Conservation: Local and National Interests Conflict on Proposals Awaiting Action in Congress

When he died, John F. Kennedy was well on the way to becoming the third chief executive whose reign could offer any comfort to conservationists. Kennedy was a city-boy whose interest in conservation grew more from an intellectual grasp of the potential crises in resources and recreation for the growing population of 20th-century America than from a passionate, personal attachment to the land. He could not match the bombast of Teddy Roosevelt, who, according to a story told by Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall in his new book *The Quiet Crisis*, threw away a speech prepared for a group of foresters and roared at them: "I hate the man who skins the land." Nor do we know of an occasion when Kennedy equaled our second great conservationist president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, when called on the week before Pearl Harbor to arbitrate a dispute between the Army and some conservationists over the location of a proposed artillery range the conservationists feared might exterminate the trumpeter swan, announced: "The verdict is for the Trumpeter Swan and against the Army."

But Kennedy appointed to the secretaryships of Interior and Agriculture men distinguished for their interest in conservation, and encouraged them to move ahead. He listened to the spokemen for conservation, and concluded that they were right. He saw that the fragmentation of supporters of conservation, and the public apathy over most conservation issues, together with the intense pressure placed on most western congressmen and senators by mining, lumber, and other commercial interests, made presidential leadership a necessity, and he introduced a variety of proposals to extend and protect the public domain, to encourage recreation, to create a new Youth Conservation Corps to go to work on the land.

Barnstorming for conservation, however, when so many issues seemed both more urgent and more popular did not come naturally to Kennedy. Freshman Senator Gaylord Nelson, a dedicated conservationist who is almost unique among contemporary politicians in having made conservation a successful political issue, both as governor of Wisconsin and in his 1962 campaign for U.S. Senator, was persuaded that conservation could arouse public interest on a national level, too. Nelson went to the White House, taking with him a scrapbook of clippings from Wisconsin newspapers, illustrating how intense and sustained the public's enthusiasm for conservation could be. For a variety of reasons Kennedy agreed, last September, to make a nonpolitical "conservation tour" of 11 states to dramatize and defend his policies. As a "conservation tour" the trip was a bit of a fizzle: as often as not, the President threw away his prepared speeches and spoke of the things more pressingly on his mind: poverty, the economy, the threat to foreign policy of the simplistic views of right-wing spokesmen, a defense of the Democratic program. But the President visited the sites of several major new reclamation and conservation facilities, he stressed his conviction that the nation is "reaching the limits" on prized natural resources, and he called for "a determined effort to preserve what is left." In all, he gave conservation more attention than it had received since the New Deal. "When Kennedy died," said Spencer Smith, Jr., of the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, chief spokesmen in Washington for all conservation groups, "we felt like just giving up."

What Will Johnson Do?

Whether President Johnson will grow into an appreciation of conservation, as Kennedy did, remains to be seen. His background as a cattleman and his links with oilmen, groups associated with some of the more predatory and wasteful phases of our land policies, make conservationists feel the outlook is a bit grim. Johnson has not yet had a briefing from conservation spokesmen in the capital nor produced a presidential message on natural resources, though that is expected shortly. But there are before Congress a great variety of controversial conservation proposals, some bearing the Kennedy stamp, some left over from earlier administrations. Action on almost any one of them would make the 88th Congress one of the few notable "conservation congresses" in our history. Whether the Congress is thus encouraged to make this name for itself depends a good deal on Johnson's interest in using presidential influence to overcome the political pressures in which all the bills are currently snared.

The most important conservation measure pending in Congress is the proposal to establish a Land and Water Conservation Fund, to enable the federal government to assist the states in acquiring land for outdoor recreation, and to build up federal recreational lands. The objective—preserving outdoor recreation opportunities for a growing population—has a good deal of bipartisan support, and the bill has been endorsed by 47 state governments as well as by all major conservation organizations. The Fund could reach $2.5 billion over 25 years. Initially it would operate on a loan from the Treasury Department, but ultimately it would be financed from three sources: modest fees charged to users of federally managed recreation areas; proceeds from the sale of surplus federal goods and property (through which the government collects between $60 million and $80 million annually); and proceeds from the existing federal motor fuels tax derived from fuels used in motorboats (the 2¢ net tax currently goes into the Highway Trust Fund).

