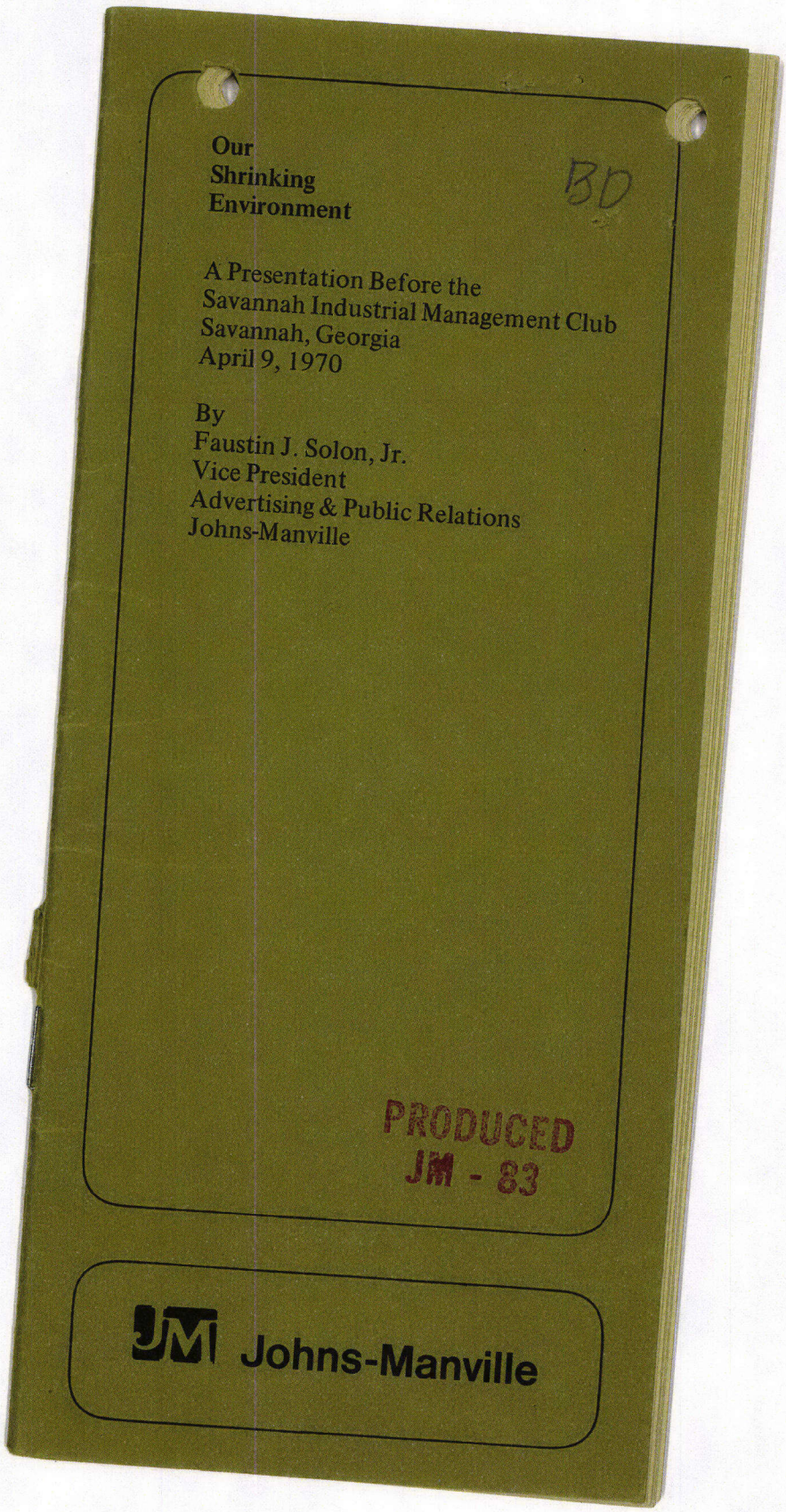
