughout the state.

Leigh Mitchell Hodges, of the Philadelphia North American, who had been spreading the Cook Forest Park propaganda through his then most widely read newspaper, for months, came to join the writer for a few days in the forest and to visit the Cooks. Here, the famed poet and writer reveled among the great pines under whose canopy his inspiration led to the writing of poems and descriptive articles the publication of which had much to do with educating the people to know of and aid in saving the Cook trees from destruction. The Guest Book of Mrs. Cook, gives the date of Hodges' first visit as on October 29th, 1912. In it he inscribed lines that were thereafter used in Cook Forest literature for many years. There is due to Mr. Hodges and to his popular paper the North American, great credit for preparing the public mind to grasp and hold fast to the idea of preserving a remnant of the original Penn's Woods.

For the 'remarks' column on that occasion the writer's contribution was:

> "From out of all the earth that Man has trod;
> let's save this relic,—from the hand of God".

Taken alone these lines signify little, and are

meaningless; but when read in the Cook Guest book among verses inscribed by noted writers expressive of their reverence for these virgin forest trees and their deep sense of responsibility to children and future people, it shows what was meant to be interpreted from them.

That such a long and difficult campaign would be followed so persistently by any one, in the public interest, and at his own expense, could hardly be expected, without the vile tongue of slander being heard some where. Here are two letters which turn up in the month of September 1926 as the file is thumbed over in following the story of the Cook Forest:

Oil City, September 10, 1926

"DEAR MAJOR:

We sent several of our men to Bradford, recently to try to secure a good Committee to represent us in the campaign to secure funds to purchase the Cook Forest, and this morning Mr. Speer who was up there last week, came to my office and gives me this story, which of course, I take no stock in, but it comes with such definiteness that I decided to pass it on to you and tried to get you on the telephone, but you were reported out of town.

Mr. A. J. Bond, now a County Commissioner of McKean County told Mr. Speer that when the Bill was before the Legislature, that you represented the Cook people and were under an agreement with them, to receive a commission from the Cooks of something like fifty thousand dollars in case the State made the purchase at the price covered by the Bill. All sorts of stories are told regarding the real worth of the property at present, some so wild that it is not worth over $350,000 and that the Cook Forest Association is being humbugged into the plan to unload the Cooks at a false value, etc., all of which I of course deny, but when such a direct statement is made as to you, I felt that I should lay the matter before you just as reported to me.

Believe me very truly,

S. Y. Ramage."

DuBois, Pa.
September 13, 1926

MR. S. Y. RAMAGE,
Oil City, Pa.

MY DEAR MR. RAMAGE:

Your note of the 10th quoting statement made by Mr. A. J. Bond. I am sorry indeed to have to dispute my good friend of Bradford, but

the statement you attribute to him is absolutely false and he should be asked to retract it. There never was any contract between the Cooks and myself either written or implied providing for a commission or any other profit for my work in the Cook Forest project.

I originated the Cook Forest Reservation idea in 1910 and led in the work to have it taken over by the State until about 1919, when the Wild Life League undertook to promote a State wide campaign which required the raising in advance of considerable sum for publicity, legal, travel, educational work, etc. and the purchase of several additional tracts included in the area but not owned by the Cooks.

When the property was tendered to the State by the Cooks at that time, the price and terms provided for a refund to cover all such items. Very probably Mr. Bond had that in mind when he made the statement you quoted, for I cannot believe that he would deliberately misrepresent a matter of this importance or intentionally discredit me.

In 1921 I was again urged by the Governor (Sproul) to submit the property, after he and Commissioner Pinchot had pledged to some fifteen members of the House and Senate, their unqualified support, and assurance that legislation would be forthcoming for it. The terms were exactly as requested by the Governor himself and he referred it to Pinchot for approval of the Forestry Commission.

