INTRODUCTION

The more I think about this subject the more incompetent I feel. For a number of reasons a Curator's post these days leaves less and less time for horticulture in association with botany and becomes embroiled in general management matters, many of them wrongly placed and others quite trivial that, in earlier days, required or received little or no attention. Now with a more liberal, even a permissive industrial atmosphere what was quite constant and firm has become as insecure as shifting sand. It takes so long these days to negotiate settlements of many kinds and some settlements are short-lived. Consequently I have insufficient opportunity to be with plants or to influence and encourage colleagues. I find little time to keep abreast of horticultural literature but, very recently, I re-read an article by Professor Heslop-Harrison in the 1971 Journal of the Kew Guild. The title of the article is "The Prospect Ahead" and in it is a precise account of what Kew is doing and what it hopes to do in the future. It is an exciting and encouraging statement and, I believe, a model upon which other botanic gardens might base their activities - if not entirely, then in part. Conservation is not overlooked and nothing would be more appropriate for my contribution to this Conference if I were to read this article to you. Instead I ask you to read it at your leisure.

This leaves me with my predicament and you with the knowledge that at least one member exposed to the limelight of this Conference is not all he should be and that the botanic garden background he emerges from is not all it should be either.
The previous speakers have referred obliquely to inherent problems. For instance Mr Bruinsma said that our present botanic garden structures can be blamed for the many problems that beset botanic gardens today. Mr Simmons referred to "massive inertia" and botanic gardens often poorly organised. Professor Heslop-Harrison did not take long to recognise the existence of parochialism between departments within one botanic garden. I am not alone then in thinking there are flaws and cracks in the foundation components upon which we hope to build an international bridge. If I have anything useful to tell you for the future it is this: we must put our own houses in order before, or during, the move towards integrated international policies. Perhaps the very size of the concept, the tremendous challenge and demands it will present may be sufficient to catch the imagination and, like the influence of a magnet, draw our random resources into a resolute pattern. But the less we leave to chance the better.

COMMUNICATION

At Kew, its Scientific Policy Committee was the magnet and under its influence there developed a formal communications-network to end parochialism. Integrated international policy will depend on a formal communication network and as a start it is essential that the following information is available.

1. Detailed accounts of the contents of living collections in botanic gardens willing to take part in international policies.

2. The aims of domestic policies of individual gardens - aims that are formulated in the light of prevailing local, financial, social and educational circumstances that are most likely to remain unchanged.

3. Prompt notification of likely national and international expeditions.

4. The dissemination of information on cultural and other techniques affecting critical areas of work in botanic gardens, eg. record systems, propagation, climate control, growing techniques, etc.

Items 1 and 3 should present no insuperable difficulties and they require immediate attention. Item 4 can only be dealt with over an indefinite period of time but within 4 there is an element of urgency to ensure that some system exists to record for posterity findings and observations the most significant of which should be publicised. Much more will be said during the course of the