

part of our national heritage and that, once destroyed, can never be replaced?

For too long, the National Government has done more to confuse the issues than to clarify them. In the absence of real leadership, at least six different Federal Agencies have hooked their horses to different sides of the cart, and then they've wondered why the cart wouldn't move forward. To make things worse, the rhetoric from Washington has often exaggerated and exacerbated the tensions between those who speak about the economy and those who speak about the environment.

Not surprisingly, these issues have very often ended up in court while the economy, the environment, and the people have all suffered. That's why it's so important that the people here today are meeting in a conference room, not a courtroom. Whatever your views, everyone who will speak today comes from the Northwest and will have to live with the results of whatever decisions we all make.

We're here to begin a process that will help ensure that you will be able to work together in your communities, for the good of your businesses, your jobs, and your natural environment. The process we begin today will not be easy. Its outcome cannot possibly make everyone happy. Perhaps it won't make anyone completely happy. But the worst thing we can do is nothing. As we begin this process, the most important thing we can do is to admit, all of us to each other, that there are no simple or easy answers.

This is not about choosing between jobs and the environment but about recognizing the importance of both and recognizing that virtually everyone here and everyone in this region cares about both. After all, nobody appreciates the natural environment more than the working people who depend upon it for fishing, for boating, for teaching their children to respect the land, the rivers, and the forests. And most environmentalists are working people and business peo-

ple themselves, and understand that only an economically secure America can have the strength and confidence necessary to preserve our land, our water and our forests, as you can see in how badly they're despoiled in nations that are not economically secure.

A healthy economy and a healthy environment are not at odds with each other. They are essential to each other. Here in the Northwest, as in my own home State, people understand that healthy forests are important for a healthy forest-based economy; understand that if we destroy our old growth forest, we'll lose jobs in salmon fishing and tourism and, eventually, in the timber industry as well. We'll destroy recreational opportunities in hunting and fishing for all and eventually make our communities less attractive.

We all understand these things. Let's not be afraid to acknowledge them and to recognize the simple but powerful truth that we come here today less as adversaries than as neighbors and coworkers. Let's confront problems, not people.

Today I ask all of you to speak from your hearts, and I ask you to listen and strive to understand the stories of your neighbors. We're all here because we want a healthy economic environment and a healthy natural environment, because we want to end the divisions here in the Northwest and the deadlock in Washington.

If we commit today to move forward together, we can arrive at a balanced solution and put the stalemate behind us. Together, we can make a new start.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Barbara Roberts of Oregon, Mayor Vera Katz of Portland, Gov. Mike Lowry of Washington, Gov. Pete Wilson of California, and Gov. Cecil D. Andrus of Idaho.

Remarks Concluding the First Roundtable Discussion of the Forest Conference in Portland

April 2, 1993

I'm going to refrain until the afternoon session from getting into the specifics of what we

ought to do. But I'd like to say something to the people who were on this panel that talked

about the human impact of the present conditions.

Mr. Espy and I are neighbors, and we share a border of the Mississippi River. For almost all the history of this country our two States were the poorest States in America. When agriculture collapsed there in and after the Great Depression, the people who loved my State more than life were forced to leave in huge numbers. As a matter of fact, it's the only way I got elected President. Every third voter in Illinois and Michigan and in the inland empire in California was from Arkansas. [Laughter] But it bespoke a terrible inability to manage a process of change so that people could stay with their roots and their culture and their lives.

Then we got everything going again. And then when he and I came of age in the early eighties and began to assume positions of responsibility, we had another horrible structural collapse in the rural areas and the small towns along the Mississippi River because agriculture and the labor-intensive, low-scale, low-wage industries both collapsed at the same time. And our little towns were turned into ghost towns. We had whole counties, county after county after county, with 20, 25 percent unemployment.

What we found was when we talk about managing the process of change, it was like a lot of what Nadine and others have said. Mike, you showed us those pictures. You had people who knew they had to change or they ought to change, but they had a relatively low skill level. They had limits on what kind of opportunities you could immediately put in the small towns, what the Mayor talked about, and they had a horrendous aversion to moving because their life was more than their livelihood. And then it all became complicated by the incredible

pressures on family life, which led more and more families to disintegrate under the burden. And Mike and I literally began our careers dealing with the broken pieces of people's lives against that background.

I say that only to make this point: I cannot repeal the laws of change. In every State in every area of this country the average 18-year-old will change the nature of work seven or eight times in a lifetime now, in a global economy. People who take jobs as bank tellers, for example, even if they keep working for the banks, 10 years after they started what they do will be different because of technology and because of the changes in the economy.

But what we have to find a way to do is to try to make it possible for more people to be faithful to their cultural roots and their way of life and to work through this process in a human way. And if you look at it, there's a lot of analogy here to all these defense workers that are on the food lines in southern California now. I mean, they did what they thought they were supposed to do. They won the cold war, and then we just cut back on defense spending. There they were in the street; nobody had even a theory about how they might go through the kind of process Larry described and be given the opportunity to reclaim their own destiny.

I don't pretend that any of this is easy, but I want you to know that at least some of us have a feel for what this must be like in those little towns. And we'll do what we can.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and timber business owner Nadine Bailey.

Remarks at the Conclusion of the Forest Conference in Portland *April 2, 1993*

I want to thank all of you for being here and for sitting through this long day, and all of the participants for everything you've done. I'd like to thank the Cabinet for coming and participating and the Vice President and our staff for all the work they did to put this meeting together.

One of the things that has come out of this meeting to me loud and clear is that you want us to try to break the paralysis that presently controls the situation, to move and to act. I hope that as we leave here we are more committed to working together to move forward than perhaps we were when we came.