

recourse guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution and tried to take your case to court, only to find that no jury of your peers would hear the case. Only a three-man commission, appointed by the court, would listen to you unless you were wealthy enough to spend literally a fortune taking the case to a higher court. How would you or any of us here feel?

All of this sounds like a fictional absurdity—and I wish to heaven it were. Unfortunately, I have in my possession signed, personal affidavits stating that each condition I have suggested has occurred in an area which the Tennessee Valley Authority is clearing of private ownership in western Kentucky. As you know from previous testimony, this area is known as the Tennessee Valley Authority National Recreation Area, or the Land Between the Lakes.

If one or two people complained of mistreatment or unfair assessment of property values, I would think that corroborating evidence ought to be gathered before making an accusation against TVA generally. If I had received only a few complaints, I would believe that some misdirected purchasing agent had been hired accidentally by TVA, and I would expect his superiors to fire him forthwith. However, it is another matter indeed when a mass of evidence from a number of respectable, law-abiding citizens clearly establishes an ugly pattern of unethical and unjust acts so clearly and so extensively as to make such acts appear to be the unquestionable policy of the agency; that is, the Tennessee Valley Authority.

As the congressional representative of these people who have been wronged, I intend to do everything in my power to correct this scandalous situation, and I believe that every Member of Congress, if honestly apprised of the facts, will join me in my efforts.

Let the record be clear that I am a longstanding supporter of the concept of TVA, but my support for the program can never extend to cover the despicable practices of some of the agency's employees. Quite frankly, the most appropriate action I can think of is for the offending employees to be fired and some compensation granted to those who have suffered unduly at their hands, but this is clearly an administrative matter which should be handled without legislative action.

Although the making of awards for mistreatment and forced land sales at unfair prices may well be the subject of congressional action in the future, for the present we must consider the protection of those who have not yet given in to the harassment and threats of the TVA.

The Senate has already approved a bill which provides for a jury trial on petition of either party to a land condemnation proceeding by TVA.

Mr. Chairman, I might add that the vote in the Senate was without a dissenting vote.

Presently, the right of jury trial is provided in the exercise of eminent domain by every other Government agency. I can see no reason why the commission system should be reserved to TVA alone. There may be arguments for the commission system under certain conditions, but the practices of TVA agents make the option of jury trial an absolute necessity to insure justice.

I would warn the committee specifically against the facade of innocence on the part of TVA officials when confronted with complaints.