

I want to make two other main points, Mr. Chairman, with regard to this legislation. This legislation is prospective in its thrust. It is directed toward how we carry on our mining activity hereafter in the Nation at large. There has been, as was shown by the charts, over long years with mining under the old practices, a tremendous amount of destruction done to the surface of land in this country. The bulk of it, about two-thirds of it, has been unreclaimed either by nature or by man.

We took a great deal of pride and still do in this report on "Surface Mining and Our Environment" that I am sure the members of the committee have seen. One of our general conclusions is that there is an enormous task that must be undertaken at some point with regard to reclaiming these lands that already have been strip mined.

This, we estimate, is in terms of cost about three-quarters of a billion dollars and it is a problem that is larger perhaps and different from the problem we had with the dust bowl in the 1930's.

There is discussion between my Department and the Department of Agriculture as to who should have this responsibility in the long run, and whether the States should have some of it. I have always been convinced, myself, that this work will never be done unless the Federal Government does it as a national project and puts up the money, but the thrust of this legislation is to see that we don't confront some future generation with the same problem that we are confronted with today—a failure of conservation, a failure of management, and a tremendous bill of costs that is presented to the country to restore lands.

The final point I want to make is that in the drafting of this legislation, in its presentation here, we are drawing on what I think is the favorable experience we have had during the last 2 years—in terms of the type of legislation we are proposing here—with the water pollution control program which the Congress enacted in 1965. With that program the approach was that of having national legislation in order to put industry on equal footing as near as one can do because—and I will get back to this—there is tremendous gain to the Nation. In this program, too, we are putting the States in a position that if they want to provide the main leadership, if they want to draft adequate surface mine control programs, they will have the main responsibility. This approach does have the great gain to the Nation of having a piece of legislation like this, in which we have the national standards that are applicable, and we put industry on equal footing all over the Nation so that the economics are balanced out in terms of competition.

I think I should report to this committee, too, that at present, I have approved 30 out of the 50 State standards on the water quality control, and we haven't had occasion to take over from the States and set the standards at the national level. There may be two or three or a small handful of States where this will be necessary. It isn't clear yet, but the system is working very well. The States are cooperating and this is essentially the same approach that we propose for surface mining.

To move into my statement, Mr. Chairman, I am going to begin at the bottom of the first page.

It is fair to say that the reclamation of mined land has not been one of the great, long-term natural resource issues of this Nation in the past, but one of tremendous neglect. It is an issue to which most of us awakened only in recent years. This is a result of striking devel-