

I get about policy considerations that are being discussed in the Department. It is possible that some mistakes are going to be made, but I hope not.

I do not want to expose any controversies at this point because I prefer to give you an opportunity to come to grips with them. I will discuss them with you later when you are in a better position to do so.

But the water quality standards program is the big challenge to the Department. As you know, I had some real reservations about the proposal to transfer this program to the Department of the Interior. It did not reflect upon the competence of any member of the Department, but I just didn't feel this was the place to put it at that time.

I think that the Department has yet to meet the challenge of the water quality standards program. I am not going to go into any further detail but this is a challenge and it is a test.

The State water quality standards were submitted to the Department as required by law prior to July 1 of this year. I think not more than 12—unless I have missed some recent ones—have been approved in whole or in part. There is a big job yet to be done. What is done will be the basis for our water quality control effort for years to come. It is terribly important and I hope and I know that you will address yourself to it as one of the first priority tasks with which you will be confronted.

I think the best way I could express my confidence in your ability to deal with this is to express that confidence in the context of this discussion of the very difficult problems with which I think you are going to have to grapple.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Muskie.
Senator Burdick.

Senator BURDICK. Mr. Chairman, I want to echo again the sentiment expressed by my colleagues.

I, too, have known Mr. Edwards very favorably these past 6 or 7 years. I have found him to be a man of great competence.

I am sure you are aware, Mr. Edwards, of the magnitude of your job. I think you have one of the toughest jobs in the country right now. We not only have polluted rivers and polluted lakes—and large lakes—but we have 10,000 lakes in one State alone in various stages of putrefaction. I am referring to the fresh water lakes in the northern regions of our country.

Civilization came to some of those areas less than 100 years ago, yet they are in various stages of becoming boggy and actually drying up. I certainly hope you also will give your attention to the small fresh water lakes of this country.

We have had a program whereby the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation builds swimming pools and does many things to provide recreation for the additional leisure time enjoyed in this country. Here we have natural lakes. We can't sit by and let them die out. They are one of our great national assets. I hope you will spend some time on that feature of your job, too.

Mr. EDWARDS. I certainly will, Senator Burdick.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Metcalf.

Senator METCALF. Mr. Edwards, I can only concur with my colleagues.

I have appreciated your ability and initiative and your energy in the job you have performed. I congratulate the President on sending