Many rights-of-ways have practiced blanket spraying to control unwanted vegetation. The opportunity to create environmental diversity by encouraging the growth of a variety of low shrubs has been wasted. The transmission lines above would be little affected by low growing species of ornamentals. The 50 million acres of rights-of-ways have great wildlife production potential. There is no need to condemn all woody vegetation as brush. Herbicides, properly used, are an important tool in vegetation maintenance. Rational and intelligent use of herbicides is all that the future asks.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE — THE FUTURE

The Public View

By ROLAND C. CLEMENT
Vice-President
National Audubon Society

The analysis of trends called for in the title of this discussion calls for recognition of the fact that current projections for supplying electric demands involve some 197,000 extra miles of right-of-way by 1990.

However, I am interested in changing these trends because I believe that such growth projections are suicidal. Whatever the ultimate acreage we commit to rights-of-way, we can begin by recognizing that the existing 50,000,000 acres now so committed represent a nationally important open space in a diminishing pool of national open space.

In short, we have already committed to rights-of-way an area the size of New York State, or ten times the size of Connecticut. The revolution in environmental awareness we are witnessing calls for giving this land use much more thoughtful consideration than it has had in the past.

As a wildlife conservation specialist, I call your attention to the fact that these 50,000,000 acres have a great wildlife production potential. Since these are mostly private lands, you need to be sensitive to the fact that wildlife includes several hundred species in addition to the pheasants and quail equated with wildlife in the past. The non-hunting general public is more interested in the scores of bird species that might utilize the rights-of-way than they

(continued on page 25)
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The first broad problem mentioned above is that associated with your credibility as scientists; the second has to do with the acceptability of your tools, the herbicides; and the third involves the acceptability of the effects of your practices in an increasingly sophisticated ecological age.

The question of credibility, like it or not, is entangled in the abuse of herbicides by our military in Vietnam. It is psychologically inevitable that the abusive use of a tool by one group will involve all other users of that tool in the public mind.

The way out of this dilemma is not to accuse the public of emotionalism, but to make sure no one abuses a good tool and that the public is educated to the realities of the case. This is not a passing fancy, because the concern of the American Association for the Advancement of Science dates back all of five years.

The Department of Defense's attempt to answer its critics byhaving the Midwest Research Institute "assess the ecological effects" of herbicides only made matters worse among knowledgeable audiences because MRI was not competent to assess ecological effects. As Frank Egler pointed out, this MRI review succeeded mostly in showing that there is very little science in Weed Science.

Let me elaborate on this last point to avoid insulting those of you who consider yourselves scientists. I refer here to the fact that science is necessarily reductionist. Science analyzes environmental reality on a piecemeal basis. This makes the scientist an expert in a very small area of the total reality that must concern us as citizens, and the trouble is that science, having dismembered reality for analytical convenience, is seldom interested in putting things back together again. What is required is an ecological point of view, but very few people have developed such a point of view as yet.

A generation ago Alfred North Whitehead pointed out that a proper profession is "an avocation whose activities are subject to theoretical analysis, and are modified by theoretical conclusion derived from that analysis." We've all been in such a hurry to keep up with the Joneses that we haven't done much philosophizing, which is what theoretical analysis is.

As a result, the Mrak report to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare caught everyone by

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