

CULTIVATING THE URBS

M.C. Fred Newberry

Geo. Price) Gov. James, Rick Parnoff, Dean Kamin, Stone Pong, Collins, Wallace, Knight

Mr. Chairman, I've enjoyed the day--up to now, when it's

my turn.

This fourth annual Maryland Urban Conservation Tour--

today in Baltimore County--has been excellent. I ^{know} hope everyone here

joins me in sincere appreciation to you and your co-workers.

You are following through on the statement Lathrop Smith made in

1967 on the Montgomery County tour:

"We are glad to show you what we are doing and hope that

you can get your program going easier than we did ours. We have

worked long and hard to get where we are and have a long way to go."

Material for talk by Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, at the 4th Annual Maryland Urban Conservation Tour, Baltimore County, Maryland, September 30, 1970

I joined you today because I believe deeply in what you are doing. Tomorrow--^{From} courtesy of our remarkable air transports--

See attached to

I'll be in San Francisco and in Reno, Nevada, for meetings with conservation district leaders from the Western States. They, too, have large and similar challenges--and great dedication for going

ahead with the job! → As Prof. ^{Am} ~~Wigman~~ says it's a matter of 3 M's - Money, Manpower, & Motivation. This has been quite a day, and I won't keep you long now.

For most of us, there is no "free" time; it is scarce and expensive.

So I gave some thought as to how best to use these few minutes. And

I think the answer is to step ^{a little} beyond the concerns of Baltimore County to try to set a broader context for the things that are

happening here. - and back home in the several states & counties & cons. dist. repr. here. It was my good fortune to co-chair the first National

Conference on Soil, Water, and Suburbia. In that session--also in

1967, in Washington, D.C.--the first speaker from the Department of

Housing and Urban Development said, in introducing the Secretary of

Agriculture:

"As you know, the sponsors...are USDA and HUD. And...that in itself is an astonishing mix. To paraphrase Mr. Kipling, farm is farm and town is town and never the twain shall meet. Then what in the world are we doing in joint conference?...The twain have met, but not very gracefully...(in) that strange, latter-day phenomenon known as suburbia...where the bulldozer has taken over from the plow--where the barbecue pit has replaced the harvest table, where most of our urban growth has happened since World War II--and will continue to happen in the foreseeable future. ^{in too many cases} Unfortunately, that growth has not been kind to the land."

To paraphrase the HUD speaker, in the next few decades the twain shall meet around a lot more of America's cities. By the year 2000, United States population is expected to be between 250 million and 360 million. That's quite a spread--the wide range is due to the recent decline in the birth rate. Whatever the actual total will be, it means an increasing demand for living space.

Most of the ^{new} citizens probably will live, work, and play in urbanized areas outside of existing city limits. Billions of dollars will be invested in this "development" in a relatively short time.

It might be possible to compress urban population expansion within existing metropolitan areas--but that certainly would not be realistic or desirable. And nonagricultural uses will continue to outbid agriculture for the use of land on the rural-urban fringes.

Residential subdivisions, recreation, transportation, and industrial uses ^{will} pay more for the use of land than farmers can. So it is

inevitable--and beneficial--that some land now devoted to agricultural use be taken for urban and other land uses. (I'll say a little more about

the Pres. & Co. concern

on this later. ~~but~~ City expansion has always taken place at the expense of someone's cow pasture or woodlot--and it will likely continue to

do so. A one-time pasture or woodlot goes to highways, a cornfield to

buildings; a marsh is transformed into a swimming lake or water reservoir.

There is, in fact, a changed Nation every day, as new highways and homes and shopping centers replace the farms and vacant lots of yesterday. And good, bad, planned, or haphazard-- changes in our physical environment and use of land and water are accelerating.

Demands on soil and water resources will increase greatly, even more than the predicted population growth would indicate. For while population will increase 50 to 100 percent in the next 50 years, the Gross National Product may jump as much as 600 to 700 percent. The GNP, a comprehensive measure of economic production, also includes inputs that would exploit resources and further degrade the environment. It may make more sense, then, to talk about Gross National Cost, because public concern for the quality of that environment is growing far faster than any purely economic index.

As I wrote this talk, the headlines of that day proclaimed:

--Power dims Washington, much of East;

--NewYork bans parking in 50-block area;

--Oil coats beach of Maryland river;

--Subway financing in danger in D.C.;

--~~Sewer~~ bond plan fails in Virginia vote;

--Tough air pollution bill passed by Senate 73-0; and

--Weather effects studied, a story about the new \$4.8-million

Biotron at the University of Wisconsin, which is seeking facts about the effects of weather, climate, and environmental pollution upon man, plants, and animals. One interesting study there has to do with the use of ordinary bean plants as a kind of environmental canary. Much as canaries were used to detect poisonous gases in coal mines, the bean plant's sensitive leaf movements might help indicate the presence of air pollutants.

plutocracy

Incidentally, another headline said,

(--Milk production up in Maryland.)

But the most intriguing headline was on a 2-page ad by one of the Nation's largest industries. A picture of two "tots" was captioned,

children

--What kind of world will we leave them?

The ad copy ended saying,

"It will take continued dedication and efforts to solve our problems. But all industry, indeed all citizens and their municipalities, will have to act with equal concern. To improve the total environment will take time. It will take billions of dollars. And the cost will have to be shared by all of us. It will be a long and difficult battle for all of us. But this is a battle we must win."

And winning is on your side!

So much for the headlines. They are representative of widespread and increased concern. (Yet, last year the combined governmental expenditures at all levels on natural resources, including agriculture, totaled \$7 billion--in a year when the Nation spent \$5 billion for cosmetics, \$9.7 billion for tobacco, \$15.5 billion for liquor!

