

AUSTRALIAN PARKS VISITOR

An Australian parks officer has begun a six-month tour of Canada to compare wallabies with beavers, British Columbia spruce trees with eucalyptus and Pacific coral beaches with Rocky Mountain ski areas.

John Erskine, Superintendent of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, New South Wales, who is participating in an exchange programme entered into by Canada and other countries, will visit national parks and field offices across Canada after discussions in Ottawa with officials of the Department and of the Canadian Wildlife Service. The purpose of his visit is to swap ideas on the management of the wildlife habitat and other resources of Canadian and Australian national parks.

BREEDING HARDIER TOMATOES

Because of mechanization, ten years from now round tomatoes may be as outdated as the horse and buggy.

High labour costs in the Ontario tomato industry are forcing growers to look to machines to harvest their crops but, because machines are harder on fruit

than human hands, the shape of the tomato is being changed to withstand the rough handling. Round tomatoes cannot withstand the beating of a machine which may slit them open or squash them.

Research scientists are engineering new shapes that won't squash when the tomato is dropped, breeding new toughness into the skin so it won't split and they are changing the interior structure of the fruit to withstand rough handling.

L.H. Lyall, chief of the horticulture section at the Canada Department of Agriculture Research Station in Ottawa, is one of the men working on the problem. Although he is experimenting with different shapes of fruit and some other characteristics of the plant, he is mainly concerned with skin toughness and disease resistance.

Mechanization could change far more than the tomato plant. Through mechanization, farmers may begin to compete with the \$4-million worth of tomato paste imported annually from Portugal, California, Italy, Spain and Greece, which is used to make pizza, spaghetti and similar products.

Tomatoes are a \$20-million-a-year crop in Canada. Changes in the fruit shape, the plant, disease-resistance and harvesting methods could make it a much bigger crop in the future.