

or not. I am referring to the 12,000 acres of timberland in this area of the country, with 150 million board feet on it was sold to a firm that was reported in the Wall Street Journal of January 2, I believe, to be representing Japanese interests.

What would you think of a chain of such transactions, whereby owners of private land decided to sell that timberland to Japanese interests, which would mean that they would have the legal right to harvest it, or mow it, which would not be certainly in the best forest conservation interests of the country, even though they are private lands? This particular story quoted a representative of the company, and I feel sympathetic to the company. They are selling it because they just could not profitably manufacture it into plywood in this case, in view of the high cost of the stumpage.

If this pattern of sale should develop, do you think then we ought to, in the interests of a sound forest conservation program, adopt some restrictions even by legislation if necessary?

Mr. CLIFF. I do not know how to answer that, Senator Morse. The private landowner has a right to sell his property to others, and I do not know of any restrictions on sales to citizens or companies of friendly nations. This kind of a thing has implications that go far beyond my experience, and I just hesitate to make an off-the-cuff comment on it. It could create problems. It is not a sure thing; I mean the possibilities are just as good that the new owners of this land will treat it as good as the old owners, perhaps better.

Senator MORSE. I would not think so.

Mr. CLIFF. The Japanese have good forestry practices in their own country.

Senator MORSE. I am not convinced.

Well, I only want to make this brief comment. I do not accept the premise that the private owners of timber in this country are free to do anything they want to do any more than you and I are free to do with our real property anything that we want to do with it, if what we are doing with it contravenes public interests.

We pay just compensation for it is we want to follow an antipublic course. I said earlier in these hearings, that all of our Federal timber law is based upon, when you get down to its basic legislative intent, a trustee relationship that the Government assumes for the interests of the American people over this natural resource. When we set up a Forest Service and a BLM to service the private timber industry of the country, the private parties become, in a sense, partners with the Federal Government in a sustained-yield program, and a wise administration of that Federal timber. In the course of this they get certain benefits of the administration in addition to the benefits of their private holdings.

If they are going to take the advantage that grows out of that kind of a system of Federal trusteeship laws, then they have some obligations to use their timber in relationships to Federal timber that does not do violence to the public interest. If they do not, then the Government should step in and say, "Sorry, but you are not going to be able to use that private land of yours in a manner that contravenes the public interests."

This goes back to the whole power of eminent domain. It goes back to the whole power of condemnation. It goes back to the whole balance