I want to thank Mr. Schlender and your Board of Directors for inviting me to speak to you this afternoon. There are two quite dissimilar reasons for my sense of satisfaction.

One reason is to opportunity to be on my home soil again and to discuss the natural resources of our great State. The other is that the preparation of a speech for a group such as assembled here today forces the public administrator -- particularly one in the field of conservation -- to reflect upon the nature and function of his responsibilities.

A great conservationist, Gifford Pinchot, once said, "A nation deprived of its liberty may win it, a nation divided may unite, but a nation whose natural resources are destroyed must inevitably pay the penalty of poverty, degradation, and decay."

This grouping of the words "liberty," "unite," "poverty" and "decay" in the context of the wise use of natural resources brings to mind that the conservation and development of our natural resources is not an end into itself, but rather a means to improve the quality of our lives and to pass on that heritage to others who will follow. In other words, it is my function to serve people, not things or statistics or abstract concepts.
This, too, is the function of the resources of our land: to serve people, to be useful, to contribute to the individual and the collective well being.

And, in Idaho, we have been fortunate because our resources have and continue to make that essential contribution. We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources in our State. For example:

--- We have ample supplies of water. The average yearly flow in Idaho streams is 35 million acre-feet, enough to cover the State to a depth of nearly eight inches, and large and productive underground reservoirs add significantly to our supplies. This abundance of water, as we all know, makes a thriving agricultural economy possible.

--- We rank seventh in the Nation in developed hydroelectric power, and less than 10 percent of a total potential of 11.7 million kilowatts is currently developed.

--- We have impressive stands of timber. Idaho ranks fifth in the Nation, and its 22 million acres of forest lands hold about five percent of the Nation's total stand of sawtimber.

--- Our mines produce more silver than any other State, second in lead and zinc, and third in the mining of phosphate rock.
-- Significant fish and wildlife resources are found throughout the State. Idaho offers some of the best big game hunting in the United States, possesses a great variety of game birds, and fish of our streams are plentiful.

-- The scenic grandeur and outdoor recreational opportunities of Idaho are second to none in the Nation, attracting over four million visitors annually from out of the states.

We are thankful to be so blessed. At the same time we are fortunate that--up to now--we have in the main developed and utilized our resources well. We are even more fortunate in that our undeveloped resources far exceed those now being used. This gives the people of Idaho a unique opportunity among the states and an awesome challenge at the same time.

Since 1957 when I went to Washington to serve on the staff of Senator Frank Church, I have crossed the Potomac River almost daily. This once beautiful and scenic waterway has been despoiled by nearly every form of pollution known to man. The threat of further pollution, the vanishing open space around our Nation's Capitol, and increasing population pressures for recreational opportunity has led President Johnson to institute a special program to make the Potomac "serve as a model of scenic and recreational values for the entire country."
In the Ohio and other river basins of the East, water has been used and re-used for industrial purposes to the point that it must be re-cooled in order to be used in steam generating plants.

In many parts of the Nation, hillsides have been scarred, fisheries destroyed, forests decimated, and farms turned into dustbowls, either through ignorance or callous disregard for the future. In some instances, the cost of repair has been appalling; in others, the losses irreparable.

I mention these unfortunate examples to underscore that Idaho's future will be bright and its people will prosper as it wisely develops its resources. A new era in the economy of Idaho, however, will not come about without hard work.

Conservation—in the total sense of the word—can no longer be a series of isolated decisions: build a dam here, place a park there. Rather, we have reached the point in our national development—even in resource rich Idaho—where it is absolutely essential that the total development of a resource, including alternate and competing uses, be evaluated comprehensively by the decision makers. And, conservation, as a pattern of thinking, is large enough to house many mansions of thought.

When we consider the development of the water resources of Idaho, we naturally think of multiple-use, and multiple-use is good public policy.
But, it doesn't wipe out the necessity for making hard choices. They become more frequent, more difficult, as we look at the full spectrum of uses to which any given resource can be put.

For example, President Johnson has said: "Those who first settled this continent found much to marvel at. Nothing was a greater source of wonder and amazement than the power and majesty of American rivers. They occupy a central place in myth and legend, folklore and literature . . . We will continue to conserve water and power for tomorrow's needs with well planned reservoirs and power dams. But the time has also come to identify and preserve free-flowing stretches of our great scenic rivers before growth and development make the beauty of the unspoiled waterway a memory."

To accomplish this end, President Johnson has said that he will soon ask Congress to establish a wild rivers system. There are rivers in Idaho--stretches of the Salmon and Clearwater, for example--which imminently qualify for such status. And, the people of Idaho should be proud if the President of the United States sees fit to recommend inclusion of a portion of our waters as part of a system which memorializes the past, serves the present, and is saved for the future.

Quite frequently, we hear that wilderness dedication is "a no-use policy," but the setting aside of appropriate areas in a wild rivers system permits
a different type of use and one which will become more and more a part of
the broad concept of multiple-use.

This is but one of the resource opportunities and challenges facing
the people of Idaho, and we face a different type of problem in the opening
of desert lands in Idaho.

The 88th Congress passed five separate pieces of legislation which are
certain to have a major impact on the public lands and Federal land use
practices. One created a system of wilderness areas within existing
Federal land holdings. One established the land and water conservation
fund as a mechanism for a systematic investment in public outdoor recreation
facilities.

These two are of significant importance and of broad public interest.
But they do not compare in immediacy with three measures which make up
the public land package of bills -- the bill to authorize creation of the
Public Land Law Review Commission, the bill authorizing multiple-use of
the Bureau of Land Management's lands, and lastly the bill facilitating sale
of public lands needed for orderly growth of communities and for industrial
and commercial purposes.