Despite the fact that the money thus acquired would still be dispensed only by regular Congressional appropriation, the fund has been attacked as an executive attempt to circumvent Congress. Further antagonism has centered on the provision for user charges ("The bill breaks faith with millions of Americans by imposing fees for entrance and use . . .", says the House Interior Committee's minority report), although many national parks already charge such fees. And the bill has also been criticized as an unwarranted hardship on boatowners (and hence boatbuilders) who will have to pay a fee for launching boats in federal waters, in addition to their contributions to the fund through the fuel tax. Since most of the objections raised to the bill so far are either trivial or inaccurate, it is thought to have a fairly good chance for passage. At the moment, however, it is stalled in the House Rules Committee, awaiting the opening of the magic gates that lead to debate on the floor. The Senate held hearings last year, but is apparently waiting for the House to take the lead.

Another controversial conservation measure, one that has been around since 1949, is the Wilderness Bill, a proposal to preserve in wilderness condition approximately 60 million acres of federally owned lands across the country (including 25 million acres in Alaska). Since the lands in question are already receiving some degree of administrative protection in the Forest

Service, or are protected by law and administrative policy as parts of national park or monument areas, the issue involved is more symbolic than real. Among the issues it has come to symbolize, however, is the conflict between "the people" and "the interests," particularly the mineral development interests of the West, which are gradually to be excluded from the wilderness lands. Just how gradually is one question that has produced acrid debate; another question has been the relative authority of Congress and the President to designate the wilderness areas.

Wilderness System

The Senate, in 1961 and again in 1963, passed bills supported by conservationists which gave the President broad authority to designate and extend the public lands held inviolate as part of the "wilderness system," and which prohibited all major commercial activity in those areas. The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, in 1962, reported a bill backed by the Chamber of Commerce, the American National Cattlemen's Association, the American Mining Congress, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and other groups with commercial interests. The House bill limited the lands available for redesignation as wilderness, permitted reclassification only by affirmative congressional action, and allowed mining and prospecting activity to continue in wilderness areas for 25 years. Another difference between the Senate and House bills was that the Senate placed the lands in wilderness status in perpetuity, while the House allowed for their periodic review and potential withdrawal from the system.

The conservationists' version of the Wilderness Bill, unlike the Land and Water Conservation Fund, has apparently not yet received the explicit endorsement of President Johnson. But recent congressional maneuvering has nonetheless produced some hope of a House bill this session that would compromise with the Senate on the two questions of presidential-congressional jurisdiction and the extent of permitted mining activities. And Congressman Wayne Aspinall (D-Colo.), chairman of the House Interior Committee and a conservationist whose ideas about the subject conflict with those of most conservation organizations, has introduced a bill calling for a special commission to sort out the confusing welter of laws that make up our present land policies and make some comprehensive recommendations about the future treatment of federal lands. Aspinall's proposal, made after an exchange of letters with President Kennedy on the need for such a review, is still in the Rules Committee, but its existence takes some of the heat out of the jurisdictional issue that has helped snarl the Wilderness Bill for so long.

