

Senator METCALF. Thank you very much.

Mr. WIDNER. We represent a new area that is being opened up in western Missouri, 18,000 acres that will be mined by the Gulf Oil Co., and we are sent here by the residents of that community.

Senate bill 3132 will help us immeasurably because we will be at a standstill as we have been for 75 years because we cannot get anything done toward reclaiming that land. Senator Jordan has been wanting to know what land is worth before and after. Before that land was worth \$250 or \$300 an acre. Land in that area is being abandoned as it is worked and being turned back, 50 percent of it, to the counties and the rest is going in as wasteland and valued at \$5 an acre.

I bought some at \$35 an acre and right beside it I am putting in an irrigation deal that will cost \$40,000. I operate about 4,000 acres there, and this will be worth about \$40,000 and that land right beside it that I bought for \$35 will be worth \$300 an acre.

That is the before and after.

I want to say and I want to impress upon you that bill 3132 will help us wonderfully. Now, as to what is going to happen to us in our neighborhood of 18,000, I want to say that 70,000 acres in Kansas and 60,000 acres in Missouri have been mined and, contrary to what we heard here yesterday, none of it has been reclaimed. Well, let's say that a negligible part has been reclaimed and the rest has been there for 5, 10, 15, or 75 years and will not be reclaimed unless something is done here.

I would like to introduce at this time Mr. Spurling. He is also a farmer in that area. He has a statement he wants to read to you and then I want to make a few comments afterward, but if you want to ask us any questions we would welcome them.

Senator METCALF. We will refrain from interrogating until after we hear from Mr. Spurling.

Mr. SPURLING. Senator Metcalf and Senator Jordan, I am John Spurling of Fort Scott, Kans. I am chairman of the Crawford County Soil Conservation District, also chairman of the Southeast Kansas Reclamation Committee. I am also a farmer and a conservationist.

In Kansas, approximately 70,000 acres have been disturbed by strip mining and according to statistics there are more than 1 million acres that can and will be mined for coal in the future.

In the State of Missouri approximately 60,000 acres have been surface mined and likewise according to statistics more than 1 million acres will be mined. Thousands and thousands of acres have already been purchased or leased by mining companies.

Strip mining in the United States has grown into a tremendously large business. Our natural resources of land and water are being depleted at a rate beyond imagination due almost entirely in some States to unabated strip and surface mining.

In Kansas the average size farm is 350 acres. The 70,000 acres that have already been mined represent 200 farmers who have been forced from the land. Now we all know that each farmer in the United States produces enough food for 38 people.

In other words, for each 350 acres of land in Kansas that are destroyed by surface mining, 38 people must find food products from some other source, but with proper control and reclamation requirements we can have both farming and mining.