PROBABLY some of you have wondered how my subject fits into the deliberations of your annual conference. I won’t try to make a case for it except to say that it may be good for all of us sometimes to raise our eyes from the immediate job and take a broad look at things. In resource management such an evaluation quickly gets us into a field that Gifford Pinchot called conservation. If we need a more scientific term for it, we can affirm with some logic that it is applied human ecology—the husbandry of man.

The use of basic resources is one of our community interests. If we fail to give it attention, I suppose we are guilty of social irresponsibility. Probably few of us feel much kinship with the congressman who asked “What has posterity done for me?” We consider it moral and ethical to realize that we are posterity and past experience places us in a position to earn the blessings of our grandchildren.

Americans are a people of recent history. Being not so far removed from frontier days, we have always lived fairly close to the earth. To a great extent we have taken for granted such pastimes as hunting, fishing, and vacationing in the nation’s hinterland areas.

But land-use pressures have long been developing against outdoor resources. And today they are reaching a critical stage where unpleasant alternatives are appearing and vexing decisions face governmental leadership. Questions to be answered reach far into the future.

For example, can we, despite an ever-expanding population and industry, hold an appreciable portion of our public lands in dedicated forests, parks, wildlife areas for long-range management by people at large?

Should government subsidies be supporting widespread drainage operations that will finish off such outdoor resources as waterfowl hunting and waterfowl seeing for the millions of people who enjoy such things?

How far shall we pursue such noble concepts as “keeping America green,” national landscaping, preserving the primitive, and man’s communion with nature? Are these abstract, sentimental ideas, or do they stand for things that actually are part of our living standard and essential to our well-being?

There are claims in many directions but as yet no clear-cut answer, in terms of social science, that has been recognized as a guide to public policy.

Certainly the nation’s outdoor assets get steadily increasing use. In 1935 the late Senator from Missouri, Harry B. Hawes, published a book called “Fish and Game, now or never.” In support of his plea for good management of our wildlife, he cited the fact that 6 million hunting licenses and 7 million fishing licenses were being sold in the United States.

Just 20 years later, in 1955, the official tabulation of the Interior Department showed a sale of 14.1 million hunting licenses and 18.9 million fishing licenses.