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Editorial

The Pendulum

The pendulum swings always in new directions—if a pendulum may be said to swing in more than two. In the nineteen fifties it was genetics. All mysteries were ascribed to the obscure workings of the genes. In the early nineteen sixties physiology was the vogue; and that name, if not always the science, was used to get over many a knowledge gap. Later it was multiple land use, a useful cudgel with which to beat importunate economists.

This year it is Conservation.*

Many definitions of the word have been given, most of them designed to cover the definer's own particular interest, few of them simple, none straight from the dictionary.

How many projects have got under way as a result? This in itself distinguishes Conservation from the previous fashions, which tended mainly to cloak ignorance. Conservation has generally been used to justify action. It is quite certain that not every Conservation Year project will be useful, but it is unlikely that many will be harmful.

For this reason in itself we must welcome this particular swing, and hope that future oscillations will bring at least equal benefits.

* Written in 1970. Publication of this issue has been delayed by circumstances outside our control.—Ed.