

Senators Cooper and Baker argued that no arm of the government should be immune to a trial by jury. They also said a change in the TVA procedures might bolster the agency's sagging image.

"The ordinary citizen must feel that he has his day in Court," said Mr. Cooper. Mr. Baker said: "What is at issue is the confidence of the people in the judicial system. There is ample evidence that this confidence is bitterly low at this time."

TVA argued that a "commission hearing would be more comfortable for the small landowner because the setting is informal and no lawyers are required." This is typical of their deceptive statements. Deceptive, in that it presents a kind, fatherly image to the public but is a death trap to the citizen who might be trusting enough to go before the commission without counsel, to be surrounded by TVA's battery of highly qualified attorneys.

TVA said it prefers the commission trial because its prices are consistent. "Consistent" is not necessarily synonymous with "fair". For example: In case of condemnation, TVA employs so-called independent appraisers, who have, up to now, miraculously arrived at the same figure as TVA's lower offer which is presented to the commission.

TVA boasts that 95% of all its land acquisition has been acceptable to the landowners. This is another deceptive statement. Regardless of how unjust and inequitable a price may be, the helpless, defeated landowner signs a contract that contains the clause: "this is a fair offer." These contracts specify the date the landowner must give possession, but do not specify when he will be paid.

TVA has used every available means of destroying the morale of the people. Months before this project was officially in operation, TVA directors and other officials spoke to groups in many surrounding towns, but refused to talk to the people involved. The burden of their message was that the "area had meager natural resources in terms of timber, agriculture, mineral and industrial potential." By sly innuendo, ridicule, false accusation and outright vilification our people have been pictured to the entire nation as nothing more than illiterate outcasts.

Now, a marvelous transformation has taken place. By the simple transfer of title from the native landowners to TVA, this "ugly, garish, impoverished strip of land" has become a beautiful land of enchantment.

No agency of the United States government which exercises the right of Eminent Domain should be in the business of buying and selling land. Condemning the property of people who are denied the right of a trial by jury compounds TVA's injustice.

In 1948, a book, "The Rivers of America: The Tennessee (Civil War to TVA)" was published. The author, Dr. Donald Davidson, an "internationally renowned historian who did conscientious, painstaking research" told of the ruthless and arrogant operations of TVA from its inception.

In a feature article in the Paducah Sun-Democrat of May 9, 1968, a TVA official is quoted as saying: "TVA is using the same approach to land buying in the Land Between the Lakes it has used in acquiring property for dams and other facilities all along the Tennessee River."

Landowners in the Land Between the Lakes will reap no benefits from trial by jury legislation, since cases in litigation are excluded. But, because this basic right has been denied too many too long, we will continue to oppose TVA's unrestricted activities; believing "it is not only our task to look after the victims of madmen who drive cars in a crowded street, but to do all in our power to stop their driving at all."

To: Members of the Committee on Public Works, House of Representatives,
Congress of the United States, George H. Fallon, Chairman.

From: Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Snipe, Wee Bit o' Heaven, Grand Rivers, Ky.

Re TVA Trial by Jury Bill.

Date: May 15, 1968.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on Public Works, it is indeed gratifying to realize that your in-depth consideration of the land acquisition methods of the Tennessee Valley Authority is taking place.

We speak as residents of the Land Between the Lakes where our property and home "will be required," we were told by TVA in their form letter mandate dated March 31, 1964, for what TVA has described as a "unique experiment" and "public venture" in recreation resource development * * * notwithstanding the fact that there was already 100,000 acres in Federal ownership and boundaries had been agreed upon earlier which honored populated areas.