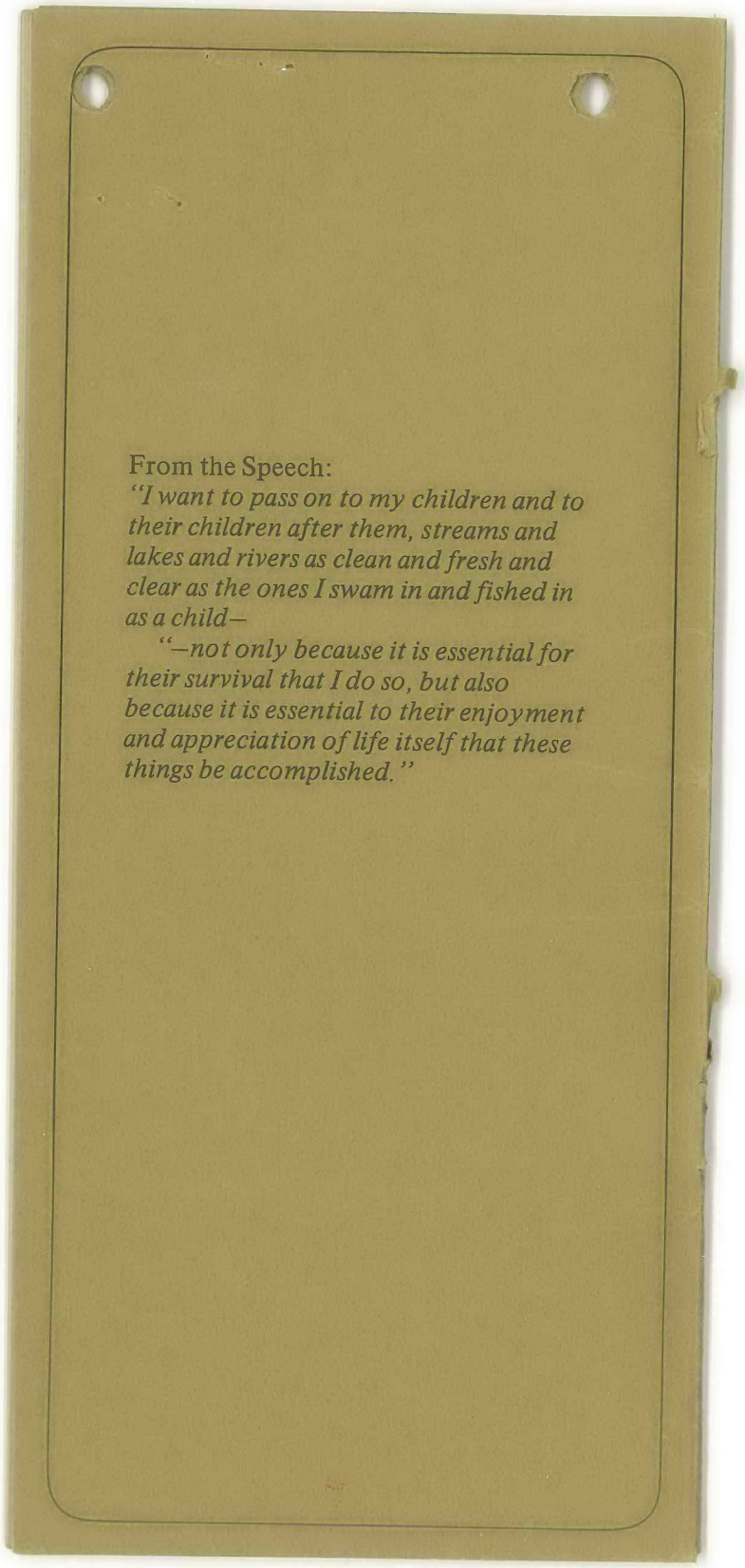


