

of you who do not know, orphan acreage is that acreage that was left over and abandoned before there was law or public opinion against such practice.

I believe that the image of the whole surface mining industry, as well as the infamous image of the local State and Federal officials, who the public believes are allowing this to happen, will be greatly improved if not completely eliminated by the most expedient reclamation possible of this orphan acreage.

From a four-State aerial survey I have found that nature itself has made considerable progress in reclaiming much of this orphan land; however, in the past much of this natural vegetation would have been redisturbed by the necessities of having to build roads to get ground machinery and truckloads of material on to these benches to reseed them.

Now, with the introduction of the tried, tested, and proven method of aircraft application, this natural vegetation can remain undisturbed and man can assist nature by adding grass seeds, tree seeds, and fertilizer to these orphan soil banks and return these Appalachian Mountains to the beauty nature originally had planned.

Let us consider the time and cost involved in the project. First of all, with the use of aircraft this project would not take 20 years, as was previously suggested; instead, I believe with a sufficient appropriation, and using the best aircraft available for this type of flying, piloted by highly skilled mountain pilots and supervised in a safe and orderly manner, the whole of the Appalachian region could be reclaimed, gentlemen, in less than 3 years.

With the use of ground machinery there is no doubt that at least one-third of any appropriation for the Appalachian region would be spent on the building of roads to make these areas accessible. With the aircraft this expenditure is nonexistent.

In the State of Kentucky, as an example, there are estimated to be some 70,000 acres of orphan land, approximately 40,000 of which has been stripped and auger mined in the mountainous terrain of eastern Kentucky. The rest is area strip mined in central and western Kentucky.

I do not know the cost of grading these area strip mines back to the approximate contour of the surrounding terrain, but the seeding and fertilizing of this 70,000 acres could be done at a total cost of approximately \$35 per acre, and even less where the condition of the ground necessitates less fertilizer than some of the acid areas.

As president of the Precision Aerial Reclamation Co., I wish to go on record as opposing the Surface Mining Reclamation Acts at issue here, inasmuch as I feel that Federal supervision of the mining industry is unnecessary, that the arrow of the whole problem points directly at the vast amount of orphan acreage existing, and that, as an alternate solution, instead of Federal supervision of the mining industry, the Federal Government should make sufficient appropriation to reclaim this orphan acreage with necessary seed and fertilizers in the most expedient way possible.

I would like to emphasize, Mr. Chairman, that the only role the Federal Government should take is in the reclamation of this orphan acreage.