

This Nation cannot afford to leave reclamation to industry's discretion. It is doubtful that there is any land in America that we can afford to sacrifice for its minerals. If reclamation cannot be assured stripping should not be permitted.

The Nation's lust for minerals is both insatiable and interminable. As long as civilized men inhabit America they will quarry stone and dig for ores and fuels. The ever-growing need for electricity is virtually certain to assure the extraction of fossil fuels on a colossal scale for many decades. Since our descendants must inhabit, cultivate, and rest upon the same land we now mine, a decent regard for their well-being makes effective reclamation of each damaged acre an absolute imperative. The English, Czechs, and Germans have demonstrated that total reclamation of strip-mined lands can be achieved. For generations they have stripped away overlying soil and stone to remove the minerals their economic well-being requires, but their restoration has been so prompt and effective that today it is often impossible to tell where mined lands begin and undisturbed areas end. And anything the English, Czechs, and Germans can do, Americans can do also. In fact, I believe we can do it better.

Scarcely a State in the Union today is without its problem in this vital respect. As William Greider reported in April 14, 1968, issue of the Louisville Courier-Journal, strip mining is spreading westward and soon the world's biggest pits will operate far beyond the Mississippi. Streams cross State lines and carry with them mud from spoil heaps. The mud settles in the beds of rivers or, overflowing, is deposited on croplands. This choking sediment must be endlessly dug away by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers, or some other Federal agency. Failing this, the rivers must be leveed to restrain the growing threat of floods. A strip mine on the headwaters of a stream adversely affects the entire watershed, which may lie within parts of several States. Too, loosened soil becomes a victim of the wind which may cross State lines. And the products move in interstate commerce. It follows that since the industries and their problems are national in scope they require Federal solutions.

While all surface mining procedures esthetic damage disrupts ecologies, and necessitates eventual reclamation, it is the coal industry that presents the most urgent challenge. At present most of our coal is mined in areas of heavy rainfall and near population centers. The terrible blight produced by the surface mining of this fuel is swelling by the thousands of acres annually. A flight across the mountains of southern Appalachia, western Kentucky, and broad areas in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio reveals a land churned into ruin by bulldozers, power shovels, and highlifts. The Governors and legislators of these ravaged States have talked for years about the ills that flow so ominously from the strip pits and have passed numerous little laws to curb the abuses. These laws have been amended and modified and tightened in many of the States. But during all the orgy of legislating—and we have been through it to the full in Kentucky—the orgy of mining continues while precious little reclamation occurs. Simply put, the States have failed woefully in their efforts to restrain the industrial juggernaut that is devouring your land and mine.

Large parts of southern Appalachia are threatened with extinction in West Virginia, western Maryland, western Virginia, western Penn-