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## DEDICATION TO THE FUTURE

*The following passages are from a recent speech by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Mr. Arthur Laing, at the dedication of the Nature-Interpretive Centre, Point-Pelee National Park, Ontario:*

...Today we are beset with problems — problems of war, problems of peace, problems with education and problems with our future. We are concerned for our nation, and one of the greatest concerns is what we are doing to our land. It has brought us riches and pleasure, but, unless properly managed, the well-being it brings today can be lost tomorrow. A hundred yards from where we are gathered exists an outstanding example of what can happen if people do not respect their natural heritage. Lake Erie used to be one of the greatest inland recreational and productive parts of this country. Fish were abundant, and a thriving fishing industry provided thousands of jobs for local citizens. The waters and the surrounding beaches provided some of the best recreational playgrounds in the country. This, too, meant jobs. Today this is largely a pleasant memory.

Because everyone thought its capacities were unlimited, cities and industry paid scant attention to what they were doing to the lake, with the result that many now claim Lake Erie is nothing more than an open sewer. They have insisted that unless corrective steps are taken immediately, Lake Erie will turn into a swamp where the only living things will be the unsightly, smelly algae that thrive on man's waste.

Governments in Canada and the United States have recognized the problem and are now undertaking programmes costing billions of dollars to protect and improve our water resources.

A similar, but more disguised problem exists on many of our strategically-located land areas. Unless we direct more attention to sound land-management, the life-giving natural resources and the very scenic attractiveness of our great land, which we come to regard as everlasting, may not remain so. I am determined that in our national parks, at least, there shall be for all time classic examples of Canada's natural heritage of Canada much as it was before the white man came. Toward that end, I announced two years ago a comprehensive policy for our national parks, the first major declaration of management aims since the National Parks Act was passed in 1930.

### NATIONAL PARKS POLICY

The parks policy I enunciated in 1964...is intended to ensure evolution of an outstanding national park system with an appeal to citizen and visitor alike, "for their benefit, education and enjoyment". The Government has instituted a policy to revitalize the parks while, at the same time, conserving the basic scenic and natural resources. With today's pressures, this means careful planning and good management. The new national parks policy, I am confident, will provide just that.

The need for a clear statement of national park policies at this time was very apparent, due to the vast changes in the character and sheer quantity of public visitation to the parks, which threatened ultimately to destroy the very quality of the visitor experience. With heavy visitation has come an inevitable demand for a variety of facilities, appropriate and otherwise. The policy statements are intended to provide the basic direction for planning and develop-