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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

HON. GAYLORD NELSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Tuesday, July 8, 1969

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, at the commencement exercises of Winona State College in early June, the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. MONDALE) spoke to graduating seniors on the environment they will inherit.

What the Senator had to say concerns us all, and it is this: that mankind, with his command of technology, now has the power to effect irreversible change on the environment; change that, no matter how much he may wish it, man has no power to overturn.

In Denver, a 2-mile-deep well, originally drilled to dispose of pesticide wastes, is now suspected of causing man-made earthquakes. They cannot be stopped.

In Lake Erie, a half-century of abuse has raised the specter of what a somber Department of the Interior report calls a "biological cataclysm" that could rapidly exhaust the free oxygen in the lake.

As Senator MONDALE says, we are indeed, "a nation bedazzled by technology and addicted to crash solutions. But this kind of mentality will no longer serve us, if we are to build an environment worthy of man in this place, in this age."

I ask unanimous consent for inclusion of the Senator's remarks in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the remarks were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ENVIRONMENT AND THE FUTURE

(Address by Senator WALTER F. MONDALE at Winona State College commencement, Friday, June 13, 1969, Winona, Minn.)

Americans have always had a curious love-hate relationship with their environment. Unlike the original inhabitants of the continent, the American Indians—who were bound to their land in a marriage of love—the white settler viewed the charms of a virgin continent with lust in his eyes and rape in his heart.

Thus, while the pioneer might have admired the purple mountain's majesty, his first thought was to gouge as many minerals out of her as rapidly as possible. A forest was something to be cut down; a river a convenient dumping ground; a buffalo herd an early exercise in genocide. And, once the forests where he lived were gone; the rivers unfit to drink; the buffalo reduced to bleached bones, there were always plenty more where they came from, out in the West. Now the frontier is gone, but the frame of mind it induced in a people is with us to this day.

What the Indians' religion and mores instilled in him as an article of faith we are only now beginning to dimly perceive—that we are not outside our environment, much less the master of it. We are in fact inseparable from it, and each action of man upon the physical world produces an equal—and sometimes opposite—reaction upon man himself.

The reaction is sometimes immediately visible, and dramatic, such as when a man-made chemical wipes out all life in a river.

Other reactions are more subtle, more profound.

Your generation and mine are the inheritors of both the physical issue of this early violence practiced on the land and, more important, of the frame of mind that produced it—for it endures even in the 20th century.

Thus, physically, because of an attitude that, as one critic put it: "looks upon one-half the continent as a mine to be stripped of resources as rapidly as possible—and the other half as a dump to get rid of the wastes"—we find that—

We pour some 130 million tons of carbon monoxide, sulphur and other dangerous pollutants into the air each year, and that every metropolitan airshed in the country is polluted, to one degree or another;

We find many major rivers, and one of the Great Lakes, are for all practical purposes denuded of the free oxygen needed to support marine life;

We find the earth's biosphere—that thin, fragile envelope of air, water and land that sustains all life—we find it laden with 500 million pounds of DDT, a persistent and nearly immortal pesticide.

And we find our daily lives increasingly dominated by the works of man; the outdoor heritage that is a part of our very makeup we find increasingly crowded, less wild and more like the artificial environment we have created.

These conditions we can see with our own eyes. They are reported daily in the media and discussed in the halls of Congress and in every forum across the nation.

They are different in degree, but not in kind, from the careless stewardship of resources that our ancestors practiced. But now, because of his mastery of the physical sciences, and because of the heedlessness of his problem-solving techniques, man is able to induce changes in his environment of quite a different order, changes that may occur with terrifying suddenness and be, in fact, irreversible.

For instance—

At the Rocky Mountain arsenal in Denver, where the pesticide residues once stored above ground in settling ponds threatened domestic water supplies and wildlife, a two-mile deep well was drilled to place these dangerous liquids below the water tables used for drinking and irrigation.

This "solved" one environmental and economic problem—disposing of a poisonous man-made substance—but it may well have created a worse one. For, one month after the Army began to pour millions of gallons of waste down this hole, Denver was shaken by its first earthquake of the century, and has since been shaken by scores more, none, so far, heavy enough to cause loss of life or property damage on a vast scale.

Scientific opinion, consulted after the well was drilled, is divided. Some geologists see no relationship between the original quake, whose epicenter was in the Arsenal region; others believe that some several hundred—million gallons of poison water pumped down the hole has lubricated a fault under the city, allowing slippage and quakes.

Whatever the scientific merit of both arguments, it is impossible to pump the water out.

Lately the arsenal has been in the news again, for it was from here that enough nerve gas to wipe out several billion people was to depart by rail for the Atlantic Coast, where it was to be put aboard freighters, hauled out to sea, and dumped. An outraged public has temporarily halted this; the nerve gas, at last report, now resides in the open under one of the flight paths for a commercial airport.

At that, the nerve gas would be but one of some half a million substances presently dumped in the ocean. These include pesticides, radioisotopes and chemicals, only a fraction of which have ever been tested for their long-term effect on man and the ecology that supports him.