While waiting action of the Commission a House member very confidentially proposed to me that the Bill be put in for $750,000 when the option was for $600,000 and when Pinchot thereafter reversed his position and said the Commission had voted it down because Elliott had always opposed its purchase by the State, I concluded there was no use, and gave up in despair. No Bill was presented and the proposal was withdrawn from the Governor at once.

Of course the excuse offered by Pinchot was utterly ridiculous, for every one knew that Elliott had devoted the latter years of his life to advocating the purchase of the property by the State; as he likewise was the first to make an authorized report recommending it to Governor Stuart in 1911. My understanding for his sudden shift was clear enough; he would not want the Cook Forest to be successful under my guidance; he held his position and public favor because Roosevelt gave him credit for the popular Conservation Policy, the origin and outline of which I myself had been the author. Too much limelight might lead to investigating the old time Conservation files.

Since that disgusting experience I have not been active in the matter, feeling that when State officials could not be depended on, further efforts would be wasted.

My cash outlay over the ten or twelve years was near $10,000 and if my strenuous energies were of any value, my total contribution to the Cook Forest project, is fully $25,000. I was not in it for profit but to do what I believed was the finest and biggest thing that could be done for all the people; I still think so, and am heartily in sympathy with your present plan and only wish I could help more. With best wishes, Yours truly,

M. I. McCREIGHT

As the summer waned the soliciting campaigns of Cook Forest Association showed increasing numbers on the Union Trust Company's list and Mr. Liggett had equipped the Inn and Boarding House for convenience of visitors or over-night tourists; the long trying four years of the Pinchot Administration was nearing an end; the fall election put in his place an old-time friend,—a real conservationist,—in the person of John S. Fisher.

Chapter XVII

FISHER AND SUCCESS

Pennsylvania's new Governor was a Man of the People; raised on a farm and descended from the pioneers of Indiana County who had settled there following the French-Indian war and before the red men had ceased their bloody frontier depredations,—the last of which was the murder of the writer's great-grandfather, Captain Andrew Sharp, who had served under Washington throughout the Revolution, and who was or had been, at the time of his death in 1794, the first settler in the Shelocta district, in neighboring distance from the parental homestead of the Fishers. The Governor's boyhood was spent in sight of the famed Kittanning Path, and he knew better than most men, the terrible suffering and trials of those who pioneered in this great western Pennsylvania forest after the struggle of a half century to wrest it from the French and turn it from a trapping ground into one of the finest of agricultural and coal-mining sections in all the country.

Governor Fisher was not a theorist nor a demagogue— but a sane practical farmer-lawyer, banker and useful citizen; he knew forests and he believed in practical conservation, he had been a faithful supporter of the Cook Forest park idea from the beginning, and all through the years of struggle by the writer, John Fisher, as Representative and Senator and Banking Commissioner, rendered his aid and best influence toward saving the Cook Woods. Now he was in position, as

Governor, to dictate final success for the otherwise hopeless campaign, to save the forest for the use and benefit of all the people,—and he did.

And now we revert again to the 1927 files and follow the work of Cook Forest Association. Headquarters of the Campaign had been transferred to 331 Fourth Avenue, Pittsburgh,—Mr. Liggett's private office from which on January 12th he writes:

"DEAR MAJOR: We have come to the conclusion that unless we can have the State give us some legislative help, Cook Forest can not be saved by the popular subscriptions.

"At the moment I am sending out a great number of the folders, with sticker attached, as per one enclosed herewith, pledge card and return envelope. We are getting the names of various organizations, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Women's Clubs, etc., and thought of sending the folder, with sticker attached, and a letter, the form of which is enclosed herewith.

"While we may not get much in the way of contributions from these, it is hoped that these organizations will endorse the proposition, circulate petitions and pass resolutions of endorsements, which I presume should be fired into the Governor so that the Legislature may see that there is a popular demand for this thing.

