

I think we are wealthy enough now as a country, I think we know enough about reclamation, about soil conservation, about water quality management, that we can carry out modern mining, using these marvelous machines that are available, and still minimize to the greatest degree possible the damage to the land, maximize its restoration, maximize its usefulness for the future. Knowing who is in the room here today, I would hope that the industry spokesmen and industry representatives will see the constructive potential for this industry if we can have a program of this kind.

I would hope that the State people who are here will see that we want them to provide leadership and initiative. This is encompassed within the concept of this bill and we hope again that they will see that the national approach is the soundest and wisest approach and that they will get busy and exert leadership at the State level.

This completes my statement. It always is a pleasure to appear before the committee.

Senator METCALF. Thank you very much for your very comprehensive and complete discussion of this problem, Mr. Secretary. Senator Nelson?

Senator NELSON. Mr. Secretary, about 3 years ago I spent 3 days flying over Tennessee, Kentucky, parts of Virginia and West Virginia, and a little bit of Ohio and also I have driven through fairly large sections of each of these States except Ohio. I saw more reclamation in your 10 minutes of photographs than I have seen in the numbers of days I have driven through the area, which tells me that this represents some very isolated but dramatic examples of what can be done rather than any typical display of what has been done.

However, I think the real tragedy here is that, in the management of all our resources—water, soil, forests, air, wilderness, scenic beauty—we never move until catastrophe has struck us. We are in that situation, as you well know, respecting the waters of America, and the air and the scenic beauty, and now we are in that situation respecting mining.

What troubles me about it is that, although this is certainly a good step forward, the bill, I think, is too little, too late. Maybe the Congress couldn't pass it all in one bill. I recognize and I believe that as Secretary of the Interior your record ranks among the most distinguished, if not the most distinguished, in regard to concern about our resources of any Secretary in the history of the country. I am not saying this in any way critical of you, because I don't know of anybody who has dedicated as much creative energy and effort toward solving our problems in the field of resources as you have, but this bill doesn't do anything about past damage.

There are about 1,300,000 acres of unreclaimed damaged land east of the Mississippi. The bill that I introduced, as you are aware, undertakes to cooperate with and give aid to local communities and States which own property that needs reclamation, as well as to private owners. It seems to me that, if not in this bill, at some stage right behind it we ought to have legislation that undertakes to do something about the land that has already been destroyed.

Now, if the reason for not making provision for the reclamation of already mined land in this bill is that it would be too expensive a package to pass all at once, then that is the only way I could justify passing legislation that is exclusively prospective in its effect.