

554 Remarks Upon Signing the Wilderness Bill and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill. *September 3, 1964*

Members of the Cabinet and the Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

This is a very happy and historic occasion for all who love the great American outdoors, and that, needless to say, includes me. The two bills that I am signing this morning are in the highest tradition of our heritage as conservators as well as users of America's bountiful natural endowments.

The wilderness bill preserves for our posterity, for all time to come, 9 million acres of this vast continent in their original and unchanging beauty and wonder.

The land and water conservation bill assures our growing population that we will begin, as of this day, to acquire on a pay-as-you-go basis the outdoor recreation lands that tomorrow's Americans will require.

I believe the significance of this occasion goes far beyond these bills alone. In this century, Americans have wisely and have courageously kept a faithful trust to the conservation of our natural resources and beauty. But the long strides forward have tended to come in periods of concerted effort.

The first, I think, was under the leadership of a great Republican President, Theodore Roosevelt. This brought passage of the Reclamation Act. This brought the creation of the national forests. This brought the development of a new concept of national stewardship.

The second period came under a great Democratic President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He led this Nation in rebuilding the land and developing the resources for improving the life of all of us. He did it through the TVA, through the CCC, through the Soil Conservation Service, through the water conservation projects.

Anyone that objectively studies the rec-

ord of the 88th Congress I think would have to conclude that another historic era has begun this year. If the 88th had not earned already so many honorable titles, such as the education Congress, the health Congress, the full prosperity Congress, it would be remembered as the conservation Congress, because in addition to the measures before me this morning, Congress has wisely this year passed the Ozark Rivers National Riverway bill, which I signed last week; the Fire Island National Seashore bill, which is awaiting action; the Canyonlands National Park legislation, which I expect to sign shortly, creating our first new national park on this continent in 17 years.

But Congress has done even more. Action has been taken to keep our air pure and our water safe and our food free from pesticides; to protect our wildlife; to conserve our precious water resources. No single Congress in my memory has done so much to keep America as a good and wholesome and beautiful place to live.

I think it is significant that these steps have broad support not just from the Democratic Party, but the Republican Party, both parties in the Congress. For example, the wilderness bill has been before the Congress since 1957, but it passed this year 73 to 12 in the Senate, and 373 to 1 in the House. So it seems to me that this reflects a new and a strong national consensus to look ahead, and, more than that, to plan ahead; better still, to move ahead.

We know that America cannot be made strong by leadership which reacts only to the needs or the irritations or the frustrations of the moment. True leadership must provide for the next decade and not merely the next day. That is the kind of leadership

that this Congress is providing.

I am very proud of the leadership and the wisdom and the vitality and the vigorous approach that the distinguished and able Secretary of Interior has made, and the leadership that he has provided from coast to coast in this field. For their leadership on these bills, I am especially grateful to Senator Anderson, who has been in the forefront of conservation legislation since he first came to the House; to Senator Jackson; to Congressman Aspinall; and to Members of both parties on these important committees that reported these bills.

So it is with a great deal of pride and pleasure and hope for the future that we enact into law today by signing these bills

some of the most far-reaching conservation measures that a farsighted nation has ever coped with.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In the course of his remarks he referred to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico, Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, and Representative Wayne N. Aspinall of Colorado.

As enacted, the wilderness bill (S. 4) is Public Law 88-577 (78 Stat. 890); the land and water conservation fund bill (H.R. 3846) is Public Law 88-578 (78 Stat. 897).

In his comments on the record of the 88th Congress in the field of conservation the President referred to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways bill (78 Stat. 608), the Fire Island National Seashore bill (78 Stat. 928), and the Canyonlands National Park bill (78 Stat. 934).

555 Remarks to Members of the National Independent Committee for Johnson and Humphrey. *September 3, 1964*

I AM GRATEFUL that the record and conduct of this administration have earned your vote of confidence this afternoon—as independent Americans. And, I might add, so is Senator Humphrey.

Our American system was not intended to be controlled by the rigid disciplines of party. On the contrary, it was founded on the belief that in political decisions affecting the fate and fortune of their country, all Americans would be, as you are, proudly and patriotically independent.

This year independent Americans, of all walks of life, have a choice: the choice of the kind of country they want America to be.

They can choose an America which sails a straight and sure course, steered by experience, confident in its strength, steadfast in its purposes. They can choose an America devoted, as America has always been devoted, to peace in the world and progress for mankind.

Or they can choose quite a different America—an America tacking sail and turning about to retrace its course. They can choose an America whose purposes will not be understood by the people of the world, or even by the people at home.

Yes, the independent American has a choice, and with that choice goes a responsibility: the responsibility to stand up and be counted.

In this year of 1964, we are not determining the future of our parties. But we are determining the fate and fortune of America itself—and of the cause we are privileged to lead.

I commend all of you not only on the choice you have made for your country, but on your courage in now assuming the responsibility of your convictions.

Ten months ago, it fell to me to become the 36th man—in 188 years—to take up the burdens of this office I hold. I entered these