

## Variety is the key

The sites encompass a wide variety of topography, including ice-capped mountains, plunging waterfalls, deep canyons, icefields, fjords and glaciers, boreal forests, sandstone cliffs, salt marshes, alpine lakes and spectacular vegetation. There are also waters alive with sea lions and flatlands where buffalo herds roam.

In a speech in the Canadian House of Commons in 1964, Hon. Arthur Laing, then Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, saw the national parks as giving the people of Canada "the opportunity to find some solitude and freedom from care, to rediscover an easy relationship with nature and to understand the beauty and significance of the natural features that express Canada's very individuality."

Parks should not attempt to meet every recreational need, the Minister said. "In future, only such activities as photography, sightseeing, hiking, swimming, riding, skiing, nature observation, fishing and boating will be encouraged." Parks would not be allowed to become private or commercial resorts. Government policy would eventually exclude private residential occupation of park land unless needed by persons who provided services to the park or its visitors.

A major expansion of the national and historic parks system was announced in Ottawa last October. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and the Minister of Northern Development and Indian Affairs the Hon. Jean Chretien, jointly unveiled a seven-point programme, including a nation-wide network of scenic and historic routes, which they called "byways," linking Canada by land and water.

The programme envisaged making use of historic overland trails first used by early settlers, canoe routes pioneered by Indians or French-Canadian *voyageurs*, and under-water marine parks. The government said the intention was to "reopen large parts of Canada for travel by boat or canoe, by bicycle or horseback, on foot or on snowshoes."

Byways were defined officially as "leisure routes for families, individuals and young and old alike, providing new pathways for travellers who otherwise are denied the pleasures of nature and history."

Other plans include wilderness parks formed round wild rivers, still flowing free. Eight historic and recreational canals in Eastern Canada are to be integrated into the programme. Small but noteworthy "wonders" of nature will be protected in miniature national parks.

Under what was described as a new concept of automobile travel, the government also spoke of rehabilitating out-of-the-way thoroughfares and building low-speed parkways along scenic routes designed for dawdling, sightseeing and exploring.

A government statement pointed out that these byways had, in the past, been Canada's only routes.

"Along the coasts, inland by lakes and

rivers, across the prairies and mountains, west to the Pacific and north to the Arctic—wherever and however man travelled, he left a network of land and water routes which time and technology have passed by—early Indian trails, explorer and fur trade routes, paths taken by settlers.

"It is these earlier routes that we propose to preserve and recreate as Canada's byways."

Increasingly, Canadians were seeking to escape the noise, congestion and tensions of city life. Superhighways for fast travel were already available. What the government had in mind were beckoning byways off the beaten track that would lure the tourist and enable him to move at his own pace through attractive and secluded places.

## Areas of peace

"These are the areas," a government statement said, "where an individual can gain a measure of peace and enjoyment of the natural environment, where one can sense through a personal presence the experience of the original inhabitants and first explorers of the land."

Among marvels of nature earmarked for special protection are the Chubb crater in northern Quebec, the frozen pingoes (ice mounds) of the Arctic, the eroded hills and

semi-desert areas of the prairie provinces and some mountain caves. Rivers are being surveyed for their potential as wilderness routes.

Possibilities for historic land trails are Indian footpaths, including the Blackfoot Trail, and others established by Royal Canadian Mounted Police, early immigrants, fur traders and *coureurs des bois*, the hardy adventurers who travelled by land and water in Canada's early days.

The historic Klondike Trail is being resurrected. This passes through Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon: it was the route followed by thousands of gold-greedy seekers after fortunes struggling to reach the fabled riches of the Yukon in the gold rush of 80 years ago immortalized by poet Robert W. Service.

Leisure-oriented travel is one of the government's aims. It sees not only a chance to bring the sightseeing motorist in contact with routes long bypassed by main roads, but to introduce a new prosperity to neglected communities. This, the government hopes, will inject a new community spirit.

"These routes would provide access to

*A tree stands against the wind in Jasper National Park, one of 29 spread across Canada.*

