

Potomac—it is going to interfere with some values that ought to be preserved, and the values which the President, the Commander in Chief of the Corps of Engineers, has asked be preserved.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JONES. Thank you very much, gentlemen. We can appreciate your great concern in the fact that you have taken so much effort to apprise and inform the committee of the transactions that have taken place involving this whole matter. Thank you very much.

Our next witness is Mr. Michael Frome, columnist for the American Forests magazine of the American Forestry Association, and conservation editor of Field and Stream.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL FROME, COLUMNIST, AMERICAN FORESTS MAGAZINE, AMERICAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATION, AND CONSERVATION EDITOR, FIELD AND STREAM

Mr. FROME. Essentially I believe that a writer's words are meant to be read rather than heard. But I appreciate deeply the interest of this committee, and of its members individually, in the tragic affair of Hunting Creek and your willingness to probe the broad implications behind it. Therefore, since I have lived in the area for 17 years, I felt that I must come to be of service to you as best I can.

I might point out that representatives of national conservation organizations—the American Forestry Association, the Wilderness Society, National Wildlife Federation, who I recognize, and others—are in the room today because the issue of Hunting Creek is not a local affair: It is a national crisis in conservation and in morality of government.

How I became involved in Hunting Creek is related in my column in American Forests, copies of which have been given to you and which I offer for the record.

A lady of Alexandria telephoned and asked how I could live in good conscience saving birds and beauty in distant places while watching the desecration of birds and beauty in my own community. "Are you," she asked, "like the Department of the Interior, which screams like a bold hawk but behaves more like a frightened chicken?"

Subsequently, I learned that the Virginia Legislature in 1964 passed H.B. 591, authorizing the sale of the historic and scenic streambed of Hunting Creek, one of the most important resting areas of diving ducks along the Potomac River. I must say, as a Virginia citizen, it grieves me that this action was taken by our legislature without public hearings, without study by the Department of Conservation; and when Mr. Reuss spoke of the need for coordination I felt desperately the need for greater coordination and initiative on the part of the States, particularly my own.

I do hope, when your committee chooses to study Hunting Creek on the site, that you will invite the Commission of Conservation of the State of Virginia, which is headed by Carlisle Humelsine, the president of Colonial Williamsburg, to come and participate with you in your study.

The bill was sponsored by Delegate James Thomson of Alexandria. The purchasers were specified as the Hunting Towers Operating Co. and Francis T. Murtha, trustee, the latter being an official of the In-