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# A letter from the PUBLISHER

Henry Luce w

WITH President Nixon's State of the Union message last week, the national concern over the environment has reached an unprecedented level of intensity. Suddenly, the word seems to dominate all conversation. It is yet another battle cry for the young—and a source of grave new awareness for Americans of every age. TIME's readers can claim an earlier involvement than most. For the past six months, the magazine has devoted a complete section to Environment, and judging by our mail, it has swiftly become one of TIME's most popular departments. Not a week goes by without dozens of letters from readers commenting -and often taking passionate sides —on the various issues covered by the section.

Readers have written to cheer Environment's report on the vast network of conservation commissions in Massachusetts and to protest the possibility of a jetport near Florida's Everglades; they mourned, with TIME, the passing of the goldencheeked warbler and shuddered at the arrival of the African snail. Other stories on the dangers of nuclear power, over-development in Vermont, noise pollution in big cities, how to abolish billboards, antipollution suits in Illinois drew wide comment. Many readers simply expressed an opinion, as did former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, that "TIME's concern over the environment's deterioration gives us fresh hope that this fight can be won."

TIME, of course, has long dealt with the environment in sections throughout the magazine. In 1965, for example, the Oct. 1 Science cover story examined the uses and misuses of the world's water supply. Our July 28, 1967 Nation cover reported Daniel P. Moynihan's fight against urban blight. The May 10, 1968, Essay, "The Age of Effluence," brought requests for 1,000 reprints. Thus it became clearer and clearer that both the ravages of man's world as well as his attempts to salvage it were of such concern to everyone that a special section in TIME was called for.

The Environment section is edited by Robert Shnayerson, written by Philip Herrera and researched by Nancy Williams, with frequent guestwriting stints by Oliver Moore. Correspondents Richard Saltonstall and Rich Rein both specialize in Environment stories.

This week, Environment's first cover story deals at length with the fascinating work of Ecologist Barry Commoner, leader of a tiny band of once sheltered scientists who have suddenly risen to prominence and sometimes sound like new Jeremiahs. In addition to the regular Environment staff, the month-long project drew on the talents of Writer Peter Stoler, Correspondents Sam Iker and Alan Anderson, Researchers Hilary Ostlere and Marguerite Michaels. The story, we feel, is in line with our promise of six months ago that the new section would report the good with the bad, would listen to optimists as well as pessimists, and would describe the exciting ideas of architects, city planners, engineers, politicians and ecologists.

The Cover: Acrylic painting by Mati Klarwein.

Each year at this time, our Education Department puts out a 100-question Current Affairs Test covering the news of the preceding year. The 34th edition of the test will be taken by 6,000,000 people around the world. Copies (price: 10¢) may be ordered from:

TIME Current Affairs Test, Box 870 Radio City Station, New York, N. Y. 10019

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