

I have a motion to propose, but I'd like to preface the proposal with a brief explanation, which I shall read as I wish it to be a part of the record.

Taconic Lake has only two assets: crystal clear water and an abundance of trees. In this respect it is most unique, for a forest without water, or a lake surrounded by treeless lands, is far less desirable than what we have.

But take away enough of the trees, and you upset a delicate natural balance that is directly responsible for the static condition of the soil and a protection against movement and change. Unbalanced soil shifts...moves...and in our case will so alter the character of the lake as to make it brownish in color, and also muddy, as well as brackish to the taste. And don't think a little change doesn't make a difference. It's like a man who steals one dollar, and another who steals a million. Both are thieves.

We have been cutting trees again this year, and again we have sold the wood for money. Several large areas have been slashed away. Big and small trees have been destroyed uselessly in order to make room for falling timber. Specifically, we have completely denuded Pine Hill, one of the best-known landmarks of this great Rensselaer Plateau. Pine Hill has not only sentimental value to me, for all of us as children used to picnic there thirty or more years ago and climb the trees, but Pine Hill is--or was--a beautiful spot, and of great scientific value to surveyors. I determined the age of one tree among many that have been cut from Pine Hill.

The age of that tree was 58 years. For the tree we received about one dollar, perhaps less, on the basis of three dollars a cord which I understand we were paid for the wood.

And by the way, this wood is listed erroneously on your treasurer's report. It is called lumber. We did not sell lumber, which is much more valuable. We sold chiefly pine and spruce for pulp paper. During the recent war this project could easily have been justified as a patriotic act, but the war was over a year ago. Pulp wood was a glut on the market, because the mills were determined to hold back paper-production for a price-rise. Our own pulp wood lay at the side of the road for many months, because the mills refused to take it until assurance of a price-rise in paper was forthcoming. The price-rise eventually came forth, and so the wood was carted away from the roadside.

Now, the motion I wish to propose is justifiable for two reasons: First, because as a scientist I believe that removal of large batches of timber-growth for any purpose whatever threatens the balance and character of topography, and, in our specific case, is wrong. I don't ask anyone to share that belief.

I do ask, however, for everyone here to consider what we are doing. To heat the house we're not merely burning the furniture; we're burning the house itself. And here's why:

We received, as I said, a dollar for the 58-year-old tree on Pine Hill. What happened to the dollar? Most of it went to fix a road. Why did the road need fixing? Because the trucks and tractors used in the timbering project gutted and rutted the roads. Look at any timbering project and see what I mean. The town of Grafton

just finished dumping gravel into holes in the back road leading to Clarence Weeden's house. Go down there now and look at that repaired road. It has been completely re-gutted and rutted by a timbering project nearby.

I call your attention to our road-repair bill. It was \$262.75 last year. It is estimated at \$500 for next year. I will venture to say that at least \$200 worth of damage was done last year by timber trucks and tractors, hauling out pulpwood for which we received \$386.15. So, what did we receive for our priceless wood? Actually less than \$200, or about four dollars per Association member.

And what have we lost? The beauty of Pine Hill. Regardless of other eventual harms from unbalance, losing the beauty of that hill is enough to hurt me. Pine Hill is bare and barren, except for the discarded tops and trimmings, broken saplings, rutted ground, and all the other signs that civilized man has been around trying to make a few dollars. It is also, by the way, a beautiful brush-fire hazard, which all the crystal-clear water in our little lake couldn't extinguish, once it began to blaze.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to ask yourselves this question: Are we wise and right in taking this fifty-year-old timber, and selling it for a few paltry dollars that we do not need? Are we going to continue cleaning off trees, denuding beautiful hills, so that our children and grandchildren will look back and see how smart we were to keep down our dues and still spend thousands of dollars on road-repair every year? Remember that timber cannot be replaced for thirty years at least, and only then

by expert forestry supervision. Think of what we have done and what we will do, if it isn't stopped. The few dollars may look good on a financial statement, but what good is the money, if most of it goes to undo damage wrought by the money-making project itself?

This Taconic Lake Association was not organized and incorporated for anything but social pleasure and relaxation. Therefore, we have no moral right, and perhaps no legal right, to enter into money-making schemes that deplete our meagre assets. Would you sell your lake water to a commercial bottling company? Why not, nature will replace it? If you wouldn't permit that, how can you continue selling your trees?

We should be able to pay for our social pleasure and relaxation from our pockets personally. We should not depend upon a penny-pinching lumber sale that makes money for the laborers, processors and the lumber mills, and actually depletes our natural beauty and the meagre assets. And with this in mind, I should like to propose the following motion:

Taconic Lake Association community assets, whether tangible or intangible, shall never be sold, leased or in any way converted into income to supplement membership dues.