"You know that we have the sympathy of the organization, as it is called, so far as this section is concerned. We were told the other day to be sure and get Senator Vare's endorsement. We think we have a line on this, but one is never certain and if you can make some suggestion or bring about some influence to bear on him in favor of Cook Forest, please do so." (Senator Vare's influence had already been secured long ago by the writer).

January 15th Mr. Liggett writes:

"Please see to getting up a petition from the Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations of your section, etc."

From the writer to Liggett, February 25th:

"Your letter about the Boy Scouts,—I discussed these matters with Senator Scott when in my office last week. Regarding Cook Forest the Senator thinks that any reasonable appeal supported by the Mellons, would have prompt attention."

As indicated in Mr. Liggett's letter of January 12th, before quoted, there was little chance to succeed with the plan for popular subscriptions to buy the property, and that help must come from

the legislature, therefore all attention was turned again in that direction. A Bill was prepared and introduced near the end of March by Representative Armstrong, in the House, and by Senator Quigly in the Senate. The Bill provided for the appropriation of $550,000 for the purchase of the property at $650,000 together with the contribution of about one hundred thousand dollars by the Cook Forest Association, as reported by the newspapers of that date. However, when the Bill was finally revised and reported out of Committee it provided but $450,000 to be contributed by the State, with the provision that the $200,000 needed to complete the purchase, was to be provided by the Cook Forest Association,—and this $200,000 had to be paid into the State Treasury before the appropriation was available.

The Bill was passed and signed by Governor Fisher April 14th 1927. But the passage of the Act by the Legislature was not the conclusion of the long fight of almost sixteen years; it was merely a challenge to the Cook Forest Association and the people. In effect the State said to the Cook Forest Association,—"You have proposed to ask the People to pay you $800,000 out of which you would pay six hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the property,—deduct expenses of the campaign, and if any was left you would spend it to improve the roads, trails, cabins, and hotel accommodations for visitors".

"Now we say as representatives of all the people 'we will assess them $450,000 toward the purchase money if you will raise only $200,000 by popular subscription'—and the deal was closed,—closed,—

all but the balance of the $200,000—and that was somewhere near $100,000—more or less. But it was a challenge that had to be met; here was something to fight for; surely there must be a sufficient number of patriotic men who would chip in to put it over,—a hundred at $1000 each; a thousand at $100 each; many of them in the State who could pay it all with ease; yes, but,—they had to be found, and found without delay,—and so there was a hurry call to arms from the Cook Forest Association; everyone connected with it, as well as its friends and supporters, became a committee of one to collect,—$10, $5, $1—anywhere, everywhere,—schools, clerks, clubs, lodges, all responded. Liggett and Ramage led the squad in tapping the tills of Big Business in sums of $1,000 to $5,000 or more. The writer having already contributed for more than he could afford to, —far more than anyone else had or could be expected to,—yet the files show that he was in touch personally or by correspondence with practically every member of the Legislature and Senate to secure the passage of the Bill, and he did his mite toward raising the final funds to pay the balance as well.

Here are a couple of letters,—samples of the appeals,—and it may not seem egotistical to remark that all the letters brought promise of willing and enthusiastic support for the Bill.

DuBois, Pa., April 1st, 1927

EDITOR SATURDAY EVENING POST,
Philadelphia, Pa.
DEAR SIR:

Enclosed are copies of letters received this morning from Governor Fisher and Chairman Mellon regarding the Cook Forest.

Several years ago you wrote me that you would support the project editorially when the occasion seemed opportune. That moment has arrived. We now have the last opportunity to save this wonderful forest for the use and enjoyment of all the people for all time.

The Cook Forest Association has raised a considerable fund from public subscriptions toward the purchase price. Won't you help it along by a strong editorial in next week's issue? If too late for the Post would it not be possible to use the columns of the Public Ledger? —Very truly yours, M. I. McCreight.

