

in making a living. This industry makes a very significant contribution to that process in the West.

The objective of the Secretary in protecting the public interest, it seems to me, is twofold. One, to prevent unnecessary erosion of the land following mining operations and the pollution of water that might be involved, although in the phosphate mining industry this is not as great a problem as it is in other kinds of mining, and two, the reseeded of the land so that it can again sustain wildlife and cattle and sheep.

All of this is entirely proper. I have been greatly concerned in my years in the Senate that proper conservation be practiced by the Government. It is a part of the responsibility that the Government owes to all its people.

We have seen some reckless and irresponsible ravaging of the land by mining companies. We have seen it in the West, in my State, where beautiful upland mountain valleys which were of great value and of recreational use to the people, were simply destroyed by dredging operations that left piles of sterile rubble, all for the purpose of some transitory profit made in reckless mining ventures. Such an attitude and such action cannot be justified. In many ways that has led public opinion to be quite adverse to mining as a whole because people see these examples of outrageous destruction and conclude that that is representative of what happens when the mining starts. I think that has had an unfortunate impact on the whole mining industry because certainly that is not representative of the way in which the responsible mining companies are attempting to conduct their business these days. But I think it leads to the swinging of the pendulum to the opposite extreme and to widespread support of regulations which might go much farther than the public interest really requires: punitive regulations against mining.

I think it is the duty of this committee, which has both the conservation and recreation interests of the country to protect, as well as the mining industry, to see to it that a proper balance is struck.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that we will continue to pay close heed to the proposed regulations of the Department of the Interior that should be forthcoming soon and to follow this along in such a way that we can reach a working arrangement that will both protect the reasonable interests that the public has in the proper conservation of the lands concerned and also permit the industry to go forward with the kind of operations that contribute so much to the economy and the well-being of the people of our State.

Thank you very much.

Senator METCALF. Thank you, Senator Church.

I, too, want to thank you, again, for a description of your industry and this legislation and the regulations which the Secretary can put into effect upon leasing of the public lands that would affect you.

I know that I do not have to dwell on the subject that Senator Church has mentioned. This committee is composed of men who are as sympathetic to the mining industry as you can find anywhere in the United States.

We are concerned about your welfare and the welfare of our constituents. You have made a tremendous contribution to the development of resources of our area.