

Mr. VANDER JAGT. Now, as you have said, and as I agree, this is a rather confusing matter. You said there were some checkered spots in it and while I agree that it is confusing and there are some things that are checkered, I thought there was one thing that I understood with crystal clarity. Now I am confused again, and I can't really believe that I don't understand it.

Because I have sounded like a broken record through these hearings, by repeatedly asking the witnesses: "In your opinion, would this adversely affect the conservation and recreational values of the area?" I understood from all the expert witnesses who have testified to say that it was their opinion that it would adversely affect the conservation and recreational values—that such was their opinion in 1964, and that it remained their opinion in October when Secretary Cain reversed the position of the Department. It remained their position in April when Secretary Cain reversed his reversal, and it remained their position at the moment they sat testifying before us.

Now, have I misunderstood what they told us?

Mr. BLACK. No, I don't believe you have, Mr. Congressman. I think that I would have two responses. First, that it is a matter of degree. I indicated earlier, or I thought I did, that there will be some disruption. I would expect that any change in any natural area is going to find conservation interests that will be affected, perhaps adversely, in some cases seriously, and in those cases we have to act with very strong—in a very strong fashion.

It is a question here, however, first, of degree and, secondly, the logical progression from the technical findings, which are within the expertise of the bureaus and other experts, to the conclusions that they draw. I felt that there was a breakdown in real logic, and again I was strongly influenced—I didn't hear Dr. Gottschalk's testimony yesterday but I was strongly influenced—by his expression to me that his principal concern had been one of precedent, and that insofar as fish and wildlife values were concerned, he felt that the disruption of them was not measurable.

If I misunderstood Dr. Gottschalk, I am surprised, because I was very explicit on this on a number of occasions with him.

Mr. VANDER JAGT. Let me read to you where I asked Dr. Gottschalk the question, at page 115 of the transcript from yesterday:

Could you tell me, for my information, does the Bureau have a position at this time as to whether the filling in of these acres would adversely affect conservation and recreation in this area?

Dr. GOTTSCHALK. The Bureau has never changed its position.

Then he goes on to explain much of what you have just explained, and that he understands you have to take other matters into consideration. But what we are interested in is his opinion, and after that explanation, I said:

While you can support the overall decision, if we get it narrowed down to just whether or not it would adversely affect wildlife and conservation and recreation, would it be your opinion that it would have an adverse effect on that interest? Is that correct?

And Dr. Gottschalk replied: "This is true."

Now—

Mr. BLACK. I don't argue with that, sir. "Adverse" of course, is not an absolute term, and in my best judgment it is that the adverse