

Columbia – and Waterton Lakes in southern Alberta. Many more have been added this century, in every province and territory. For instance, in addition to the Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan can boast Grasslands – the only mixed grass prairie park in North America and home to the pronghorn antelope, the sage grouse and the prairie falcon.

#### Historical sites also preserved

Other areas of Saskatchewan have been set aside as parks because of their historical significance. Fort Walsh, set in the Cypress Hills, was an important post of the Northwest Mounted Police; so was Fort Battleford, former capital of the Northwest Territories, which was besieged by Cree Indians in 1885.

The Motherwell Homestead National Historic Park, commemorates less turbulent times. William Richard Motherwell was an eminent politician who played a crucial role in the settlement of Saskatchewan and in the agrarian movement. Parks Canada is currently restoring the homestead's farmhouse, outbuildings and landscape to recapture its Edwardian appearance.

However, for most people Canada's national parks represent an opportunity to escape from the stress and bustle of city life to a world of quiet and solitude. They are ideal spots for camping, photography, hiking and picnicking, while for the more energetic, they offer excellent opportunities for rock climbing, fishing, backpacking, canoeing and horseback riding.

## Canada implements measures to reduce acid rain

In recent years, much concern has been expressed in Britain about acid rain and its effects on the environment. This is, of course, not purely a European phenomenon. Canada, too, has experienced much harm to its forests and pollution of its lakes, even though it has taken tough action to reduce the emissions which create the damage.

Acid rain is caused by emissions of sulphur dioxide (largely from coal-fired power stations and smelters) and of nitrogen oxide, (produced by vehicles and fuel combustions). Once released into the atmosphere, these substances can be carried long distances by prevailing winds before returning to earth in acidic forms of rain, snow, fog or dust. In cases where the environment cannot neutralise the acid being deposited, damage occurs.

Acid changes the chemistry of ecosystems. Streams, lakes and soils become acidified, and this process starts to kill off plant and animal life. This is a particular problem in the seven eastern provinces of Canada – an area sensitive to acid-rain precipitation.

#### Federal and provincial governments launch initiatives

Scientific observation of acid-sensitive waters suggest that there is no increase in acidity provided acid deposition is kept below 20 kg per hectare (18 lb per acre) per year. To reach this target, sulphur-dioxide deposition must be reduced by some 50 per cent east of the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border.

This is no pipe-dream. The federal government's acid-rain control programme – costing about £250 million per year – is already getting good results. Over the past decade and a half, sulphur dioxide emissions have declined in

the east, and parts of Canada's Atlantic provinces have managed to reduce acid deposition below the targets set. As a consequence, affected lakes and rivers in these localities are starting to show signs of recovery.

The provincial governments of Quebec and Ontario have also taken strong action. Quebec aims to cut overall sulphur dioxide emissions to 55 per cent of the 1980 figure by 1990. Ontario is planning to reduce emissions by 60 per cent by 1994.

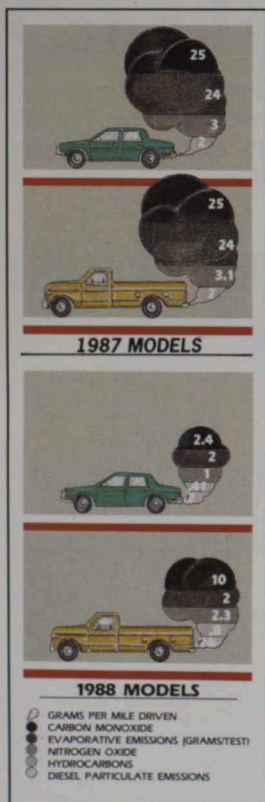
As part of Ontario's clean-up programme, the four major sulphur-dioxide-producing companies in the province now have to report twice yearly on their progress towards the emission reduction targets they have agreed to; and new boiler regulations ensure that the sulphur content of emissions is reduced to one per cent.

#### Cross-border co-operation with the United States

Other federal initiatives have been the imposition of stringent exhaust-emission standards on motor vehicles, the provision of financial assistance for smelter modernisation and pollution abatement measures, as well as investment in the development of innovative and viable technologies for the cleaner, more efficient use of coal.

Pollution, alas, respects no national boundaries, and the federal government is therefore working towards an agreement with the United States to assess and solve the international problems associated with trans-border air pollution. The impetus for this co-operation came at the 'Shamrock Summit' of 1985 when Canada's Premier Brian Mulroney met US President Ronald Reagan.

Canada has made considerable progress in its bid to clean up the environment and will continue its strenuous efforts until the environment is exorcised of this pollutant.



Canadian vehicle emission standards