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From the Speech:
"I want to pass on to my children and to their children after them, streams and lakes and rivers as clean and fresh and clear as the ones I swam in and fished in as a child–

"–not only because it is essential for their survival that I do so, but also because it is essential to their enjoyment and appreciation of life itself that these things be accomplished."

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My subject tonight is one of harsh reality. I've named it, "Our Shrinking Environment."

The problem of the environment, as you all know, has captured the interest, enthusiasm and concern of a whole lot of the American public. Major articles on the problem have appeared in most of the nation's prominent magazines, and we are constantly reminded in the daily press and on television about this new danger to our survival. The shelves of bookstores and libraries are filled with both technical and layman-oriented volumes on the field—ranging in subject matter from clarion calls by politicians for a national commitment to saving our environment, to "how-to-do-it" books on the best ways to picket a polluting plant or industry.

Environmental scientists and ecologists like Barry Commoner, Rene Dubos and Georgia's own Eugene Odum find large, enthusiastic audiences wherever they speak. Consumer crusaders, like Ralph Nader, are also taking up the banner of the environment. Nader, as you read in your papers recently, has already announced his intention to come down here this summer and clean up the Savannah River.

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In the political arena, the competition for top spot as the strongest supporter of environmental reform is fierce. In his State of the Union message, President Nixon said that we must "make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done to our air, to our land and to our water"—and there are many other politicians equally as concerned and equally as vociferous.

At the grassroots level, April 22nd, less than two weeks from today, has been designated "Earth Day" by various groups—mostly high school and college students who are concerned about the serious air and water pollution problems facing the nation. Plans for environmental "teach-ins", the picketing of pollution sources, and other activities are being formulated for this day of national environmental involvement. Industry, as you might suspect, is the chief target of "Earth Day."

True Concern or Faddism?

Some cynical observers believe that all this concern with the state of the environment may be nothing more than a mid-winter fad, and that when the ecological craze begins to wane in the spring sunshine, we'll toss the subject of environment onto our ever-mounting garbage heap along with the Davy Crockett hats and the hula hoops and the Nehru jackets.

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Personally, I don't think that this is going to happen. Certainly, there is an element of faddism in all this enthusiasm, but there also is a solid foundation of public concern about this issue which will see to it that the present torrent of words is followed by action.

This is of special importance to those of us in industry. If we think for a minute that the so-called conservation kick is going to die of its own accord and that we can mark time until its demise, we are going to be in for a very large and very expensive surprise. This is a problem and an issue that is not going to go away—the politicians are not going to forget about it, the people are not going to forget about it, and it would be to our great advantage if we don't try to forget about it.

Knowing that there is something wrong with our environment and that people on every level are concerned about it is really not much help when it comes to answering the question of what should be done about it.

If, as many experts estimate, we are facing a decade-long struggle that may ultimately cost one or two hundred billion dollars, it would seem to me to be of the utmost importance to place the problem in some sort of perspective and to search for a system of priorities that will show us the way to get the job done.

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"Where did we go wrong?"

The first question that must be answered is how did we get ourselves in this mess in the first place—where did we go wrong? Part of the answer to this question lies in an examination of those very virtues that enabled a struggling federation of tiny colonies crowded along the Atlantic Seaboard to expand across an entire continent and to grow into the strongest and most prosperous country on the face of the earth. It was in our blood—the frontier ethic, the pioneer drive, the striving for more and better. We considered the land and its resources, including the air and water, to be limitless. We viewed our environment as something to be conquered and tamed for our own use. Life was considered a struggle of man against nature, not a joint venture between the two. The illusion that our phenomenal plenty was a God-given deserved recognition of our peculiar excellence as a people became a part of the American creed.

The problem, of course, is very simply that land and air and water and resources are not limitless. They are finite elements in a finite world. Elements that can be used up rather rapidly but need seemingly endless amounts of time for regeneration.

These attitudes many years ago set the stage for our present ecological problems. The only catalyst that was needed was time—time to exceed the limits of our supposedly limitless land.

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The question still remains—how did we manage to do this in such a relatively *short* period of time? Basically, we did it with two partially-related activities. First, and perhaps foremost, we reproduced our own kind in staggering numbers.

In 1790, the year of the first United States census, there were less than four million people living in the country. By 1850, when the republic finally stretched from ocean to ocean, there were 23 million, and by the end of the First World War the total population had reached 100 million. These figures are not so surprising, despite the enormous growth, when one considers the huge immigration into the new nation in the first century-and-a-half of its existence.

However, in the past 50 years, with *limited* immigration policies, we have still managed to double our population to its present 210 million, and if the census estimates are accurate, we will add another hundred million perhaps as soon as 1990 and certainly by the turn of the 21st century. The 400 millionth American will be born sometime around 2020 or 2025—approximately 50 years from now.

Such numbers in themselves are not frightening unless one realizes that each of these Americans is a consumer of the riches of our environment and a contributor to its despoilment.

