

The first action by the Federal Government was to compile information on measures that are being taken under its authority in the resource field. This, as you know, was done early in 1958. On November 17th, 1958, the first meeting with representatives of the provincial governments took place. It was a source of great gratification to find that the provincial governments shared with us the view that a national conference on conservation could be of benefit and assistance.

As I have mentioned, that federal-provincial meeting reached the decision that the Conference should be limited to renewable resources including soil, water, forests, wildlife, fish and recreational facilities. It decided that the Conference should be called the "National Conference on Conservation - Multiple Use of Renewable Resources". I think these were wise decisions - although I must say that I have since wondered whether we could not, by a more striking and imaginative name, make clearer to the people of Canada the significance of the Conference. What will we be talking about? I suggest it is "Resources for To-morrow" - and perhaps we would do well to call our Conference by that name.

As to the limitation to renewable resources, it does not mean that we are neglecting the very important non-renewable resources, but simply that we feel that the renewable ones can be dealt with as a group in a productive and useful fashion. For the present, I feel sure that we shall have more than enough to do in considering the very wide range of questions that come together under the heading of renewable resources.

Since our meeting of last year, the provinces have submitted material concerning measures being taken by them in the resource fields that will be under discussion at the forthcoming Conference. The Federal Government has taken action by the appointment of a secretariat in order that the work of collating information and initiating the preparation of particular studies can be undertaken. I must confess that it has not been possible to proceed with the establishment of the secretariat or with the initial work as quickly as I had hoped. We do, however, now have the nucleus of what I think can be a strong and adequate organization and it was with that knowledge that it was felt that we could now call a meeting of the Steering Committee to consider the questions that were left to it at the meeting of last year. These were particularly the questions as to the type of paper that should be prepared to form the basis of the Conference and, secondly, what non-governmental organizations should be invited to participate in that Conference.

To my mind the studies that are undertaken for the Conference will be as important as the Conference itself. From these studies and resulting papers, I expect the Conference in its discussions will crystallize the ideas from all groups into suggestions for the eleven governments who have the policy-making power.