

did show us that conditions are deplorable throughout the country, conditions which we hope can be forestalled by a little better foresight on the part of all of us.

First, let me say I am in hearty agreement with the basic purpose of the bill. I also concur that steps must be taken to stimulate and accelerate the efforts of responsible mining companies in developing effective programs to minimize the damage which your slides show to our land and other natural resources caused by surface mining operations. These steps must be taken by the higher echelons of government.

At the same time, Mr. Secretary, those responsible mining companies that are engaged in surface mining are concerned about any proposed legislation that impose controls at the Federal level and in the hope of clarification giving some clearer meaning to some of the sections of the bill, I have a few questions I would like to propound to you.

On page 3 of your statement you say :

In the context of surface mining we do not consider reclamation to mean a restoration of the land to its original condition.

That is a fair statement. You pointed out also that a lot of the pollution that occurs here in the Potomac was caused by subdivision developers who can break the surface of the land and when the rains come it washes the silt and clay into the river and we get pollution from that source.

So there must be a reasonable accommodation here of proper mining of the surface or development of the surface and still be able to live with conditions that may be imposed by the Federal Government.

I fail to find any section of the bill that says what you say in your statement here. Why doesn't the bill say that, in the context of surface mining, reclamation is not considered to mean a restoration of the land to its original condition. I don't find such language in the bill.

Mr. UDALL. Well, I think certainly the language in the bill and the language in the report of the committee will want to address itself to this total problem. On the basis of what I have seen the best result if you are going to carry out a particular mining operation oftentimes doesn't require restoring land to its previous condition.

Now, I have watched the National Coal Board of Britain with great interest. They usually take the topsoil off, do their mining, put it back on, and end up with more fertile fields than they had in the beginning.

You see some of this in southern Illinois and in some of the flatland areas where coal is mined. In southern Kansas I saw coal mine areas that are now excellent fish and wildlife recreation areas because fortunately the mining companies carried out their activity in such a way that they ended up with fresh water lakes. They created a series of lakes and the lakes are linked together.

If we could get industry to do more of this, to not just pile the overburden aside, and this reclamation is the end result achieved, you might wind up with a different environment. Out in the arid west—the desert country where I am from—not much grows on the land in any event, and when you scoop out a big open pit copper mine, well, unfortunately there is not much you can do when you get through. You couldn't get much to grow even if you had some topsoil, at least nothing that would be productive, and so we have all kinds of problems.