

The Public

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EDITORIAL

The Worst "Haunt" of All.

The Cabinet Society for the Suppression of Back-from-Elbaism has been having a lot of trouble with a ghost. The Indian name of the ghost is, Afraid-of-Possible-Disclosures, and it has been under the management of Mr. Gifford Pinchot. But if there is anything that should be disclosed, why not disclose it? Should crimes against the people—if such have been committed—be used for public or for private ends?

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Pinchot the Idealist.

The President has dismissed the Chief Forester, Gifford Pinchot, from the public service. The reason—Pinchot appealed to the country over the President's head in the Alaska coal land cases, his appeal taking the form of a letter to Senator Dilliver which was read in the Senate. It was a case of insubordination, if subordination be stringently construed; for there is a Taft-made rule that things must not be said publicly or given out to the press by government department employees, with reference to the affairs of the departments, until they have been censored by the head of the department. Pinchot had talked with Secretary Wilson about the letter, and the Secretary had not told him not to send it. On the other hand, he had not given permission for its sending; and he had "advised" against it. Nevertheless, Pinchot sent the letter—which was a justification of the

whole anti-Ballinger record of the Forest Service, and of Glavis the Land Office Inspector who had been discharged for too great zeal against the Cunningham coal claims, by the President himself. Glavis appealed to Taft over Ballinger's head, and was fired by wire by Taft. Pinchot appealed to the people over the President's head, and was fired with almost telegraphic suddenness by the same august Chief Magistrate.

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Who are these men who risked the penalty of dismissal in these Cunningham cases? What are their motives? Are they selfish? Are the men themselves strivers for publicity? Are they small men run mad? Are they great and unselfish souls sorely mistaken? Or are they unselfish patriots striving against odds to prevent the looting of the public domain? Passing by Mr. Glavis, whose acts cannot be explained on any basis of selfishness, let us consider this man Pinchot. He is rich and cultured. He is able—that is admitted. No one—not even the New York Sun—doubts his integrity. He created the profession of forestry in this country. He is a man of sense in practical ways; for his department is the model of all the government services in business methods. Loving trees, he has sought to serve the race through forestry. He has adopted the faith that the earth belongs to the race, and that we of the present hold it only in usufruct for the race. He has never been a lime-lighter nor a grand-stander, so it must have taken the strongest considerations to induce him to take the center of the stage now. He was for years about all there was of the American Forestry Association, and is said to have paid its bills. He is known to have paid the expenses of the White House Conference of Governors out of his own pocket. He wanted a good secretary two years ago, and the man he wanted was able to command twice what the government was authorized to pay; Pinchot paid the difference out of his own pocket, that the Forest Service and the nation might be well served. All the time he was keeping in the background. He whispered "Conservation" into Roosevelt's ears, and Roosevelt shouted it to the world. Pinchot wanted nothing except to save the public domain and to see the forests in the way of restoration. It is a religion with him. Fitted for a cabinet position, he is said to have declined it because he could do more good in the Forest Service. Of all men in the public service, Gifford Pinchot has seemed to follow the highest ideals, and been guided by the purest motives.

Such is the man who has suddenly violated the letter of official propriety, and sent out to the people the message that the Administration is allowing the nation to be robbed of billions of dollars' worth of coal. No one can doubt that in Pinchot's mind the alternative before him was violation of his official instructions or treason to the interests of the people. Is he, the trained public man, versed in all the tortuosities of Washington bureaucracy, likely to have been mistaken about this? Is he likely to have been so thoroughly convinced of the sinister nature of the Ballinger administration, unless something was really wrong? Would Pinchot have thus carried this fight on from month to month against the President himself, if he had not been sure of his ground? Everyone must hope to see Ballinger and Taft—for the one cannot be smirched now without the other being tainted—exculpated. Just now, however, they stand accused as much by the weight of the integrity and ability of Pinchot as by the known facts, of acts which will stand a lot of exculpation. However the matter may turn out, Pinchot will be credited with the sacrifice of a position of great power for the sake of an ideal—an act of a sort too seldom seen in this age. And along with Pinchot stands Glavis. This is not a heroic age, perhaps, but in both these men the nation will see much of heroism.

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A Question of "Conservation."

While the world of the United States is discussing the loss of Mr. Pinchot, the conservator, from the forestry function of the Federal government, it is interesting to note the loss of that fine name "Conservation" as the title of the magazine published by the American Forestry Association. In an announcement to the members of the Association, made under date of January 1, 1910, is to be found the following, shall we say "wary" statement?

The Directors, after careful consideration at two meetings, and consultation with members of the Advisory Board, have decided to restore to the name of the magazine the word "Forestry," which identifies its especial work better than the inclusive and somewhat vague title "Conservation,"—coupling with it "American," so that the magazine will hereafter be known as "American Forestry." This title, they hope, will commend itself to the members as clear and descriptive.

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Mr. Taft Fights "My Policies."

The first shots have rung out and the battle is on! The devoted friends of Mr. Roosevelt and his policies are certainly not in the mass more philo-