

Any increase in the flow of tourists to the northland or to the national parks is bound to benefit the Province of Alberta. As a matter of record, substantial gains have been registered in parks attendance in the twelve months ended March 31, 1950.

During that period 1.8 million visitors entered the national parks, representing an increase of about half a million over the total for the previous year.

Because of the value and importance of the national parks to the people of this province, I am taking the liberty to digress for a few minutes to speak on the subject of the parks.

I expect to leave in a few days time for a visit to the Territories. Before doing so, however, it is my intention to take part in the official ceremonies on July 8th at Jasper, in connection with the opening of the new Recreation Centre there. The completion of the various units of this project marks a main step forward in a broad program of national parks improvement.

It is the aim to develop Canada's national parks into areas of healthy enjoyment and relaxation, unmatched anywhere in the world.

Good roads are vital to the success of the parks. The Department has had under way an intensive program of highway improvement in the National Parks. For example, during the 1949 season on the Banff-Jasper Highway 42 miles of highway were cleared, 20 miles of new grade were built and 16 miles were gravelled.

Reconstruction of the Maligne Canyon-Medicine Lake Road in Jasper Park has continued and a new roadway to the Lake Edith sub-division was cleared, graded and gravelled.

Because of its proximity to Edmonton and because of the unique nature of its wildlife resources, the development of Elk Island National Park is followed, I know, with keen interest by Albertans generally.

I am glad to announce that not only have plans been completed in the matter, but arrangements have been made to build the first unit of the park historical museum this year.

This museum project will commemorate the early Ukrainian settlement of the district. It will consist of three units. The first will be a replica of an early Ukrainian farm home. It will house exhibits of early household furnishings as well as farm tools and equipment.

The second unit will be a larger modern structure to contain other historical exhibits and specimens of the flora and fauna of Elk Island National Park. This building will also serve as a central community hall for public lectures and concerts.

The third unit will be a replica of old Fort Victoria.

The establishment as a whole will be designated as a memorial to the life and service of Dr. A.E. Archer. It will bear the name of this pioneer medical man of the Lamont District, one of the most public-spirited Canadians of his generation...

Conclusion

In my remarks today I have touched on a number of features of the work carried on by the Department in the large and vitally important field of resources development.