Shall we then vow not to drink or drag or dab, and instead deal ^{only} with the environmental crisis? ^{I doubt it.} The typical American response to a new crisis is to smother it with money and expect solutions to promptly appear. But the new environmental quality problems do not readily lend themselves to this approach. The complex scientific, engineering, economic, political, managerial, and educational programs for cleaning up our air and water and landscape will have to be tailored to meet different situations, in various industries, under various social conditions, and in various regions of the country. The private sector will have to lend a massive hand, because environmental reclamation is not a nice, neat "governmental" package like a Manhattan project or a lunar landing.

Perhaps, as one speaker said recently, we must seek a conservation movement old enough to have traditions and young enough to transcend them. If the new conservation is to succeed it will be through the mainstream of established groups, yet they must be groups that grasp the technical and radically different rules of the "New ball game."

Man tends to think that only he is changeless in this changing world. He has altered his environment at every turn many times with little regard or even full knowledge of the consequences. It has been said that history turns no sharp corners. There have been changes in America, but for the most part they have been gradual.

Civilized man has been on this side of the ocean for about 500 years. For centuries prior to that time Native American Indians--perhaps as many as 10 million--had survived in a harsh primitive environment. They had changed the landscape somewhat with fire, cultivation, hunting, and building tribal communities. But European settlers greatly accelerated the process of change. Collectively, our ancestors and we ourselves have definitely made large-scale changes on the face of our land, by successively:

- . Clearing land
- . Plowing land for crops
- . Draining wetlands
- . Irrigating dry lands
- . Grazing grasslands

- . Surface-mining for minerals
- . Building towns
- . Making a nation's transportation system--roads, canals,
railroads
- . Damming streams and rivers
- . Building metropolitan areas, with associated services
such as superhighways and airports
- . Covering increased acreages with impervious materials
such as asphalt and concrete
- . Polluting water with sediment and wastes from agriculture,
industry and cities--and polluting air with dust and smog.

In this process of change--to develop our Nation--we also have:

- Severely reduced the Indian population
- Reduced or exterminated dangerous animals such as bears,
lions, and snakes
- Reduced big-game animals such as buffalo, moose, elk,
and antelope

- Exterminated nearly 50 species of wildlife and seriously reduced half again as many others to the rare or endangered category
- Introduced a variety of plants and animals originally foreign to our land (not all of them good), and
- Left very few stands of native forest.

Recently, we also have changed the environment through the introduction of:

- Carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate materials that pollute the air;
- Thermal pollution that lowers water quality;
- Persistent chemicals, erosion sediment, sewage, and wastes from agriculture and industry that affect soil and water; and
- Radioactive substances that pollute all three.

But these problems of growth, if we read the signs correctly, perhaps will never get the increased attention they deserve. People want jobs, not pollution.

An article in the Madison (Wis.) Capital Times said, "The one thing needed to recover and preserve the American environment is a reverence for earth--paying fair homage to the soil, the winds, the waters, and honoring the very spirit of their places."

finally Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, speaking earlier this month at the National Plowing Matches, put it another

way: *for all of us?*

"Now is the time, while we still have some elbow room, to take a hard and critical look at our land and how we want to use it...

"How land can be put to best use for the greatest number of people is a matter that could be, in a very real sense, a key to America's future. It involves such vital issues as: adequate supplies of pure water, continuing abundance of farm products, living and working space for a growing population, protection of species and ecological systems, development of increased transportation facilities...location of industrial land power plants, and the creation of safer, pleasanter environments for recreation and cultural purposes...."

"The area of America's useable land is fixed, by and large.

How land is to be apportioned for various purposes will have to be governed, sooner or later, by sensible, carefully thought out guidelines. In developing a guidance policy, the Department of Agriculture and numerous other agencies of government at Federal, State, and local levels will have important contributions to make.

"Since most of the land involved is privately owned, many of the decisions for formulating and carrying out national land use policy will be made by landowners in terms of personal gain--hopefully in the best traditions of enlightened self-interest.

"In the development of land use policy many differing aims and different interests will have to be reconciled...by comprehensive approaches which take into account the widest range of social, economic and ecological concerns...

"The best efforts of everybody concerned will be needed to assure that America's land and natural resources are properly developed to produce ample food and serve the space requirements of a growing population and economy."

"Best efforts" pretty well characterizes the conservation districts of Maryland, as we have seen today. Will they be successful? Will they help bring about ~~the~~ change in the way we look at land, water, and people in this State? I think the progress so far indicates that the answer is yes.

From individual half-acre tracts to the Maryland State Legislature, decisions are being made on the basis of facts and assistance provided through conservation districts. More help and more careful decisions are yet to come. More technical answers are on the way, as you chip away at the more difficult problems.

You have learned through years of work that individuals have some responsibility in the area of land use planning and treatment; that governments and organizations have some responsibility; and that all of them together have the responsibility to cooperate in determining how land should be developed.

You have learned that cooperation and guidelines can work up to a certain point, and then conflicts over land use policy or liability for sediment control work make statutes and regulations mandatory to be sure the interests of the community are served.

Above all, I think you have learned that a conservation program is not farmland erosion control or urban sediment control or wildlife management or floodplain zoning or anything else all by itself. Providing for more people and retaining a high-quality environment takes the broadest possible outlook and effort.

Maryland's population grew 25 percent in the past decade; how much it will grow in the 1970's I couldn't guess. But I am confident that the growth in this decade will be accommodated with a far better total impact on the environment than the experience of the 1960's and before.

You have a long way to go; and your visitors from other states have perhaps a longer way to go. But it will be worth the effort. And days like this make it enjoyable getting there.
