



Rocky Mountains

What does exceed expectation in Canada is the Rocky Mountains. Niagara Falls may be a let-down — just a lot of water going over a cliff, what's all the fuss about? — but in terms of an experience that isn't a cliché or an anti-climax, the Rocky Mountains are really something. What I did was to go through the Rockies on a train. I caught the train at Calgary, broke the journey for 24 hours at a place called Banff National Park, — incredible place, about the size of Switzerland — then

I got on the train again through the Rockies. In the observation car was a mixed, merry crowd — a high-class hooker, a dentist from Los Angeles, a very flash couple from Vancouver, a hippy boy, a hippy girl — one could almost do a Canterbury Pilgrims piece about the people on this 24-hour journey (it's 36 hours altogether, unbroken). They were all talking and drinking merrily in the observation car before the mountains came. Then gradually as the mountains got nearer they got quieter and quieter, because the impact of this physical immensity, these huge overpowering snow-

bound mountains that you go into, is really overwhelming. After half an hour or so into the mountains everybody had gone completely quiet.

They defy the cliché. Niagara Falls isn't big enough to defy the cliché: you still get "Boy, that's one helluva lot of water!" The Rockies are so overwhelming, and the engineering feat of this railway going through them, it takes away the capacity to say, "Boy, that's one helluva big..." Well, you just couldn't say it. The words would stick in your throat. It's something really worth doing, to take that journey. ♦

Anti-booze centres use soft-sell techniques

By Michael Jeffries

The man is quite plainly very drunk. He tumbles out of a bar, staggers across the road and almost into the path of a car whose headlights pick up his dark shape just in time to swerve. Finally, he trips on the kerb and collapses; incoherent and quite unable to get up again. Inevitably, the police pick him up. Yet another drunk to appear in court the next morning with a pounding head? But this time it is different. The police drive him a mile or so away from the centre of Ottawa, where they found him, and deposit the staggering figure on a doorstep, ring the bell... and quietly withdraw when their "prisoner" is in safe custody.

It is not a jail. They have taken the man to a recently opened "detox" centre. It is

an exciting new approach to the alcohol problem which is starting to pay dividends in Canada. The drunk is made welcome — not too strong a word — by the friendly, undemanding staff. He is ushered into a brightly decorated lounge furnished with Chesterfields and comfortable armchairs in which perhaps a dozen or so other people in various stages of intoxication are sprawled. Would he like a cup of coffee?

By now the drunk, who could be a truck driver, bank clerk, or even a doctor, is feeling a bit better and is able to gulp down the coffee. "When you feel ready, there is a room with beds and clean linen where you can sleep for the night," says one of the staff. But it is entirely a matter for the drunk whether he takes up the offer.

Like most "guests," he decides to stay. With this decision, the alcoholic — that is what he is — does not realize that he now stands a relatively high chance of beating his drinking problems. The "detox" centre will not necessarily "cure" him. But they will help him to help himself to control his drinking.

Approximately 125,000 people in the province of Ontario where this man lives are alcoholics. Among these, about 10,000 are chronic drunkenness offenders — those convicted of being drunk in public three or more times a year.

Canada's growing drinking problems, like those in Western countries, are a reminder that for some there is a price to