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A Lifetime of Demands

Every eight seconds a new American is born, and on the average he will live for about 70 years. During his lifetime the demands he will make of his environment will be enormous. He will use 56 million gallons of water; 21 thousand gallons of gasoline; 10,150 pounds of meat; 28 thousand pounds of milk and dairy products; 9 thousand pounds of wheat and great storehouses of all other varieties of food and drink. Collectively, the annual crop of 4 million or so babies will, in their lifetime, buy more than one billion pair of shoes, demand 200 million pounds of steel and consume enough lumber to construct a ten-foot wide boardwalk 42 times around the earth at the Equator.

While their demands are not as great as our own, the population of the rest of the world is growing at an even faster pace.

Of all the people who ever lived since man first appeared on this planet, approximately half are alive today. World population, on the whole, is doubling every 35 or so years. We all know the rate of malnutrition and starvation in the underdeveloped countries of the globe. Imagine what conditions will be like in another 35 years. The idea of 2½ billion starving Chinese, *with the Bomb*, is not a very pretty thought to contemplate.

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Fortunately, population control is being worked on with increasing vigor and some success in all sections of the globe, and there is considerable hope that the world growth rate can be arrested to the point where we can establish some sort of working balance with the environment. If not, we will reproduce ourselves out of house and planet before our great grandchildren will have reached middle age.

The second major factor in the crippling of our environment has been industrialization and the struggle for the better life for all of us. This may sound strange that the very elements that made this country prosper should now be contributing so heavily to its problems, but it is a fact that must be accepted.

To supply the demands of a growing, affluent population, industry must produce more and more goods. Most of it, either in production or in finished form, will add to our growing pollution problems. The more industry expands, the more people and machines it needs to get the job done and the more people that work, the more goods are needed to supply their needs and wants.

"The environment is not limitless."

The basic problem with this simple economic theory is that it works in reverse when applied to the environment. The more demands that are made of the environment, the less it can supply. The environment is not limitless. It is finite.

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We have produced an amazingly complex industrialized society that, in order to survive, has continually taken from the environment without giving anything in return.

A single modern paper mill, for example, requires more water each day than a city of 50,000 people; the metal processing industries in the United States suck up many billions of gallons of water daily and return much of it to our lakes and streams in a condition unfit for further human use.

America's 60 million automobiles—the very symbol of our industrialization and affluence—contribute approximately 100 million tons of noxious fumes and solid particle crud into our atmosphere each year, as much as all other types of air pollution combined.

And we, ourselves, the human products of this industrialized society, we are perhaps the worst polluters of all. Sewage, like organic wastes and detergent-filled wash water, dumped into our rivers, lakes and streams in staggering quantities, are an even greater source of water pollution than industry.

Solid waste in the form of garbage is another human contribution to the pollution mess. Each of California's 18 million residents, for example, throws away 20 pounds of solid wastes per day—an amount that in a year would make a wall of garbage 100 feet wide by 30 feet high stretching from Oregon to Mexico.

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What these fascinating statistics add up to is simply that our insistence on more and more of everything, regardless of the cost to the environment, is a major factor in the ecological muddle. But I have confidence in our ability, as I'm sure you have, to accept the challenge of the environment and to return it to its proper state.

Our Most Pressing Problems

The two most pressing problems created by our expanded population and industrialized society are, obviously, air and water pollution. Air and water are the two most vital elements essential to our survival and in seeking a system of priorities to follow, we must accord them top spot.

The severity of the air pollution problem is readily apparent to anyone who has ever visited New York or Los Angeles or any of a thousand other American cities on a normal day. The fumes from a million smokestacks and most of our 60 million automobiles sit heavy on our urban areas, and with between 75 and 80 per cent of our population concentrated in the cities, it is easy to see that we are electing to live where the problem is the worst.

The soaring rates of emphysema and lung cancer that have arisen in recent years, especially in our cities, are striking testimony to the severity of the problem. In New York City, it has been estimated that breathing in the fumes and dusts that contaminate the air is equivalent to smoking two packs of cigarettes a day.

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That these fumes and dusts are extremely lethal is unquestioned: For example, an inversion layer blanketed New York on Thanksgiving Day in 1966, trapping all the choking, gagging fumes that would otherwise have risen up out of the city. 168 people died, most of them elderly folks with a history of respiratory troubles.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the country, if not its people, still enjoys clean, crisp, breathable air. And our still abundant trees and plant life, as you know, constitute a continuing source of fresh oxygen for the atmosphere.

