

Mr. Chairman and members of the Conservation Commission. Ladies and gentlemen; I deeply regret that I cannot be present in person and I wish to express my very sincere appreciation to those persons who made possible, this means of presenting my comments. I have often met many of you at similar occasions, no doubt you know what to expect, to those of you who do not, let me say that I do not intend to pull any punches, in order to clarify my position

There are among you many who have been keenly interested in the creation of a wilderness in the Flambeau, many too who have opposed it. Some far longer than most of us, among them To you may I offer my deep respect for your patience and persistence. Let us not forget today, two persons who must be with us in spirit, Aldo Leopold and Judge Owen, for in spite of years of discouraging effort they never forsook their dreams or their efforts in this behalf. When this wilderness becomes a fact it will forever be a living memorial to these men, even without benefit of word or plaque.

There is an old proverb, Divide and conquer, it is most effective, but when practiced by those assumed to be in the same camp it is most regrettable. That some may differ in opinion is natural, and democratic but, if it is allowed to become destructive to a cause, then I believe it is imperative to expose the facts behind it. To clarify the situation today, let me say quite clearly The Flambeau Committee has no connection with the C.N.R.A. That some of its members are members of the C.N.R.A. is fact, and that is its only connection.

Mr. Olson has clearly outlined the policy we propose for the Flambeau, and why and how it was developed, if you have not yet argued the points pro and con you will do so. Having known many of you a long time, I do not need to hear your arguments by heart. Lets pick them up, some of you having spotted the magnificent veneers and sawlogs make no bones about wanting them for your mills, to you they represent dollars and cents, and therefore you claim that preserving them in their natural state is wasteful, that they have become so scarce it is a crime to allow them to follow their natural cycle. Gentlemen I grant you such trees are tragically scarce. But you have no one to blame but yourselves, we have been out of the dark ages of forestry to long for you to hide behind ignorance. Hindsight has been lacking for some time. You have been and are now failing to plan your forest program to provide for this type of forest products. By the time you wake up this very wilderness may be the means of redeeming ourselves in forestry. This is in fact the greatest reason for preserving trees within it. For it may well provide the knowledge and seed for future forests. One thing is certain the few left there now, cannot begin to solve the problem of scarcity in these two items. It's like pouring water down an empty well. Oh yes; there are a few dollars there today at the expense of tomorrow. But there are other means of income in those woods, in the very trees themselves, and you can harvest it over and over, and still have the tree instead of the stump. In a report I once read on Minnesota, the statement was made that they could sell everything in the forest, except the whisper of the pines. We maintain you can sell the whisper of the pines at such a profit that you wont have to sell anything else, and prosper as you never have before.

*Archie Schmitt*