DuBois, Pa.
March 31, 1927

HON. JOHN M. FLYNN,
Harrisburg, Pa.
MY DEAR MR. FLYNN:

I have never asked any favors from you, but now I am going to. The Cook Forest Bill has been reported out and I want you to see to its passage and the signature of the Governor to it. I have fifteen years of hard work and a lot of money in it, which I shall not regret if only the trees can be saved for future generations to see and understand what you and I and our fathers did to her great forest areas.

It wouldn't be fair not to leave one little sample of the original map. We are doing it all over the west, and we were charitable enough to keep a small sample of the buffalo, the elk, the antelope and the mountain goat, as well as a few sickly survivors of the original red race. Otherwise, you know, it would not be America. Please vote for the Cook Forest Bill.—Yours truly, M. I. McCreight.

And here is my letter to Liggett of April 4th:

DEAR LIGGETT: Yours received and I sent fifty copies by parcel post yesterday. It is exasperating to have the State quibble over an appropiation—it is going to be hard to raise a couple of hundred thousand dollars from popular subscriptions in small amounts. I think your experience has taught you that the cost of raising money in this way is altogether prohibitive.

As the letters which passed during the campaign for the Bill before the Legislature and Senate are examined, but one appears in opposition to the measure, and that is a very frank declaration by Senator Frank E. Baldwin, of Potter County; he wrote that the State ought not to contribute more than $100,000 to $250,000—but that even if the Bill called for $400,000 he had not made up his mind to oppose it. Senator Frank J. Harris writes:—"I want you to feel assured that when

this measure is presented for action in the Senate, it shall be my pleasure to give it my enthusiastic support." Senator North, of Jefferson: "I am in favor of this project and I want to assure you that it brings back memories of my earlier legislative experience with my father fifteen years ago." These are representative of all the many others from Erie to Philadelphia; Senator Hunsicker from the Quaker City says: "Will do all in my power to push the Bill along"—and Senator Kitts from the opposite corner of the State said: "I surely shall be glad to support the Bill'.'

Ramage writes from Pinehurst April 9th:

"We have all been busy doing all possible to secure the support of all legislators for the Cook Forest Bill,—if you can reach any of them I trust that you will do so, as your standing is so well known that your support will give it great impetus."

Liggett's letter shows that he was in Harrisburg much of the time in early April. On April 2nd he wrote:

"As matters stand now;—the whole proposition is how far Governor Fisher and Mr. Townsend the budget clerk, can go in the monies which they will appropriate to us, and anything above what they can give, will be for us to raise from the people—they have set their figure at $400,000.—but I still believe that when I see the Governor on Monday, we may get $450,000 but I think that will be the limit, and if it is, I intend to have the Bill put through on that basis,—and then there will be some real work to do to raise the other $200,000."

The Bill passed both House and Senate as scheduled, and the Governor signed it promptly. Liggett wired the writer:

