

The message ~~and accompanying papers~~
referred to the Committee on

Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union
and ordered to be printed.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

For centuries Americans have drawn strength and inspiration from the beauty of our country. It would be a neglectful generation indeed, indifferent alike to the judgment of history and the command of principle, which failed to preserve and extend such a heritage for its descendants.

Yet the storm of modern change is threatening to blight and diminish in a few decades what has been cherished and protected for generations.

A growing population is swallowing up areas of natural beauty with its demands for living space, and is placing increased demand on our overburdened areas of recreation and pleasure.

The increasing tempo of urbanization and growth is already depriving many Americans of the right to live in decent surroundings. More of our people are crowding into cities and being cut off from nature. Cities themselves reach out into the countryside, destroying streams and trees and meadows as they go. A modern highway may wipe out the equivalent of a fifty acre park with every mile. And people move out from the city to get closer to nature only to find that nature has moved farther from them.

The modern technology, which has added much to our lives can also have a darker side. Its uncontrolled waste products are menacing the world we live in, our enjoyment and our health. The air we breathe, our water, our soil and wildlife, are being blighted by the poisons and chemicals which are the by-products of technology and industry. The skeletons of discarded cars litter the countryside. The same society which receives the rewards of technology, must, as a cooperating whole, take responsibility for control.

To deal with these new problems will require a new conservation. We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and

charm of our cities. Our conservation must be not just the classic conservation of protection and development, but a creative conservation of restoration and innovation. Its concern is not with nature alone, but with the total relation between man and the world around him. Its object is not just man's welfare but the dignity of man's spirit.

In this conservation the protection and enhancement of man's opportunity to be in contact with beauty must play a major role.

This means that beauty must not be just a holiday treat, but a part of our daily life. It means not just easy physical access, but equal social access for rich and poor, Negro and white, city dweller and farmer.

Beauty is not an easy thing to measure. It does not show up in the gross national product, in a weekly pay check, or in profit and loss statements. But these things are not ends in themselves. They are a road to satisfaction and pleasure and the good life. Beauty makes its own direct contribution to these final ends. Therefore it is one of the most important components of our true national income, not to be left out simply because statisticians cannot calculate its worth.

And some things we do know. Association with beauty can enlarge man's imagination and revive his spirit. Ugliness can demean the people who live among it. What a citizen sees every day is his America. If it is attractive it adds to the quality of his life. If it is ugly it can degrade his existence.

Beauty has other immediate values. It adds to safety whether removing direct dangers to health or making highways less monotonous and dangerous. We also know that those who live in blighted and squalid conditions are more susceptible to anxieties and mental disease.

Ugliness is costly. It can be expensive to clean a soot smeared building, or to build new areas of recreation when the old landscape could have been preserved far more cheaply.

Every major river system is now polluted. Waterways that were once sources of pleasure and beauty and recreation are forbidden to human contact and objectionable to sight and smell. Furthermore, this pollution is costly, requiring expensive treatment for drinking water and inhibiting the operation and growth of industry.

In spite of the efforts and many accomplishments of the past, water pollution is spreading. And new kinds of problems are being added to the old:

- Waterborne viruses, particularly hepatitis, are replacing typhoid fever as a significant health hazard.
- Mass deaths of fish have occurred in rivers over-burdened with wastes.
- Some of our rivers contain chemicals which, in concentrated form, produce abnormalities in animals.
- Last summer 2,600 square miles of Lake Erie -- over a quarter of the entire Lake -- were almost without oxygen and unable to support life because of algae and plant growths, fed by pollution from cities and farms.

In many older cities storm drains and sanitary sewers are interconnected. As a result, mixtures of storm water and sanitary waste overflow during rains and discharge directly into streams, bypassing treatment works and causing heavy pollution.

In addition to our air and water we must, each and every day, dispose of a half billion pounds of solid waste. These wastes -- from discarded cans to discarded automobiles -- litter our country, harbor vermin, and menace our health. Inefficient and improper methods of disposal increase pollution of our air and streams.