Suffice it to say we now have a broad directive from the Congress to
devote increased attention to the public lands as a major natural resource
to support a maturing Nation. I must confess that the assignment is something of a balancing act to do several things at once that are in some respects contradictory. At one and the same time we must do two things: look to the adequacy of our public land laws in meeting the needs of three hundred or more million people and act immediately to conserve and protect areas needed for public recreational use. Even while we study the basic public land law pattern, however, certain interim measures must be taken to meet the short-term needs of the Nation.

Thus, we must at the same time conserve, study, manage and dispose. This task is one that cannot be accomplished by the land administrators and the Congress alone. It will require a large amount of understanding, assistance, and cooperation from the public land users and others in the communities whose welfare depends upon sound decisions in this area.

We have only to look downstream on the Snake River itself to illustrate this problem:

Intense interest has developed in the public lands straddling both sides of the Snake River extending below Thousand Springs by pumping water from the river to irrigate the river benches and terraces above. In eighteen such areas along the river the Bureau of Land Management has a backlog of about 400 applications for desert land entry embracing more than 100,000 acres of public lands.
Natural gas and electric service have been extended to most of these areas making a source of comparatively low-cost energy available. Technology of sprinkler irrigation has developed to the stage where it is possible to irrigate lands that not too long ago were considered non-arable under conventional methods of surface irrigation.

This combination of circumstances has made it very attractive, financially, to put new lands into potatoes. Much of the irrigable new lands are public lands desired by desert land applicants. The Desert Land Act, enacted in 1877, permits granting of as much as 320 acres to each adult member of a family. The Reclamation Homestead Act of 1902 permits one entry of 160 acres to a qualified entryman and requires residence on the land.

Here there are two main areas of concern:

1. That the agricultural development, under the Desert Land Act, does not directly or indirectly affect adversely Federal Reclamation projects, including the impact of group activity on public domain lands to existing reclamation withdrawals in the General Mountain Home Reclamation Project Area. About 160,000 acres of withdrawn reclamation lands are involved.

2. That group activity must be for the benefit of desert land entrymen and not a device for corporate control and land speculation.
So far I have discussed two conservation decisions which will, and should, require the full participation of the people of Idaho. In the first instance, the problem is essentially balancing the preservation of a portion of a resource in the overall development of that resource. In the second, the focus is on the immediate use of a resource without impeding other future economic uses.

Finally, I would like to discuss briefly the development of a resource—specifically, the water and power resources of Idaho. First we must start with two premises:

-- One-third of the water which flows into the Columbia River comes from the headwaters of Idaho streams. Therefore it is unquestionable that Idaho should get an equitable share of the abundant low-cost power now being generated downstream on the main stem of the Columbia River. The extension of the marketing area of the Bonneville Power Administration into southern Idaho is the logical, orderly vehicle to bring some of this power to Idaho.

-- Idaho's municipal systems and cooperatives, such as yours, need a firm assurance of low-cost power sufficient to meet growing agricultural and industrial demands in their service areas.

In this connection, we are currently negotiating with the Idaho Power Company, as directed by the Congress, to reach agreement on the means to
meet our legal responsibilities in the power marketing area and we will report shortly to Congress on these efforts. Should these negotiations fail, the President's budget provides for consideration of funds for a Federal transmission line into southern Idaho.

You are aware of the fact that there have been proposals to divert water from the State of Idaho for use in the Southwest. I wish to assure you that the Department of the Interior has made no such proposal; in fact, it is our view that over the long-term future, Idaho's water will be used within the State.

This will be brought about by private development, much of which is similar you presently have, and by the Department's Bureau of Reclamation working in close cooperation with the local people. The Bureau is currently actively investigating a number of projects. Among these are the Guffey Unit of the Snake River Project, enlargement of American Falls, development of the Salmon Falls on the Snake River, and the Lynn-Crandall Division of the Upper Snake River Project, and our present legislative program includes the Challis Project.

I would like to point out the long-range problem facing the cooperatives and municipals of Idaho, as I did earlier this week to the California Municipal Utilities Association.
The Department of the Interior has a concern and an obligation to see that the many consumer-owned electric systems share fully in the fruits of the large high-voltage interconnections of the future. The National Power Survey of the Federal Power Commission states the case fully in the following words:

"The small systems in the electric power industry are understandably concerned about their future welfare as elements of the complex electric industry structure. They fear that the growing emphasis on the economies of scale in generation and transmission will reduce their opportunities for the orderly expansion of their own generating capacity, and perhaps even threaten their survival."

Cooperatives and municipal systems constitute 3,190 of a total of 3,600 electric systems. These systems must obtain their power supply from low-cost sources, and there must be opportunity for them to do so. The benefits of future technologies and economies in transmission and generation must serve these public agencies, not threaten their existence.

Interior will protect the public investment in facilities managed by the Department. We recognize our responsibility to "preference customers."

The diverse pattern of electric utility ownership has assisted and will continue to assist in the development of low-cost electricity for all Americans.
regardless of who sends them their electric bills. And, with this continuing influence of diverse ownership, the traditional role of the Federal Government in providing leadership will grow, not diminish, and the traditional tools which have led to the growth of our consumer-owned systems will be maintained and strengthened. The yardstick idea has not lost its meaning.

Throughout my discussion today, I have tried to imply that there is a challenge in the idea that we must leave Idaho--and America, in the process--better, not worse, than we found it. The historic attitude of carelessness, still evident today in our land, requires a new revolution in our thinking--a new conservation. And, in this new conservation, we have no better a statement of principle than given us by President Johnson when he said:

"We are the creation of our environment. If it becomes filthy and sordid, then the dignity of the spirit and the deepest of our values are immediately in danger."

If we heed these words and work to make a new America better than the old, the motto of Idaho -- "May you last forever" -- will surely be realized.