

BLUE JAY CHATTER

Saskatchewan's First Resources Conference

More than 300 delegates, including many from beyond Saskatchewan's borders, met in Saskatoon, January 20 and 21, 1964, for Saskatchewan's first Resources Conference. I attended as a representative of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. We talked about our natural resources and how we can better utilize them without depleting them and jeopardizing our future.

All delegates were together for the introductory addresses the first morning and the final speeches and conclusions on the last afternoon. The rest of the time we were divided into five sections: land, water, forests, minerals and recreation. I was a member of the recreation group. Papers from all sessions have been printed and I have copies of them which members may borrow.

Mr. I. K. Fox, Resources for the Future, Inc., Washington, D.C., gave the keynote address. He emphasized that the world population has doubled since 1900 and will double again before the year 2000. We must consider the needs of this growing population and we must preserve our resources at a level conducive to good living. Mr. Fox is optimistic about our ability to provide food but thinks we will have real problems governing our large cities, finding occupations for our unemployed and using our leisure time. He warned us that threats to our physical environment are already here, e.g. water and air pollution, pesticides, and general deterioration of our landscape. He stated that we must develop new regulations, such as charging cities for the wastes and detergents released into our waters so that they will control and reduce such wastes. Mr. Fox emphasized that our physical environment is part of our natural resources and that we must preserve and enhance this environment.

Mr. R. G. Young, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, Regina, was the chairman of the Recreation sector. The first speaker was Mr. W. W. Mair, Chief of the National Parks Service, Ottawa. He described the great increase in the number of visitors to our parks and said that most of them came to see wildlife. Wildlife, therefore, is very important in tourism which was described as the second largest earner of dollars for Canada. Since wild animals and plants require land there is naturally some conflict of interests, but farmers are not antagonistic to wildlife if the damage they do to crops and property is paid for. It was emphasized by Mr. Mair and by several discussants that not enough of the revenue from the tourist industry is being spent on wildlife research, and on salaries for biologists needed in this important industry, and that almost no pamphlets are being produced. Saskatchewan's climate is rigorous. We can make our province a better place in which to live by keeping our rivers and lakes clean and by conservation of scenic areas and protection of native plants and animals.

Mr. W. M. Baker, Park and Recreation Planner, Toronto, told us that we should examine areas carefully and try to capitalize on their unique features. For example, there is no grassland park in all of Canada. Our government plans to develop such a park, and as natural history people we should urge them to make the park as large and impressive as possible. We want to see wide grassy areas with no signs of human habitation (any shelters or accommodation provided could be inconspicuous or hidden in a valley). We would like to see native animals in the area. Grazing by domestic animals should be rigidly controlled so that this can become truly a park where man can enjoy a grasslands environment. The establishing of such a park would provide wisely for recreational use of one of our most attractive "natural resources."

—GEORGE F. LEDINGHAM.