Almost all these wastes and pollutions are the result of activities carried on for the benefit of man. A prime national goal must be an environment that is pleasing to the senses and healthy to live in.

Our Government is already doing much in this field. We have made significant progress. But more must be done.

Federal Government Activity

I am directing the heads of all agencies to improve measures to abate pollution caused by direct agency operation, contracts and cooperative agreements. Federal procurement practices must make sure that the Government equipment uses the most effective techniques for controlling pollution. The Administrator of General Services has already taken steps to assure that motor vehicles purchased by the Federal Government meet minimum standards of exhaust quality.

Clean Water

Enforcement authority must be strengthened to provide positive controls over the discharge of pollutants into our interstate or navigable waters. I recommend enactment of legislation to:

- Provide, through the setting of effective water quality standards, combined with a swift and effective enforcement procedure, a national program to prevent water pollution at its source rather than attempting to cure pollution after it occurs.
- Increase project grant ceilings and provide additional incentives for multi-municipal projects under the waste treatment facilities construction program.
- Increase the ceilings for grants to State water pollution control programs.
- Provide a new research, and demonstration construction program leading to the solution of problems caused by the mixing of storm water runoff and sanitary wastes.

The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare will undertake an intensive program to clean up the Nation's most polluted rivers. With the

cooperation of States and cities -- using the tools of regulation, grant and incentives -- we can bring the most serious problem of river pollution under control. We cannot afford to do less.

We will work with Canada to develop a pollution control program for the Great Lakes and other border waters.

Through an expanded program carried on by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and Interior, we will continue to seek effective and economical methods for controlling pollution from acid mine drainage.

To improve the quality of our waters will require the fullest cooperation of our State and local government. Working together, we can and will preserve and increase one of our most valuable national resources -- clean water.

Clean Air

The enactment of the Clean Air Act in December of 1963 represented a long step forward in our ability to understand and control the difficult problem of air pollution. The 1966 Budget request of 24 million dollars is almost double the amount spent on air pollution programs in the year prior to its enactment.

In addition, the Clean Air Act should be improved to permit the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to investigate potential air pollution problems before pollution happens, rather than having to wait until the damage occurs, as is now the case, and to make recommendations leading to the prevention of such pollution.

One of the principal unchecked sources of air pollution is the automobile. I intend to institute discussions with industry officials and other interested groups leading to an effective elimination or substantial reduction of pollution from liquid fueled motor vehicles.

Solid Wastes

Continuing technological progress and improvement in methods of

-- The possibilities of a national tree planting program carried on by government at every level, and private groups and citizens.

CONCLUSION

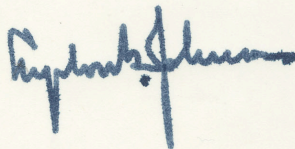
In my thirty-three years of public life I have seen the American system move to conserve the natural and human resources of our land.

TVA transformed an entire region that was "depressed." The rural electrification cooperatives brought electricity to lighten the burdens of rural America. We have seen the forests replanted by the CCC's, and watched Gifford Pinchot's sustained yield concept take hold on forestlands.

It is true that we have often been careless with our natural bounty. At times we have paid a heavy price for this neglect. But once our people were aroused to the danger, we have acted to preserve our resources for the enrichment of our country and the enjoyment of future generations.

The beauty of our land is a natural resource. Its preservation is linked to the inner prosperity of the human spirit.

The tradition of our past is equal to today's threat to that beauty. Our land will be attractive tomorrow only if we organize for action and rebuild and reclaim the beauty we inherited. Our stewardship will be judged by the foresight with which we carry out these programs. We must rescue our cities and countryside from blight with the same purpose and vigor with which, in other areas, we moved to save the forests and the soil.



THE WHITE HOUSE,

February 8, 1965.