

D R A F T

STEWART UDALL:

I would like to begin with a poem by Robert Frost which will also say something about my own interests. There has been an on-going argument among environmentalists, which may continue till doomsday, about whether we will ultimately create atmospheric conditions that will create a green house and cook us or whether we will pollute the atmosphere in such a way that we return to the ice age and do ourselves in that way. Frost anticipated this forty years ago in his little verse "Fire & Ice".

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

The question of the future of rural america and of small towns is one which we need to begin discussing. Most of the "progress" of the last thirty years has worked against rural america. Forty years ago 30% of this nation's people produced the food and fibre for the rest of the country by farming. Then mechanization and cheap energy took over, and, as we know, the secret of the high productivity of american agriculture is not plant genetics but is cheap petroleum. When the machines took over, the young people began to leave rural america because there was no place for them. There was a great wave of immigration to the cities which has become, of course, a principal development around the world. As a whole this trend is probably a tragic one, and yet I want to suggest that it may very well be that today's energy crisis signals a turnabout; that we are perhaps going to have an

extraordinary opportunity not only to conserve but to correctly develop small towns and rural america .

We have seen what I believe to be a historic transition, a change from what was thought of and was an age of abundance, I suppose super abundance, to an age of shortages. We are running out of cheap land. The best and cheapest land, the land at the bottoms of the valleys is gone and with it the easy development that could be done in quickie fashion. We are running out of cheap resources and cheap energy and this more than anything else is going to mean enormous changes in our lives because energy has been the life blood of our whole system. The period when growth, almost any kind of growth, was regarded by the community as a good thing is quickly passing and if there is any one thing that the energy crisis has written large on the wall it is that urban sprawl is over. The pattern whereby people could live in one place and commute to a job thirty or forty miles away and do a round trip of 120 miles as they do in Southern California worked as long as we had cheap gasoline and as long as there was enough of it to go around, but this is coming to a screeching halt and we are going to have to re-think a lot of things.

A few years ago there was a general assumption in large and small towns across the country that any kind of growth - a new subdivision on the edge of the city or a new addition up the nearest hollow - was beneficial to the community because it added to the tax base. Finally we got our eyes off the GNP for a moment and began to look at the economics of urbanization and found out that many forms of growth actually added to the tax burden of the people who were already paying the taxes in a given community. This trend is now rapidly intensified because obviously



the more spread out you are, whether you are talking about police services or school busses or electric power services or water or sewer or whatever, the higher the cost.

We are just now discovering the full impact of this situation and, with the beginning of state land use planning, we recognize that growth from now on must be controlled and guided, and the right way to do it is through national land use legislation. The states should lay down their guidelines and the local government should make decisions relative to these guidelines. However, we are moving rapidly into a period where we not only need good planning, that has always been necessary, we need above all public officials who are not simply interested in having good plans on the walls to pass out to environmentalists, but officials who are themselves sensitive to the need for implementing good plans to protect their community for very practical reasons. We have suddenly come to see that a lot of the forces that formerly moved under the banner of progress are anti-progress, and I speak of not only the pollution that has come to the valleys and cities but of all the types of development that are destroying our economy, our society, and our values.

Today's environmental movement isn't just concerned with nature; from now on we must be concerned with city environments and the environments of work places. There is a movement beginning that is essentially keyed to the idea that the way to protect the values of people who live in the country, the towns, or the cities is to control what happens to the land. This isn't a new idea, but it has suddenly become respectable and in some cases even politically popular. There are many manifestations of this new movement and in one sense it is more than a concern for land, it is a concern expressed in terms of quality environments that not only relates to our physical

environment but to our cultural environment as well. The Blacks and the Indians have done this nation a great service by pointing out what they have to contribute to our culture and we should encourage the development of those cultures and qualities that add variety to our cultural environment. One of the terrible things that has happened to the U.S. is what one might call the homogenization of American life. You can fly into Denver or Dallas or Phoenix or Charlotte or heavens knows where and you would hardly know which city you are coming into because they are so much the same. Television does that to us, and the regional accents and differences that once added a lot of spice and interest to American life are disappearing. It is important to recognize that the protection of regional and cultural differences is part of an environmental protection program.

A key to the protection of our natural, social, and cultural environments is good land use planning and the key to good land use planning is good energy use planning. The science of energy economics, something we do not yet know much about, is going to dominate and dictate many decisions for the future. The energy crisis putting it as simply as I can is the fact that we are running out of petroleum and there is no substitute in sight. This means that in the future we are going to have to be less mobile, the sprawl must end, the second home movement, I guess, is already dead and buried and we are going to have to build more cluster housing, make our communities more compact, provide more efficient forms of transportation, bring back the railroads, and so forth. The future of this country for the next ten or twenty years is going to be dictated by one consideration, energy efficiency, and as I said this it so happens fits in hand in glove with good land use and



with good environmental planning. This means for the automobile industry that the only way that they can survive is to move ahead as fast as they can, because small cars they get twice as much per gallon as big ones. It means that our transportation priorities change and we put our money into railroads and public transportation and bikeways and walkways in our cities all of which would save energy and make us more efficient. It means that government, local government, state government, all government must for the first time decide what kind of growth what kind of development is efficient and fits in with this new period of lean energy. This does not mean that we have to have an economic catastrophe. Until the Alaska pipeline was started a year ago the two public works projects in the U.S. that employed the most construction workers were the Washington D.C. Subway and the public transportation system in San Francisco. There is no reason why we cannot restore railroads and build new ones, if we begin to recycle and reuse our wastes, and some of them contain enormous amounts of energy, and recycle our metals and minerals we can create thousands or tens of thousands of new jobs. In short we can prosper while we are making many of these basic changes.

I think that the focus of this conference is very timely and that you are working with history with these new trends beating on the door and saying that we much change. We not only need good planning, in many ways this country is over planned, part of making this change is to inject the right kind of politics - environmental politics. What caused the State of Vermont to pass state legislation guiding growth of people was ordinary

people, Yankees. Yankees are the kind that in the past said "Leave me alone don't even zone my land. I want to do with my land whatever I want to do with it". But when they saw ill planned development taking place all around them and their own valleys were being spoiled then the most conservative members of the community stepped in and got into the political dialogue and things began to change. There is still time left if we begin to act soon and to correct many of the mistakes in the past. To grow and develop in the right way will require us to recognize the new forces that are gathering momentum that will enable us to change the direction of history. We are going to be working with those who want to have the right kind of development and the right kind of living values because this country is in a situation with its population growth rate at the lowest point in history with us levelling off in terms of our growth. We have a great opportunity in the next twenty or thirty years to learn from our mistakes of the past to learn to incorporate the finest new concepts of economics, ecology, land energy use planning and all the rest into the things that we do. A good stiff wind is blowing in our backs, and I suggest that we take advantage of it.