New Deal Revisited

Perhaps the most romantic of the conservation measures before Congress is Kennedy's proposal to create a Youth Conservation Corps, a successor to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the New Deal. The YCC, approved by the Senate last April, is part of a twofold youth employment program with conservation overtones, to be administered by the Department of Labor. It would put 15,000 men between 16 and 22 to work at a variety of jobs on federal lands. The bill was reported favorably by the House Education and Labor Committee, but—like so many bills—is stalled in the Rules Committee by southern opposition. And, at the same time, since the YCC was as much an anti-poverty as a pro-conservation measure, there is now a possibility that it will get swallowed up by President Johnson's larger "war on poverty." A plan being toyed with by Johnson's poverty planners (headed by Sargent Shriver of the Peace Corps) calls for rehabilitating young men found ineligible for military service by providing special education for them in Army camps. The idea that education in an army camp, whether or not actually run by the army, is equivalent in value to good conservation work in the great outdoors is anathema to many conservationists who are afraid the new proposal will scuttle their dream. The two plans will not necessarily conflict, however, and since the poverty-planners have considerable interest in the relation between rural poverty and conservation problems, it is more likely that conservation will benefit from the "war on poverty" than that it will be harmed. For the present, at any rate, the villain of the YCC story is not the Army or the war on poverty but the Rules Committee.

Water Bills

In addition to the major bills promoting the conservation of land and people, there are also three major bills relating to the conservation of water.

The first bill, the Water Resources Research Act, is aimed at developing a group of competent water scientists and engineers in each state, and at accelerating the conduct of research into state and local, as well as national, water problems. Under the terms of the legislation, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to grant up to $100,000 annually to each state for the establishment of state or regional water resource centers at land-grant colleges or state universities. The bill passed the Senate last April and was reported by the House Interior Committee on 10 February. It is in the Rules Committee.

The second water measure, the Water Resources Planning Act, would establish joint federal-state commissions to prepare comprehensive plans for the development of water and related land resources within river basins, regions, or groups of related river basins where such plans do not already exist. Such a system has been proposed for many years by water experts, but efforts have always been frustrated by the inability of the states and the federal government to agree on their respective rights and responsibilities. The joint commissions proposed in the new bill, which was passed by the Senate in December, are thought to be generally acceptable, and the bill is expected to pass the House.

The third water bill, the Water Pollution Control Act, is a threefold attack on the problems of pollution. It takes the power to enforce pollution-abatement proceedings from the Public Health Service and places it in a separate administration under the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; it authorizes the promulgation of federal standards of water quality for the country's rivers; and it places curbs on the use of synthetic detergents. This bill, too, has passed the Senate, but is now the subject of a strong industrial counterattack in the House, and its fate is increasingly uncertain.

In addition to the water-conservation bills, there is a major reclamation project, a Pacific Southwest Water Plan, proposed by Interior Secretary Stuart Udall last week. According to a spokesman for the Interior Department, the main elements of the five-state plan, estimated eventually to cost $3 billion, are: (i) a system of aqueducts and storage reservoirs to permit central Arizona to utilize its share of waters from the Colorado River (a

claim upheld by the Supreme Court last June after 11 years of litigation); (ii) a guarantee to replenish the dwindling water supplies of southern California and the Lower Colorado basin by importing surplus water from the mountainous areas on California's northern coast; and (iii) the construction of two major dams on the Colorado River to provide power and financial support for the project. An unstated objective of the plan is to end 30 years of bitter feuding between Arizona and California, by providing a basis for common action. A handful of smaller reclamation projects are also pending.

National Parks

Finally, in matters of conservation the 88th Congress has before it proposals to create six new national parks: Canyonlands National Park (Utah), Ozark Rivers National Park (Missouri), Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Michigan), Oregon Dunes National Seashore (Oregon), Fire Island National Seashore (New York), and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (Indiana). The 87th Congress created a record by adding three new national parks—Cape Cod (Massachusetts), Padre Island (Texas), and Point Reyes (California)—and it is unlikely that the present Congress will equal that record. Nonetheless, the park bills are in various stages of the long road through Congress, and it is expected that two, and possibly three, of the measures will go through.

A final note on conservation politics: Of the six major bills discussed here five (the exception is the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill) have passed the Senate and are stalled in the House, several in the Rules Committee. Conservation measures frequently upset local patterns and alienate possibilities for commercial exploitation, and they are most often opposed by those closest to the areas affected. Senators, with 6-year terms and statewide constituencies, can afford to take a lofty view of such complaints; Congressmen cannot. Many of the conservation landmarks of the two Roosevelt administrations were achieved by arousing the public to arouse Congress; many were achieved not by consulting Congress but by bypassing it. Either way, leadership in conservation has clearly got to come from the politician with the largest constituency of all.

