

And since the despoilation of our lands by unregulated surface mining has had a degrading effect on land, water and our economy, we feel that the inclusion into the act the prospect of mandatory federal regulation of the surface or strip-mining activities if an adequate State plan is not submitted within two years and federal penalties for those persons failing to comply with federal surface mining regulations are indeed necessary for the action required to reclaim our ruined lands and to see that further surface mining is conducted in harmony with continuing land usage.

We believe that the long-range comprehensive programs to reclaim lands and water damaged by coal mining, to promote an effective continuing land-use program and to prevent further detriment to the Nation from such mining operations contained in the "Mined Lands Conservation Act of 1957," will be supported by conservationists and sportsmen nationwide.

The integration of reclamation work into the mining cycle with realistic time limits established for the completion of reclamation as provided in the bill will prove to be a definite aid to the prompt return to productivity of the coal minded area for wildlife. The long-range benefits such as halting erosion, pollution, damage to natural beauty and the loss of wildlife habitat are of immeasurable future value. Here too, authorization of federal grants for research projects and the rendering of technical advisory assistance to mining operators in States with approved standards for mining, reclamation, conservation, protection and management of coal mined lands, will provide an excellent base for new knowledge to be used in the reclamation and conservation of lands and waters adversely affected by the coal mining operations.

The non-renewable minerals may have been stripped from the surface of strip-mined lands but we feel that passage of the proposed bill will be of the highest value to renewing the land's productivity once more for recreational purposes. Again, Mr. Chairman, we would like to express our unequivocal support of these bills, S. 3132, S. 3126 and S. 217. In terms of public benefit, logic and fairness, this proposed legislation ought to be made public policy and public law.

Senator BURDICK. The committee will recess until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m. the committee recessed, to reconvene at 9 a.m., Thursday, May 2, 1968.)