

Mr. TAYLOR. Our next witness is Representative William R. Anderson. I understand he can't be here, and in the absence of objection, his statement will be placed in the record at this point.

(The statement referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM R. ANDERSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee: I respectfully submit my statement of: first, full and unconditional support for the concept of a National Scenic Rivers System; second, preference for the plan set forth in H.R. 6588; and third, most earnest endorsement of the Buffalo River of Tennessee for inclusion in the National Scenic Rivers System.

Risking the charge of undue presumption, I will offer my sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties inherent in the venture undertaken by the Committee. There are by conservative count 141 important and eligible rivers in the United States, each with its web of substantial tributaries; I suspect that someone sees a uniquely satisfying and irreplaceable beauty in every one of these waterways. This is doubtless, as it should be. But the Committee is charged with the task of judging among these many rivers, tributaries and their segments to select the few areas which possess the greatest scenic and recreational value for the Nation at large. In some respects the task is akin to judging a beauty contest on the basis of medical reports, poetic testimonials and selected photographs submitted in behalf of the contestants.

It has been my experience that Congressional Hearings are without exception, rich in adjectival constructions and metaphorical innovation. Nonetheless, I suspect that, by their nature, the Scenic Rivers Hearings will afford a remarkable opportunity to the Members of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee to enjoy an unprecedented demonstration of eloquence. For my own modest contribution I can claim status as neither wilderness poet nor as a scientific analyst of the recreational tastes of the American people. I can only transmit the very clearly expressed views of the outdoorsmen of Tennessee and speak from my own personal observations and deep conviction.

I have dwelt in cities and ships for the greater part of my life, surrounded by men and their manufactures, intensely dependent upon the accoutrements of civilization. Yet, when at last I was able to build my home I chose a sight half a mile deep in a Tennessee wilderness tract, overlooking a mile of windy water at the end of a poor access road concerning which I would write "letters to the Editor" were it a public thoroughfare. And I count myself more fortunate with each passing season to have recourse to these quiet, tree-strewn, untrimmed acres by the water. I would think it a sad commentary on the quality of American life if, with our pecuniary and natural abundance, we could not secure for our generation and those to come the existence of, and reasonable access to a substantial remnant of a once great endowment of wild and scenic rivers. My introduction of a Scenic Rivers Bill (H.R. 6588) is motivated by the belief that if rational governmental action is not taken very soon, vital, expansive population and economic forces will irreversibly claim these last wilderness waterways for systematic exploitation in waste disposal, industrial processing and inexpensive transportation. As a vigorous exponent of rural economic development I appreciate very deeply the persuasive inclination to exploit any and all natural resources for industrial gain heedless of disfiguration wrought upon the land.

The nub of the problem is that we are a people of unparalleled economic vigor striving ceaselessly for economic growth while still wishing to retain our magnificent heritage of unspoiled wilderness for enjoyment, contemplation and the irreplaceable spiritual experience of simply wandering in the midst of a rich, undisciplined nature for a day or a week or even an hour. Somehow we must strike a balance between beneficial economic exploitation of our natural resources and our human need for reasonably accessible areas of natural beauty in which to enjoy the leisure that we earn. Where unspoiled rivers are at issue, we must move quickly or forever accept fouled, dammed or industrialized rivers as a cost of affluence. It seems that as urbanization and industrialization rapidly spread and intensify, quickly reducing the number of fresh, lush, wilderness rivers—the human desire to see, boat on, bask and fish in such rivers grows.