—ELINOR LANGER

Announcements

The three **geographical divisions of the AAAS** are scheduling their annual meetings this spring and summer. Sessions will be open to members and non-members. *Detailed information on the meetings and on submission of papers is available from the section secretaries or the executive secretary of each division.* The meetings are:

Southwestern and Rocky Mountain Division, 40th, 26–30 April, Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas. Papers for presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes; titles and 200-word abstracts are required by 7 March. Executive secretary: M. G. Anderson, P.O. Box 97, University Park, New Mexico, 88070.

Pacific Division, 45th, 22–27 June, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Titles of the papers to be presented must be submitted by 15 April. Pre-registration deadline is 31 May. Executive secretary: Robert C. Miller, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco.

Alaska Division, 15th Alaskan Science Conference, 1–4 September, University of Alaska, College; theme: "communication," both technical and social aspects, and the variations found in the North. Titles of papers must be submitted by 1 June; 250-word abstracts by 1 July. (The division recently reorganized its sections to encompass the AAAS section structure.) Executive secretary: G. Dahlgren, Department of Chemistry, University of Alaska, College.

Meeting Notes

An international conference on **photosensitization** in solids will be held at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, 22–24 June. The topics will include mechanisms of energy and electron transfer, sensitization of chemical and electrical effects in organic crystals, polymers, silver halides, and zinc oxide, the aspects of biological photosensitization, and the formation of molecular complexes. Deadline for applications to attend: *1 April* (L. I. Grossweiner, Department of Physics, I.I.T. Chicago 16, Ill.)

A conference on **vacuum microbalance techniques** will be held 7–8 May in Pittsburgh, Pa. Papers are invited on theory and applications, new types of balances, associated equipment and other microweighing methods. Deadline for submission of abstracts: *26 March.* (F. A. Brassart, Westinghouse Research and Development Center, Beulah Rd., Pittsburgh 35, Pa.)

Papers are invited for presentation at the 19th conference of the Instrument Society of America, 12–15 October in New York. The meeting will consist of approximately 70 technical sessions covering the major areas of **instrumentation**. Deadline for receipt of abstracts: *31 March.* (H. T. Marcy, General Products Division, International Business Machines Corp., White Plains, N.Y.)

Papers are being solicited for the 1964 international conference on **microwaves, circuit theory and information theory**, scheduled 7–11 September in Tokyo. Summaries of 800 to 1200 words, and 100-word abstracts, in English, are required; tables and figures are also acceptable. Deadline: *31 March.* (K. Morita, Institute of Electrical Communication Engineers of Japan, 2-8 Fujimicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo)

Scientists in the News

Abe Silverstein, director of the NASA Lewis Research Center, has received the Sylvanus Albert Reed award for 1963. The award, presented by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, cites him for "major contributions toward the development of propulsion systems for aircraft and spacecraft and for outstanding leadership in the nation's programs of scientific satellites and manned space flight."

Clyde Hall, public information officer for the National Science Foundation, resigns as of 1 March to establish a free-lance writing-editing enterprise in the Washington, D.C., area.

Erratum: Because of an editorial error, Fig. 1, of the report on *Autoradiographic Distribution of Radioactive Sodium in Rat Kidney* [*Science* **143**, 695 (14 Feb.)] was incorrectly described as a reverse autoradiograph. Because these are normal autoradiographs, the dark, not the light, areas denote deposition of the radioisotope. In the legend of the cover photograph (p. 631), which is associated with this report, the word "Reverse" should be deleted and in the third line the word "dark" should replace "light." The first six lines of the legend of Fig. 1 (p. 696) should read: "Autoradiographs of cross sections, parallel to the long axis of the kidney, from rats injected with Cl^{36} (*A*); and with inulin-$C^{14}OOH$ (*B*). In each section, dark areas denote deposition of the radioisotope . . ."