

which had the mission of aiding depressed areas throughout the nation, smacked of the pork barrel. Its administrators were beset by political pressures from localities hungry for federal money and from those localities' representatives in Congress. As a result, projects were funded with scarcely more than a pretense of following well-thought-out development strategies. The Appalachia program is not wholly innocent of pork-barrel tendencies, but, in its case, political pressures usually can be deflected. ARC receives project applications only from the governors, who, with the help of their economic development offices, set funding priorities after reviewing the proposals prepared by the localities and the multi-county development districts.

A congressman who comes to ARC pleading for support for a project in his district is usually told to go see his governor. That generally ends the matter. "Congressmen quickly saw that they could claim credit for projects that we supported and escape blame for those that we did not," says a former ARC official who was with the program during its first years. "The governors, they liked the system too, because it gave them a real voice."

Authority to approve or disapprove projects for funding has been delegated to an executive committee made up of the federal cochairman, the "states' regional representative" (the stand-in for the governors in the daily operations of the commission), and the ARC staff director. The commission itself, which establishes project criteria, is not an operating agency and projects which it helps fund are carried out by other agencies. However, ARC has a professional staff of 63, and it provides technical assistance.

With an annual budget now approaching \$300 million, ARC's annual spending is an important enough supplement to that of other federal and state agencies to give the commission real influence in the development process. For one thing, it functions as a broker between the federal and state and local governments. Several months ago ARC brought Kentucky's health, mental health, education, and welfare officials together with their federal counterparts to design a new child development program. It was discovered that the state officials had never before met together for program planning and that the same was true of the federal officials. ARC sees itself as a catalyst acting both vertically and horizontally, engendering pro-

Land Law Review Stirs Controversy

Leading conservationists reacted with disappointment to the report issued last week by the Public Land Law Review Commission. The 342-page report—complete with pictures, maps, and graphs—was the result of a 5-year, \$7-million study and was the first comprehensive review of public land policy in the nation's history. The commission, set up by a 1964 Act of Congress, was made up of seven House members, six senators, and six presidential appointees, including Philip H. Hoff, former governor of Vermont, and Laurence S. Rockefeller, a well-known conservationist.

The commission's report recommended several major changes in the way public land is managed. It called for a coordinated land policy to replace the disjointed series of statutes and laws, which have governed policy in the past, and for a reassertion of congressional primacy and a curbing of executive powers over land management. It also recommended a revision of procedures to aid commercial interests and urban expansion, the establishment of environmental guidelines for use of land, and the creation of a new Department of Natural Resources by combining the Agriculture Department's Forest Service with the Department of the Interior.

Despite these and 350 other recommendations, representatives of the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Wilderness Society characterized the report as superficial and criticized it for failing to face up to many of the serious issues facing the government in its land policy.

Timber and Mining Sections Criticized

Particular criticism was leveled at sections of the report dealing with use of public land for timbering and mining. The report recommended, for example, that "public lands that are highly productive for timber be classified for commercial timber production as the dominant use" and that "mineral exploration and development should have a preference over some or all other uses on much of our public land."

Thomas Kimball, head of the National Wildlife Federation, said "I intensely disagree with the report's recommendations on timber and mining. It's incredible to think that the commission could come up with a report so favorable to private interests." Kimball faulted the makeup of the commission, which he described as "dominated by advocates of special interest groups." Included in the 19-man commission were 12 congressmen from western states, where development of land is often considered more crucial than conservation.

The conservationists found a few praiseworthy items in the report. Recommendations for a coordinated land policy and for government retention of most of the land it now owns (one-third of the United States) were both lauded. But for the most part, conservationists found more to condemn than to praise.

In his letter of transmittal to President Nixon, the commission's flinty chairman, Representative Wayne Aspinall (D.-Colo.), said the report represented the consensus of a wide range of views. But he noted that "the absence of a member's separate views does not necessarily indicate that there is a unanimity on details."

Indeed, unanimity on details was far from complete. In addition to several written objections to specific sections of the report, general criticism of the favoritism shown to industry was voiced privately to *Science* by two of the commissioners. Yet all members of the commission signed the report (which does not of itself change any laws), and even the most critical conservationists conceded that it paves the way for congressional action on badly needed land law reform.

Aspinall, chairman of the House Interior Committee, said that it will be at least 6 months before such action can be initiated.

—THOMAS P. SOUTHWICK