



Mid-Canada Development Corridor Conference

OBJECTS OF CONFERENCE

To examine the practicability of a continuing long range economic development and land use plan for the urbanization, industrialization, populating and general development of Mid-Canada; and to this end to use the concept of a Mid-Canada Development Corridor as a focal point.

And if such a long-range economic development and land use plan is found to be both feasible and practicable, then to formulate recommendations and suggested courses of action to be delivered to the Federal and Provincial Governments, to financial, commercial and industrial sectors of the National Community and to Canadian Universities.



Mid-Canada Development Corridor Conference

MID-CANADA DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR CONFERENCE

A two-part "Mid-Canada Development Corridor" Conference on the feasibility and practicability of the preparation of a long-range economic development and land use plan for Canada's habitable Mid-North will be held in 1969 under the sponsorship of the University of Guelph, Lakehead University, Laurentian University and the Government of Ontario.

The theme of the Conference will be the Mid-Canada Development Corridor Concept which includes plans for new cities, harbours, railways, industries, roads to be built over the next 50 to 100 years to receive part of the 100 million population growth expected in Canada by 2067. Early in 1967 the idea of a transportation and development corridor was taken by Richard Rohmer, of Toronto, to Norman Simpson, President of Acres Limited, who agreed that his firm would undertake its research. The Acres Group is Canada's largest totally Canadian Engineering organization. The combined efforts of Acres and Mr. Rohmer resulted in their jointly producing the Rohmer-Acres Concept of a Mid-Canada Development Corridor which was first published as a Centennial Project at the beginning of July, 1967.

The Concept envisages a coast-to-coast development corridor from two to five hundred miles in width running from Newfoundland through Labrador, northern Quebec, south of James Bay, then north-west across the unopened Ontario clay belt, through Northern Manitoba with a spur into Churchill), Saskatchewan and Alberta where the Corridor splits into three parts, one going into the Northwest Territories up the Mackenzie River Valley to the Arctic Ocean at Inuvik and Tuktoyatuk, another into the Yukon Territory and the third into the Prince Rupert sector of British Columbia.

The provinces and the territories through which the Development Corridor passes will be asked to join the Conference as co-sponsors.

The Government of Canada has already agreed to a full participation in the Conference.

The first organizational meeting of the Convening Board of the Conference was held on August 7th with representatives of Guelph, Lakehead and Laurentian Universities and the Government of Ontario in attendance. The general format and method of organization and financing of the Conference were decided upon at this meeting.

The Conference is to be divided into two Sessions. The first will be held at Lakehead University on August 20th, 21st and 22nd, 1969. The second Session will be held early in 1970, at a place and on dates to be decided.

The August, 1969, meeting of the Conference will discuss the problems, as opposed to the solutions, of the future and long-range urbanization, industrialization, populating and the general development of Canada's Mid-North. Papers will be delivered by outstanding Canadian authorities on eight major topics: Transportation and Communications, Resources, Environment, Human Factors, Jurisdictional and Constitutional Aspects, Technology, Urbanization and Industrialization, Financing.

The Conference will be limited to one hundred and sixty persons. Each of the participants will be assigned to a working group of approximately twenty. In turn each group will study and examine the objectives of the Conference in relation to one of the major topics.

After the first Session of the Conference adjourns in August, 1969, and before the second Session, each group will take part in a field trip to various places of interest throughout the entire Mid-Canada Development Corridor and will see at first hand the existing situation in the Mid-North.

During the same period, about fifty Conference members will participate in an additional field trip through Siberia and Northern Sweden where the experience in urbanization, industrialization and general economic development is significant. The field trip to Siberia will depend upon the geo-political climate of the day.

Early in 1970, the Conference will reconvene outside Ontario and inside the Corridor, to discuss solutions and the practicability and feasibility of a long-range economic development and land use plan for Canada's Mid-North.

At that meeting each working group will prepare and submit recommendations to the plenary Conference for discussion and debate and for amendment, adoption or rejection.

The findings of the Conference will then be submitted to the Federal Government and the Provincial and Territorial Governments through which the Mid-Canada Development Corridor passes.

The question whether the Conference will conclude with its 1970 Session or carry on in continuing sessions is yet to be decided.

There will be one hundred and sixty seats at the Conference. The preliminary allocation will be: ten seats for the lecturers; fifty seats for Federal, Provincial and Territory representatives; seventy-five seats for Canadian "captains" of industry, commerce and finance; and twenty-five seats for Canadian universities. Because of the limited number of seats the invitations will be on a selective basis. The expenses of all participants, such as travelling and hotel accommodation, will be paid by the Conference.

Provision will be made for those of the press, television, film and radio media who wish to cover any aspect of the Conference including the field trips through the Mid-Canada Development Corridor, Siberia and Sweden.

Policy concerning the direction and operation of the Conference will be under the control of the Convening Board which is made up of representatives of each of the sponsors, representatives of the Government of Canada, Mr. Norman Simpson and Richard Rohmer. The size of the Convening Board will be increased to accommodate representatives of such other governmental or university sponsors as may participate.

The administration and organization will be in the hands of a newly created non-profit corporation, Mid-Canada Development Corridor Foundation, Inc., which will also be the fund raising vehicle through which the Conference will receive its monies. It is anticipated that all donations to the Foundation will be tax deductible. An application for this privilege has been made.

The letters patent of Mid-Canada Development Corridor Foundation, Inc., provide that when the work of the Foundation is finished any funds then remaining will be divided among the three sponsoring Universities to be used for the furtherance of research into the continuing development of Canada's Mid-North.

The Board of Directors of the Foundation are Professor Norman Pearson (University of Guelph), David Morgan (Lakehead University), Dr. W. Y. Watson (Laurentian University), Norman Simpson, President, Acres Limited, Richard Rohmer, Q.C.

In addition, an advisory Council to the Conference will be appointed from among the invited participants. The Advisory Council

will be canvassed from time to time in order that their opinions can be obtained in relation to Conference policy and other matters. Their counsel will be most necessary to the success of the Conference.

The financing of the Conference will be through substantial donations by the corporations, trade unions and national associations whose representatives participate in the Conference. The Conference will seek a minimum contribution for each of the seventy-five seats allocated to this group. Funds will also be received from the Government of Ontario and from such other governments – Federal, Provincial or Territorial – which join as sponsors.

The Convening Board is hopeful that all invited governments will accept the proposal to join the original sponsors in order that the scope of the Conference might be as nation-wide in its support and involvement as is possible.

The Conference will also seek from certain of the corporate participants the use of their aircraft for a period of about ten days during the period August, 1969, to early 1970, in order to transport each of the eight working groups of the Conference on its field trip through the Mid-Canada Development Corridor.

The Convening Board intends to make this examination of the potential of our Mid-North the most important and significant ever undertaken on the future growth of Canada.

Canada will have an additional one hundred million citizens one hundred years from now. Canada today has the technological ability, the human resources, the wealth to embark on a planned scheme for the opening up, urbanization, industrialization and populating of the massive, habitable sectors of our country which lie in Mid-Canada so that those one hundred million will not have to remain huddled against the border of the United States, so that the incredible treasures of our natural resources can become accessible, so that they can be taken from above or from under the ground, processed and made by our people into manufactured products providing employment for our citizens and finished goods for competitive consumption in the expanding markets of the world.

Canada can continue to grow in its Mid-North sporadically, without plan, virtually by accident of discovery of resources; or it can grow in accordance with a far reaching plan of economic development and land resources use which will provide for new cities, new transportation links, new methods of climatic control, new environmental techniques, new harbours, new technology of all kinds and, finally, a new common objective or National Purpose for the people of Canada.