

FIRED

Pinchot v. Taft: The Fight for Conservation



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After Roosevelt's handpicked successor William Howard Taft won the Election of 1908, Pinchot and Roosevelt devotees became increasingly wary of the incoming President. Pinchot saw Taft's nominee for Secretary of the Interior, Richard Ballinger, as a grave threat to conservation. Pinchot's fears quickly materialized into conflict. The climax of this conflict became known as the Ballinger-Pinchot Controversy regarding the use of federal coal lands in Alaska. Pinchot publicly criticized Taft and called for a Congressional Investigation into Ballinger's suspicious handling of federal lands. While Pinchot got his Congressional Investigation, Taft responded by firing Pinchot for insubordination in January 1910. Taft's break with the Roosevelt Administration was now complete.