Here again, man responds recklessly, with little to guide him. Some 70 percent of the earth's photosynthetic oxygen is produced by micro-organisms suspended in the oceans' surface water. What these chemicals' effect on these organisms is, no one precisely knows. What would happen to marine life, if a tanker loaded with herbicides for use against foliage in Vietnam crashed upon the ocean rocks, such as the Torrey Canyon did with its cargo of oil—no one knows.

Another example:

Man has lived on the shores of Lake Erie for millennia, with no noticeable effect on the Lake itself. But over the past 50 years, with the use of the Lake as a dumping ground for solid and liquid wastes, man has managed to artificially "age" the lake by an estimated 15,000 years; in other words, the lake is 15,000 years nearer "death"—a process that happens to all lakes sooner or later than if he made wise use of this resource.

And now, according to Department of Interior scientists, who are not given to rash statements, "It is possible that . . . Lake Erie may face a sudden biological cataclysm that will exhaust, for a time, most of the oxygen in the greater part of the lake . . . (this) could come with explosive suddenness."

The lake has come to its present state because pollution has grown geometrically, while knowledge of its effects has grown only arithmetically. For 50 years now man has been adding great quantities of phosphorous to the lake. Phosphorous stimulates the growth of algae, which blooms in great quantities during the spring and fall. The algae dies fast and sinks to the bottom of the lake, fouling it with organic matter.

Meantime, even more phosphorous—which most sewage treatment plants being built today do not remove—is poured on top of the dead algae on the lake bottom. Now, there is grave danger that the process is self-generating and that the "biological cataclysm" of oxygen exhaustion could take place with terrifying swiftness.

And so, near the Continental Divide in Colorado; in the sea around us; in the Great Lakes; man is tinkering with profound forces which may well prove to be beyond his ability to counter, once set in motion.

The same forces that have brought Erie near death are at work on Lake Superior, greatest of the Great Lakes, and the world's largest body of still relatively unpolluted water. Because the lake is big, and because population is less concentrated on its shores, we still have time to save it, if we act promptly.

But doing so will take more than just money. It will take a conscious decision by private industry, government and the citizens of Minnesota to cease using the Lake as a dumping ground and sewer, and to begin looking upon it as the unique, priceless natural resource that it really is. Whether or not this will be done in time remains to be seen.

The truth of the matter is, our ability to pollute our environment has outrun our knowledge of pollution's effects and how to stop it.

I was shocked to learn, when I first came to the Senate some years ago, of the primitive state of research in lake pollution. It is no exaggeration to say that we now know more about the composition of the lunar surface than we do about what causes a lake to die—and how to prevent it.

For three years now, I have had legislation before the Congress to fund at least a beginning in lake research. Last year the measure passed both houses, only to die because of differences in the two bills. This year the bill is contained in the omnibus water pollution control act, and I am hopeful of passage.

Once the legislation is passed the really hard work will begin; the fight to obtain adequate funding. And herein lies much of our present problem with pollution control.

Although we are ready, willing and able to fuel the engines of war—last year at 97 percent of the amount the Pentagon requested—the Nation is far less willing to spend the money to clean its own nest.

Over the past five fiscal years—

We provided less than half the amount requested at the federal level for grants to build sewage treatment plants;

We provided just over 60 percent of the amount requested for air pollution control;

And we provided less than a third of the amount requested for water and sewer grants.

Although federal spending for all natural resources purposes—pollution control, parks, recreation areas—has been climbing gradually we are actually spending a smaller percentage of the total federal budget now, in fiscal 1970, than we did five years ago.

The result is, as far as the environment is concerned, we are just barely managing to hold our own, if that.

We often talk about a pollution problem, or a park problem, or an air problem. But what we have in this country, really, is a war problem.

This year the federal government will spend just over 300 million dollars to help build sewage plants and to control air pollution. I have not been around Washington so long that I look upon this amount as a pittance, but compared to defense spending, that's just what it is.

Three hundred million dollars would run the Vietnam war for 4 days and 8 hours. It represents less than one percent of what we will spend this year on wars, past, present and future.

We are willing to pick up the tab—\$50 million a few weeks ago—for a submarine that sank immediately upon launching.

We were willing to pick up \$23 billion, according to Senator Symington, for 43 separate missile systems once deemed vital to the national security that were abandoned prior to deployment or rapidly became obsolete.

But we are not willing to pick up the tab to clean our rivers, our lakes, our air. And it is not only government that is at fault:

Private business each year spends billions of dollars—as they should—to advertise their products. They spend hundreds of million more in research to bring forth new products. But, with very few exceptions, they are very unwilling to spend money to find out how to dispose of the products once they're discarded, or to clean up the wastes produced by their manufacture.

I really cannot believe that a nation which next month will land men on the moon cannot devise an auto exhaust control system that will clean up the air. I cannot really believe that a nation that each year produces 5 million cars cannot devise a means of disposing of their corpses, once they're worn out.

I am convinced that we will never build a livable environment in this nation—to say nothing of building a decent society, with decent housing and no hungry children—until we re-order our priorities.

