

December 7, 1960 -- New York City, N.Y.

STATEMENT ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR BY REP. STEWART L. UDALL

I am honored and challenged that the President-elect would ask me to share part of his burden of national leadership.

Senator Kennedy has today also paid a high honor to the people of my state as this is the first time that anyone from Arizona has been asked to serve in the Cabinet.

I cast my lot with Senator Kennedy nearly fifteen months ago for the reason that I saw in him the personal character and talents of leadership I thought our country needed at this time. I also esteem his high concept of public service and welcome the opportunity to work alongside him in formulating fresh national policies.

I am no stranger to the problems and challenges of the Department which I will head. In many ways my own state is a compact image of the Interior Department. (For example, Arizona has more Indians -- nearly 100,000 -- and Indian reservations, than any other state; and it has more National Monuments in the National Park System than any other state.) I have had an intensive schooling in Western problems during my six years on the House Interior Committee, and naturally I have many new ideas about the solution of these problems.

The broad guidelines of our policies are already delineated in President Kennedy's campaign speeches and in the platform of our party. We intend to move toward these goals and are preparing "new start" programs for conservation, reclamation, power, Indian affairs, and public lands.

On many occasions I have heard Senator Kennedy state his admiration for Presidents Franklin D. and Theodore Roosevelt and I know that nothing would give him greater satisfaction than to equal or surpass the record of these two great Presidents in natural resources development.

Few areas in government leave a more abiding and visible mark on our land and our individual future than what is done or not done by the Department of Interior. Our success will be measured by the scars of neglect that are removed and the creative programs we realize in improving this great land of ours.

Senator Kennedy and I share the same political philosophy, and I know he agrees with me that in the long run the best politics is a job well done. In the recent election our party fell short in the West, and we intend to aggressively prosecute programs which will forcefully identify the Kennedy Administration with high goals of resource development.

This is a day of pride and of challenge for me, for my state -- and for my generation. I think I clearly understand the aims of the President; I shall bend every effort to see that these aims are attained.