The solution, from an ecological point of view, is therefore relatively simple. Stop polluting the air and nature's own mechanism will soon restore it to its natural, healthy state. Unlike water pollution, air pollution when stopped, leaves no lasting residue. We have categorized most of the contaminants to be found in city air. We know where they come from. The question of eliminating them, therefore, is one of simple technology—something we as Americans are very good at. The automobile manufacturers, for example, are working on their share of the problem. So are many other industrial firms.

Given sufficient push and financial backing, I believe that most major sources of air pollution can be eliminated within five years and certainly by the end of the decade. We *can* achieve Mr. Nixon's pledge in this area.

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Water pollution, on the other hand, is a much more difficult problem and, I fear, is going to require a good deal more time, if not money, to control.

That the problem is reaching alarming proportions is without question. Let me give you a few statistics. In 1965 we used in the United States on the average, 359 billion gallons of water a day. This worked out to 1,900 gallons a day per person, of which 1,750 gallons were used by industry and government. By 1980, instead of 359 billion, we will be using an estimated 600 billion gallons of water a day, an increase of two-thirds in a quarter century.

Where is this vast increase going to come from? Certainly not from the horribly polluted rivers and streams that flow through our major urban centers. Most of these waters are so foul that they can not even be used for industrial purposes, let alone for human consumption or recreation.

The Great Lakes—Ecological Disasters

Take the Great Lakes. They used to be a common source of fresh water for the heavily industrialized Northeast, but the dumping of untreated industrial and sanitary wastes into their waters has reduced them to ecological disasters. Lake Erie—I spent my boyhood near its shores—was once the world's 12th largest lake; clear, beautiful water, abundant with many kinds of fish. Now, it's a 10,000 square mile septic tank. The only species of fish thriving in its waters is a mutant of the carp that has adapted itself to living off poison.

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If all pollution of Lake Erie were to stop this very minute, ecologists project that it would take the lake around 250 years to cleanse itself of its accumulated wastes and poisons. Believe me, we are going to need Lake Erie and a lot of other lakes much, much sooner than that. It's going to take some doing.

Although the total flow of all rivers and streams in the United States is still 1.2 trillion gallons a day, twice the amount experts estimate we'll require in 1980, the figure is misleading. Much of this flow is polluted by biologic wastes and factory effluent long before man ever has a chance to draw it from the rivers and streams for his own use. Equally as important, a sizable proportion of this flow is in areas far removed from the urban centers where clean, fresh water is in such demand and in such short supply.

The simple fact of the matter is that America is using up its available water supply at an appalling rate, and is polluting what it is using so that it is not available for re-use by others.

Unlike the air pollution problem, the solution to our water difficulties must be a two-stage effort. First, we must stop polluting the water we are presently using. Then, and this is the tough part, we must clean up those waters, such as the Great Lakes, that we have already despoiled.

Obviously, step one takes priority. We have already ruined a goodly piece of our natural water resource, but we must first take steps not to ruin what's left.

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Who Should Pay?

The next question that must be considered, and one that you have probably all been thinking about, is who is going to pay? This is a question that is obviously of importance. The suggested answers have been many but most of them lack a clear sense of reality.

The two most obvious sources of money for pollution control are government, primarily the Federal government, and the actual polluters themselves, namely city and local governments and industry. I don't like to inject a sour note into anyone's thinking about the possibilities of the Federal government's picking up the tab for solving our environmental problems, but I believe it is somewhat unrealistic to think that this will happen.

While politicians have shown considerable interest in the problem, the monies they have asked for to get the job done are a mere drop in the bucket compared with actual requirements. The reasons are quite simple. Politicians are—politicians. Their expected life span in office is comparatively short. For a Congressman it is two years, for a Senator six, and for a President four. Of course they can increase their political life by re-election but in order to do so they must be able to show the voters what they have accomplished. We have already seen that the solving of even the simplest environmental problem requires time, in most cases many years or even decades.

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Politicians are therefore not particularly keen on allocating huge sums of taxpayers' money for projects that may not show results for ten or twenty years. They like projects that will show results in time for the next election. For these reasons, politicians are more inclined to pass laws and impose regulations than spend money on environmental projects. Of course, there are exceptional politicians—and you may very well have some in your area and in your state. But generally speaking, I believe I'm right—that most politicians like to spend money only for rather immediate, conclusive results.

