

I have no other questions, Mr. Chairman.

Senator METCALF. Mr. Wright, this morning it was suggested that area J isn't of wilderness quality. It is crisscrossed with roads, and it has been logged off, and isn't under the definition that we normally have of a wilderness area that is in its primitive and primeval state. In view of the fact that we need the area for other recreational opportunities, wouldn't it be better to preserve the quality of the wilderness and leave area J off?

Mr. WRIGHT. I don't think so, Senator. I have to rely on the regenerative capacity of nature, and the fact that the future act is for the future, perhaps even more so than it is for the present, and that we have to come up with a real sound wilderness system, one which will have adequate acreage, and adequate extent for future generations of Americans. I just simply don't feel that, because of the minor intrusions which now exist in this area, that this is a reason for keeping it out of wilderness designation, because in time, perhaps not too long a time, I think that area J will be a real good wilderness. I might advert to the Shenandoah National Park situation. As you probably know, the National Park Service has a wilderness proposal for Shenandoah National Park over here in Virginia. Now, that area was once inhabited by mountain farmers, and the land had been overhunted, and all the timber had been cut, and there were few fish in the streams. The land, in short, had been badly used, and in the 35 years since that park has been created, you now have mature forests, abundant wildlife, a good watershed, and the land has recovered. So you now have, in Shenandoah, a real good wilderness area, one we think will be a good wilderness area, and we have to rely on this. In my estimation we simply cannot afford to be stingy in putting lands into wilderness for this reason, and what is more, Senator, while it might be an oversimplification, wilderness is a little bit like money in the bank.

What Congress gives, Congress can take away and, if later developments require, we can go through the same procedures of the Wilderness Act to take land out of wilderness that we are going through now to put it in.

Senator METCALF. So you feel that the point that was made this morning is that the intrusion has been so slight that if area J is included in the wilderness area that in a relatively short time it will return to its wilderness characteristics.

Mr. WRIGHT. Yes, sir. As I understand from Wyoming people, that there have been tie cut camps and other intrusions in other areas of the Washakie, and they have pictures which show nothing but a few old stumps remaining there. But timber is maturing now, and looks like wilderness country. I think this is so, yes, sir. I just don't believe we can afford to be purists in our attitude toward wilderness. Otherwise, we will be short changed out of good wilderness land.

Senator METCALF. Thank you very much for a most helpful testimony, Mr. Wright.

Mr. WRIGHT. Thank you.

Senator METCALF. Our next witness is Mr. Lloyd Tupling, representing the Sierra Club. As I understand it, Mr. Tupling—you are an old friend of this committee—that you are going to have some other people from the Sierra Club with you.