

CHAPTER X.—LAND USE AND RENEWABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT*

CONSPECTUS

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The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found on p. xvi of this volume.

Canada's era of settlement ended as the northern areas of the Prairie Provinces came under cultivation in the 1930s. Government policies, previously directed mainly toward the large-scale utilization of natural resources, have evolved toward concern with land use and the socio-economic circumstances of people involved in renewable resource-based industries. Undiscriminating land settlement policies and ill-advised individual choices had resulted in the settlement of some submarginal land throughout Canada, but most notably in the southern areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan, creating requirement for land-use adjustment even before settlement had been completed. Far more significant than this, however, is the technological revolution in agriculture which has occurred during the past three decades concurrently with improvements in transportation and a strong trend toward the concentration in urban centres of a growing population.

Accompanying these changes has been an altered pattern of land use resulting from individual response to economic factors; but the rate of such adjustment has not been concomitant to the magnitude of the socio-economic dislocation in rural areas. Because of this situation, and because of increased concern with forest management, water pollution control, recreational resources and wildlife management, the trend has been for a vast increase in public decision-making with respect to resource management and use. Implicit in this has been the need for improved legislative-administrative organization relative to natural resources.

Early federal investigations of significance to the general problem of organization for resource use were: the Senate of Canada Special Committee on Land Use, established in 1957 and continuing until 1963; the House of Commons Standing Committee on Mines, Forests and Waters; and the National Conference on Reconstruction held in 1945. Notable among several provincial government activities along similar lines is the annual British Columbia resources conference.

One of the most important responses to this need was the "Resources for Tomorrow" Conference held in 1961 to permit examination of problems of resource use and of developing an organizational framework suited to the modern requirement for integrated, comprehensive resource-use planning for social and economic development. Subsequent to this Conference, the Canadian Council of Resource Ministers, composed of one representative from each province and one from the Federal Government, was established to perform a similar function on a continuing basis, with the aid of a Montreal-based staff.

* Revised in the office of the Canadian Council of Resource Ministers, Montreal, Que.