

The most popular alternative suggestion is to create coordinating and advisory committees. The Congress recognizes the need for developing policy and programs related to national needs rather than to the traditions and prejudices of competing agencies. A distinguished group of Democratic Senators in both the 86th and 87th Congresses have sponsored legislation to establish a Council of Resource and Conservation Advisers in the Executive Office of the President in order to coordinate resource conservation on the basis of national goals.⁴

This change would go only part of the way towards providing the necessary coordination. The past history of trying to obtain unity through committees and advisory groups illustrates the futility of expecting much from these proposals. At present, only if the President himself operates as his own Secretary of Natural Resources (to the near exclusion of many other important programs, problem of administration history) it is imperative that our resource management programs be accelerated to provide for the increased productivity needed by an expanding population. A broad resource program involving the application of specialized techniques and investments of billions of dollars can be carried out only by a well designed and coordinated federal organization. It is clear that the present clumsy operation of the Government in the natural resources field will not only result in wasteful duplication, but fail to meet the goals set forth. Public disillusion will be inevitable. Nor are the alternatives thus far discussed adequate. A Department of Natural Resources is vital if the Federal Government is to meet its responsibilities for the conservation and development of natural resources.

Because of the present concentration of resource activities in the Department of the Interior, the easiest way to obtain a Department of Natural Resources would be to transfer other resource agencies to Interior. The major obstacle in the past to such a transfer has been the organized special interest clientele of the agencies involved. These groups fear that their relationships to the Government would be affected.

The most adamant group blocking the way to reorganization of federal water functions is the Rivers and Harbors Conference, backed by water development contractors who strongly support certain congressional relations of the Army Corps of Engineers. This, however, is only one example of a general condition. Many other agencies have special interest clientele groups which do not want their interests disturbed. Few agencies or clientele groups have a direct interest in the improved efficiency which could result from a reorganization.

On the other hand, public citizens' organizations such as the wildlife, park, forestry, and similar groups, the League of Women Voters, and the several farm groups, and development of basic land, water, and mineral resources, including primary extraction (except agricultural crops) and those which deal with product processing, economics, etc. It is the first phase with which a Department of Natural Resources would be primarily concerned.

On the other hand, resource programs which affect privately owned resources

⁴ S. 2549, 86th Cong., 1st Sess. (1959) ; S. 239, 87th Cong., 1st Sess. (1960) ; S. 1415, 87th Cong., 1st Sess. (1961).