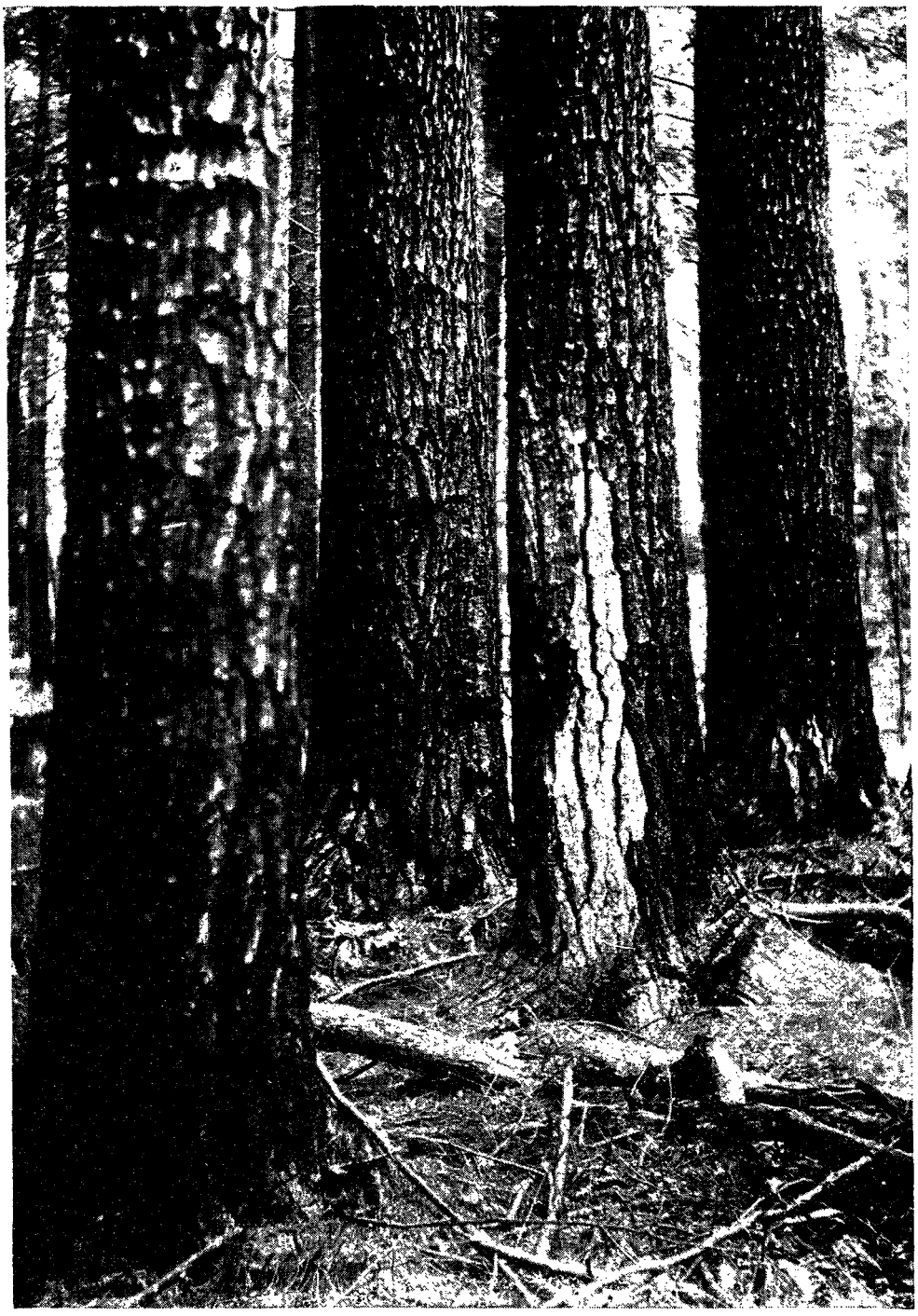
"Governor signed Cook Forest Bill today. Send appropriate telegrams.—Thos Liggett."

TELEGRAM—DuBois, April 14th, 1927

Thomas Liggett, Penn Harris Hotel, Harrisburg, Congratulations. Monument for you among the tall pines. M. I. McCreight.

TELEGRAM—DuBois, April 14th, 1927

Hon. John S. Fisher, Executive Chamber, Harrisburg, Penna; Congratulations signing Cook Forest Bill today. An everlasting monument for you. M. I. McCreight.



PENNSYLVANIA ONCE WAS COVERED BY SUCH GIANTS AS THESE

Responding from Pittsburgh next day Liggett writes:

"I received your telegram of congratulations but don't blame it all on me. Every person in Harrisburg and our friends on the outside did their full share in helping,—if there are going to be any monuments, I think they ought to be in the shape of totem poles,—don't let your people get cold on this for a minute—we don't have the total of the $200,000 by a long shot".

In a letter May 25th to Liggett is mentioned suggestions of 'engineer' Dowling:

"That the Cook Forest should be a sort of rustic relic of bygone days, the trails and log cabins scattered about for accommodation of tourists and campers, rather than the usual summer resort, hotels in white and gold."