For that reason, the argument for industry to pay the lion's share of cleaning up the environment strikes a warm note in the heart of the average American politician. It also appeals to our avowed sense of justice. If industry messed up the nation's air and water, it is only right that it should pay to put things right. I might point out, before proceeding, that nobody is pressing state and city governments to pay for cleaning up *their* problems. Most of them are flat broke as it is, and besides, the politicians that run them are susceptible to the same pressures as their brethren at the Federal level. Which leaves us with industry—good old rich, corrupt industry, they would have you believe—already convicted by the nation's press as being chiefly responsible for the environmental problems facing us.

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Industry's Problems

There are, of course, enormous problems that industry will have to face and conquer in its position of environmental whipping-boy. For example, while most large corporations have the money and technical resources to undertake a thorough clean-up of their own facilities, what of the small or medium-sized company or plant working on so narrow a profit margin that waste-treatment costs would force it under, throwing perhaps thousands of men out of work? One solution suggested for companies facing this sort of dilemma is a series of tax benefits or rebates for the non-pollution of air and water, but I fear that we are going to see strict control regulations enacted long before anyone takes a serious look at the problems of the companies being regulated.

Another problem is that most ecologists and politicians, responding to the present popular clamor, demand *immediate* action from industrial polluters, but this immediate action is more often than not beyond the capabilities of even the largest corporations.

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My own company, for example, has made a firm commitment to cleaning up all of its own plants and mines, and we are spending millions of dollars a year doing it. Last year we allocated $8.5 million for control projects involving every one of our 52 plants and mines in the United States and Canada. But these things take time. I would be talking up my sleeve if I were to tell you that we have the end in sight, and we have been working on it for years. Certainly, many of our problems have been corrected, but it has not been an easy task. Because of the vast amount of work that needs to be done, we have had to set up a system of priorities to handle the worst situations first. It is the only reasonable way to go about the job.

Technological Problems Still Exist

Even a company as large as we are, and with a firm commitment to get the job done, cannot do it overnight. Technology is a problem that so often throws a monkey wrench into even the most dedicated anti-pollution effort. Some problems exist that industry, right now, simply does not know how to handle.

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For example, our plant here is Savannah manufactures asphalt roofing. It has a minor air pollution problem in the form of odorous emissions from our asphalt saturators, the machines that apply hot asphalt to the binding material. While we have been working on a device to remove these emissions from the exhaust air stream for some time, it was not until late last year that our engineering department in New Jersey developed a sophisticated high energy air filter that we hope will do the job.

We have a test unit installed at one of our other roofing plants right now, but refining the process, constructing the necessary equipment to fill all our requirements, and installing it is going to take additional time—necessary, unavoidable time, but time nevertheless.

No, not even the richest and most dedicated companies can meet the "tomorrow" deadline. The nation must learn to be patient for it is obvious that we may not see the full fruits of our labors, no matter how much money we spend, for a decade or more; and some especially tricky environmental problems may not be completely corrected within our lifetime.

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These are only a few of the many different types of situations that industry is going to have to face in its efforts to clean up its own pollution problems. I'm sure that most of you could add additional items to the list, many of which would, I'm positive, be even more difficult to solve than the ones I've touched upon. One thing is sure. We in industry are going to be expected to get these things done. Perhaps we will receive some assistance in the form of understanding legislation from politicians who realize the problems that industry is faced with.

At a press conference held last month in Atlanta at the time of our annual meeting, Clinton Burnett, the President of our company, suggested that one way legislators could assist industry in its clean-up activities would be to decide once and for all on hard-and-fast, realistic pollution standards for industry to shoot at, rather than changing the standards every few months or years as they do now. He said that state and local governments should also refuse to issue building permits for new factories until a company has proven that the new facility it wants to put up is not going to be a source of air or water pollution. Then, at least, we wouldn't be adding to our problems, and we could apply those standards to cleaning up existing plants.

I would hope that legislators across the country would take comments like these to heart and act on them, but I wouldn't depend on it too strongly—not in the very immediate future at least.

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No Credit for Industry

Another thing I wouldn't depend on too strongly is receiving any credit for what we do accomplish. We are in the unenviable position of the man who has been ordered to stop beating his wife. No matter what we do, we just can't win.

It's true. You wouldn't know it from what you read and what you see on television, but many companies are working hard on their pollution problems today and are in fact making enormous progress.

I'm not suggesting mountains of praise for our efforts. I would however hope at least for the understanding and support of the people, the politicians and the news media in our plant communities and across the country.

