

One of the major specific concerns of the Council has been water resource management. Relevant activities have included a major conference on pollution, held in the autumn of 1966 for the purpose of formulating realistic guidelines to assist federal, provincial and municipal governments in developing programs to meet the challenge of pollution. An investigation was made by the Council of the administration of water resources in Canada; a report was published in 1965 and updated in 1968. A major workshop seminar on water is planned for the autumn of 1968.

In keeping with its general concern for optimal use of available resources, the Council has done investigative and liaison work to ensure that fundamental data are available to guide the allocation of resources to outdoor recreation and has prepared other documents that have assisted in developing liaison between and within governments. As part of its role in information gathering and exchange, the Council maintains liaison with international bodies concerned with natural resources, and participates in international programs such as the International Hydrological Decade and the International Biological Program.

Constitutionally, administration and disposition of natural resources rest mainly with the provincial governments. Under the British North America Act, fisheries were under federal jurisdiction and the federal and provincial governments shared legislative authority with respect to agriculture, international and interprovincial waters, etc., with federal legislation taking precedence over provincial legislation should conflict arise; however, subsequent interpretations of the Act have established most aspects of control of resources as being matters of provincial jurisdiction. As well, in the years following Confederation certain provinces, by agreement, assumed varying degrees of responsibility for administering the fisheries legislation and other federal resources legislation. Within this general framework, the Federal Government has taken certain steps to establish a national resources policy, to co-ordinate the activity of the various federal departments concerned with resources and relevant social and economic problems, to undertake or share in research, and to provide initiative and financial assistance in the establishment of programs of resource adjustment and development; and provincial governments have moved significantly to accommodate their administrative structures to the need for integrated, planned resource adjustment and development. Aspects of this trend to accommodate legislative-administrative organization to emerging needs will be apparent in the following descriptions of federal and federal-provincial agencies and programs. In addition, a great number of provincial programs have been instituted or strengthened, furthering the trend toward integration of activities relative to renewable natural resources.

Federal activity in resource conservation programs began before the turn of the century, starting in 1877. This included the work of the now long-disbanded Department of the Interior in the field of surveying and development of water resources in Western Canada. Later programs included those conducted under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act which was enacted in 1935 to aid in the rehabilitation of drought-stricken areas of the prairies, the work on the eastern seaboard conducted under the Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Act of 1948, water development projects under the terms of the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act of 1953, the broad and comprehensive resource development and adjustment programs being undertaken under the terms of the Agricultural and Rural Development Act of 1966 (formerly Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act of 1961), and the Fund for Rural Economic Development Act, 1966, and projects under the Atlantic Development Board Act of 1962. There have been numerous programs under the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act of 1911 by the International Joint Commission established to fulfil the provisions of the treaty and the confirming Act. Over this period many projects of varying nature and scope have been undertaken under legislation such as the above and under the terms of reference of the federal and provincial government departments and agencies concerned with resource development—all toward the basic objective of achieving more effective utilization of Canada's land and water resources and the provision of a greater degree of economic stability and equitability for the rural areas of the country.