

# Canada Weekly

Volume 10, No. 41  
November 3, 1982

Ottawa  
Canada

Gatineau Park offers a festival of autumn colours, 1

Acid rain causes forest damage, 3

International law meeting in Montreal draws record numbers, 3

Success story at printing and paper fair in Germany, 4

Prehistoric carving found, 4

Funding for seniors, 5

Concern over lumber exports to the United States, 5

Canada and Britain sign radar satellite agreement, 5

Migraine relief at fingertips, 6

Antivirus developed for cattle, 6

Canadian-designed taxi ready, 6

News of the arts — painting, 7

News briefs, 8

## Gatineau Park offers a festival of autumn colours



*Park lake forms a backdrop for the beautiful autumn leaves.*

Gatineau Park in Quebec is a delightful retreat at any time of the year but it is in the autumn when the trees are magnificent in their multi-coloured foliage that nature lovers are provided with a glorious sight.

The park covers a wedge-shaped area 60 kilometres long and can be reached by car in ten minutes from the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

Visitors can take their bicycles and follow the 12-kilometre asphalt cycle path that leads to Pinks Lake. The outward ride requires some effort, but on the way back down one can just coast along, completely relaxed.

Hiking trails criss-cross the entire park for a total distance of 150 kilometres, some following old Indian paths groomed in winter for cross-country skiing. Three look-outs in the park provide a good vantage point where the whole festival of fall colours can be seen. Wave upon wave, the ruby, gold and amber of the leaves spread out below in all their fiery autumn splendour.

These look-outs — Huron, Etienne-Brûlé and Champlain — are located at

the end of the Gatineau Parkway in a cul-de-sac high up between the Eardley Escarpment (which marks the area boundary of the Canadian Shield) and the Ottawa Valley 300 metres below. The Eardley Escarpment borders on the former Champlain Sea whose waters covered a large part of the area. It used to be the shoreline, and the sedimentary deposits can be distinctly recognized.

### Recreational facilities

In addition to admiring the leaves, visitors can also take the opportunity to picnic, fish or swim if the weather has not yet become too chilly. A number of lakes are situated in the park, and camp sites and picnic areas are available at these sites. Some lakes have been stocked especially for sport fishing.

The lakes most suitable for swimming are Meech Lake with its sandy beaches, Lac La Pêche where bass is plentiful and row boats, motorboats and surfboards can be rented, and Lac Philippe which offers camping facilities.

During the summer and fall the park provides nature interpretation activities.



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