As for getting the job done . . . I think that in the long run the most feasible plan is to have industry as rapidly as it can, stop doing what it has been doing—polluting our air and water—and work with federal, state and local government to clean up the mess that's already been made. Stopping our present pollution is the most important first step to be taken. And industry is on the firing line—or in front of it, depending on your point of view.

Let's accept this initial responsibility as being ours . . . and let's do it now. On the negative side, if we do not accept, then we will be regulated to such an extent that some companies could be forced out of business and others so restricted in their operations that the free enterprise system could suffer serious harm.

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Industry's Obligation

There is another aspect of this concept of responsibility. We in industry have an obligation as citizens to do all we can to improve the lot of all Americans. Too often we think in terms of what America owes to industry, rather than in terms of what industry owes to America. It is a mutual obligation. Industry must have a conscience. A truly Christian conscience. It must recognize that its main function is to serve people, and that it can not in all honesty fulfill this purpose if it pollutes the air and contaminates the water.

One final thought in this area. When we talk of industry and government and the people as separate entities, we stand a good chance of misunderstanding one very important facet of this entire pollution control idea. And it's important that we do understand—for it is a fact of life in America. In the final analysis, it is the people, you and I, who are going to have to pay for the restoration of our environment. If the government is going to clean up Lake Erie, then the money needed to do the job is going to come out of our taxes, not out of some amorphous fund mysteriously created for the purpose. If a company installs a multi-million dollar air filtration device in its plant, in many cases the cost is going to be passed on to us, the consumers, in the price of the products we buy. The taxpayer, the consumer, the stockholder, call him what you will, he will end up paying the bill.

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The Esthetic Factor

Before I close, I would like to touch on one other factor. Tonight we have concerned ourselves primarily with the practical considerations of the need to correct the dangerous state of our environment, and I hope that I've given you a few things to think about. But there is another factor to be considered in approaching this subject.

I call it the *esthetic* factor. By our despoilage of our environmental heritage, we are reducing to a significant degree man's ability to take pleasure in nature and in his own existence. We can not always view our planet and its worth with the eye of a computer. To look at a giant redwood tree strictly in terms of board feet, or to gaze upon a roaring mountain stream with nothing but visions of hydro-electric plants dancing in our heads is to deny a part of what makes us human—that ability to appreciate all forms of life and nature and to respect them for their own sake, without regard to their utilitarian uses. The whooping crane and the alligator and a hundred other endangered species are perhaps not essential to the survival of human life on this planet, but there is in nature and its preservation a value that transcends purely practical considerations.

I want to pass on to my children and to their children after them, streams and lakes and rivers as clean and fresh and clear as the ones I swam in and fished in as a child—not only because it is essential for their survival that I do so, but also because it is essential to their enjoyment and appreciation of life itself that these things be accomplished.

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This is the point of view that I believe the young people in our country today are adopting; the sincere ones who'll be involved with Earth Day on April 22nd. Young men like my friend, Matt Swetonic here, who already has this viewpoint. It was Matt who put together much of the statistical material and gave me the benefit of his thinking in preparing this talk. His heart was in it—he said he never enjoyed a piece of speech research quite as much as this one because he knows it's an important cause.

Young men like Matt, and hopefully older men like me, believe another thing . . . that man as a species, despite all the excesses that he himself has wrought on his environment, is not yet in danger of extinction. However, if he persists in his unthinking ways—if he continues to reproduce his own kind in massive numbers, if he does not cease his endless despoilment of his own air and water, if he continually takes from nature without a thought for the future, then he will in time throttle the ability of our already shrinking environment to support his species, and he will perish from the earth.

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I don't think this will happen, though. If man has throughout the ages demonstrated one outstanding quality, it is his ability to surmount any obstacle, however difficult, that has stood in the way of his unending search for a better life. If this resiliency and determination is applied to the problem of the environment, and I believe it is going to be, then I have no fear that our futures and our children's futures will be as filled with clean air and sparkling waters as were our grandparents' yesterdays.

I have great faith and belief in the things to come. Like one of my favorite people—Charlie Brown—of the Peanuts comic strip. Asked to name his favorite day of the year, Charlie paused only a moment and then answered, "Well, I've always been kinda fond of tomorrow."

To ensure a good tomorrow, we've got to work together to begin to get this job done today.

Thank you.

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