

Recreation. In 1941, little more than 50 per cent of Canada's population lived in towns and cities. In the 1960's, by contrast, town and city populations make up about 70 per cent of the total. Over 40 per cent of Canada's people, in fact, live in the thirteen cities with populations over 100,000.

This trend toward living in large urban centres has been accompanied by a desire to return occasionally to non-urban surroundings as an escape from the pressures of modern city life. The annual exodus from the cities during the summer months stems directly from the increase in leisure time enjoyed by most Canadians and the fact that many more people now own cars (car ownership increased from one for every eight persons in 1949 to one for every four in 1963).

Much of the recreation sought by holidaying Canadians is water-oriented. Swimming, fishing, boating, water-skiing, all increasingly popular, require clean water. But many rivers and lakes close to urban centres are polluted to such an extent that they are useless for recreational purposes. This increases the demand on those which are suitable, and creates also a demand for new recreational lakes. The demand is such that many large reservoirs have been built with recreation as one of their primary purposes. The South Saskatchewan River project is one example.

Several of the flood-control and conservation dams built recently in southern Ontario are designed so that their reservoirs can also be used for recreational purposes. Five reservoirs to be built in the Metropolitan Toronto region have recreation as their only purpose.

Recreational requirements are no longer overlooked in the development of water-use projects. The demands of recreational interests have in some cases been strong enough to affect decisions involving the location of hydro-power projects. How an existing project is operated is frequently influenced by the effect it will have on recreation.

Pleasure boating on natural and artificial waterways has shown a phenomenal increase in the past few years. Thousands of pleasure craft travel the rivers of Canada every year, retracing the old voyageur routes that once carried the commerce of a young nation. The Rideau Canal from Ottawa to Kingston, built in 1830 for national defence, has for many years been a popular waterway for pleasure craft travelling between the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence Rivers. The Trent Canal System is another mecca for pleasure-boat operations.

A growing awareness of the recreational value of clean water to the country, to say nothing of the tourist dollars which water-oriented recreation can attract, will undoubtedly give rise to many programmes for the restoration of natural waterways which have become damaged or destroyed through indifference.

Waste disposal. Usually last to be mentioned, but far from least in importance, is the vital service which water renders in diluting and carrying away the wastes of a modern society. Unfortunately, this use leads easily to abuse, as demonstrated by the condition of most of the rivers serving populated areas.