I believe this very deeply, and I do not believe this makes me either a neo-isolationist or a pacifist. I believe arms are necessary for survival in the age in which we live. But I am no longer prepared to hand the military a blank check each year.

We are a nation bedazzled by technology and addicted to crash solutions. We are a pragmatic people, one whose first response, in facing any dilemma, is to look for an instant answer.

But this kind of mentality will no longer serve us, if we are to build an environment worthy of a man in this place, in this age.

This generation does not have the excuse of environmental ignorance that could perhaps justify the past excesses we have visited on the continent. We now know the effects of our actions. We can see, smell and touch the products of unwise resource management. They are all around us.

Until we act on this knowledge . . . until we somehow engineer into the very structure of government a system of determining the long-term effects of scientific change on the environment, we are, in a very real sense, playing Russian Roulette with our destiny. There is this, and more:

We hear a great deal nowadays about alienation; about a feeling of powerlessness that afflicts the poor and middle class alike.

I wonder if part of the reason for this public unhappiness, isn't a belief, on the feeling, which Paul Goodwin called "the part of many of us, that somehow we have lost control over our own destiny.

A case in point:

The Mississippi flows past Winona here, and within the next few years, if present plans go through, radioactive wastes from a nuclear power plant upstream will be dumped in the river.

A million people in Twin Cities will be ingesting these materials with their drinking water.

Many of us fought this, both in Minnesota and Washington. We have not so far prevailed.

The public institutions charged with protecting the public interest in this and other matters are vast, unresponsive and remote. They contribute, in a very real sense, to the unease we feel, as individuals, over controlling our own destiny.

I am aware of all the legalisms that allowed this decision to be made; but that does not make it right. If a people do not have the right to influence a decision this basic, then they do not have much say in control of their own lives.

In the last speech he ever delivered, Adlai Stevenson summed up what I have attempted to say here today, in these words:

"We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable supplies of air and soil, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and I will say the love, we give our fragile craft."

BEN S. GILMER SPEAKS ON THE UNIVERSITY AND THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

HON. ROBERT G. STEPHENS, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 1969

Mr. STEPHENS. Mr. Speaker, recent campus disorders, and reactions to these disorders have their roots in a deep emotionalism. It is indeed a pleasure to read a balanced, reasoned examination of the situation by Mr. Ben S. Gilmer, president of American Telephone & Telegraph Co., delivered at the recent commencement exercises of the University of Georgia. Mr. Gilmer, a native of Alabama, was formerly the head of Southern Bell Telephone Co. He has had a

distinguished career in the field of public utilities.

Mr. Gilmer has accurately noted that what began as an idealistic impulse, has concluded in perspectives and tactics that became self-defeating. The politics of due process, with the public welfare as its goal, has been perverted into the politics of violence, creating a new authoritarianism, making tolerance and understanding increasingly difficult.

What is alarming is not so much the breakdown of tradition, but the desire to avoid the responsibilities and risks of participation. To ascend nobly above the "murgy establishment" is all too easy. Positive reform should be the real test of the dissident student, not merely his capacity to voice complaints.

I think this speech will be of interest to all of the Members of Congress. I submit it, therefore, for insertion in the RECORD:

ADDRESS BY BEN S. GILMER

This I know is a day to which all of you have pointed your efforts and energies for a long time. I congratulate you and am honored to be with you on this great day in your lives.

So many long honored customs of college life have been challenged of late I would not have been surprised to see the abolition of the commencement speaker become one of them. Fortunately for me this did not turn out to be the case, and I am happy to join with you in the enjoyment of this day.

Most commencement speakers, I suspect, are under no illusions as to how long their words will be remembered—and I am no exception. Who, for example, spoke at my own graduation and what he said have long since slipped from memory.

At the same time there is a certain solemnity about these occasions that moves one to look long and earnestly within himself for that one portion of wisdom with which life may have endowed him that might have some meaning to the new generation to whom his own will shortly pass the torch.

In recent years that search has become a particularly trying one, for they have been years in which some members of your generation have been loudly asserting that they trust no one over 30, such protestants at the same time giving very little indication as to why anyone over 30 should trust them.

With each succeeding graduating class, it would appear, the generation gap grows wider and the wider it grows the greater the risk that the commencement speaker will fall in.

Nonetheless I suspect that nearly every commencement speaker—up until this year at any rate—has secretly harbored the hope that somehow he might find the words that will convey to his younger audience that he—perhaps in some measure understands the aims of youth, that, he shares them with undiminished ardor in spite of the passing years.

This rapport once established, his audience will, he hopes, hear his words with open minds—and perhaps even heed some of them.

Thus most commencement comment on youth to youth falls into a predictable pattern: applaud youth's aims, deplore its methods.

You will forgive me, I trust, if this year—I abandon the pattern. To my mind rapport between the generations will be better served by candor than by strained efforts at ingratiation. At the risk, then, of being characterized as a quaint survivor from a bygone era, I am going to tell you precisely what I think.

Briefly, I am not with it. What has been happening on many of our campuses over the past few months—or rather what the