"I think Dowling is right. There should be ample hotel accommodations, but they could be duplicates of Glacier Park Hotel and Old Faithful, constructed of native timber and furnished accordingly. I would have scattered about, representative families of Eastern Indian tribes, and—there could be a smaller encampment of mixed tribes of Sioux, Blackfeet and Fighting Cheyennes to live in teepees. These various Indian families could be used as patrols and care-takers permanently.—nothing would so appeal to the average American citizen and especially to the younger generation, as to know that such a place was built for observation and recreation. I have been in Florida the past three weeks, but saw your letter regarding your radio speech in time to have it published in the afternoon paper of that day."

Summer dragged on with constantly spreading solicitation campaigns in effect; Liggett visited the civic, sporting, service clubs, conventions and outdoor associations, when and where meetings could be arranged,—and exhibited Cook Forest films and delivered lectures to encourage working committees to raise funds,—then as time drew to an end for this slow and uncertain course, a whirlwind campaign with Pittsburgh's Big Business leaders, headed by R. B. Mellon was started, when the funds came in big sums and the long fight was over. Liggett and Ramage and their Pittsburgh friends pried loose the padlock from enough of Pittsburgh's bulging pockets to make up the deficit,—and the Cook Forest Park became in due time a reality.

RECAPITULATION

As this little story is completed to the transfer of the property from the Cook owners to the State, it is appropriate to discuss how the Cooks' fared in the final result. It would not be far from the truth to say that the saving of the trees bankrupted the owners; and fighting for seventeen years to preserve them for the people, likewise brought the original sponsor to the verge of bankruptcy,—for had the years of energy expended, and the money spent, been devoted to private concerns, he would not be within hailing distance of—distress now.

The great contribution to the Forest Park, has been by the Cooks themselves; their self-denial, suffering, interruptions, annoyances,—their endless and continued mounting of expenses, the constant piling up of interest and taxes for so long a period, would not be discharged had they received double the consideration. For all this they have not received and will not receive any appreciation from the State nor from the public,—unless the facts are brought to their attention,—and the writing of this little history, is to acquaint the State and the public with the facts. In counting the contributors, those who handed in their $1000 to $5000 checks at the final wind-up, will be given credit for the success of Cook Forest State Park; the contribution of the Cooks' and that of the writer do not appear in the balance sheet on the day of transfer,—yet they far exceed any other contributions.

To Thos. Liggett and Mr. Ramage must go the full credit for standing by at the crucial time and in faithfully fighting on through the discouraging years of the Pinchot Administration 1922-1926.

Prominent among the hundreds not heretofore mentioned who devoted their time and money to help save the forest were: Judge T. L. Wilson, of Clarion, Judge Harvey of Clarion County, Newton E. Graham of East Brady, D. L. Taylor of Brookville, who always took a leading part both in actively working for it and he rendered invaluable service in the way of finance; the Coulter Bros., of Greensburg, R. T. Brown of Elwood, and as already mentioned, John H. Nicholson and John M. Phillips, of Pittsburgh.

No influence however, was so far-reaching and permanently helpful as that rendered by Farquhar, McFarland, Rothrock, and most valuable, that of the Hon. S. B. Elliott, who died before his hope was realized. But without the bull-dog tenacity of Liggett with the financial aid of Ramage, it is doubtful if there could have been the same successful round-up of the big business men to write checks sufficiently large to meet the last hundred thousand,—therefore there is due them a debt of gratitude which can come only with the passing of the years when the people realize the great and everlasting monument that Cook Forest Park really is.

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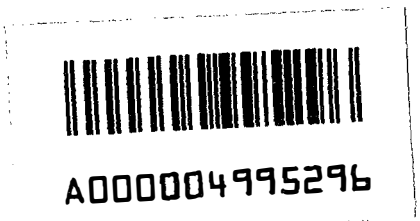
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