

the spending of Canadians travelling in their own country, an estimated \$11.4 billion in 1980.

The World's Most Spectacular Plunge

NIAGARA FALLS in the south of the Province of Ontario is one of the great natural wonders of the world and Canada's most popular tourist attraction. For a spine-tingling bird's-eye view, visitors can take a helicopter flight across the gaping chasm, or ride a glass elevator up the outside of the Skylon Tower.

The most spectacular plunge — the greatest in the world — is at the bottom of the peninsula, between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario on the Niagara River, where each minute up to 540 million litres flow over the crests of Horseshoe and American Falls, drop 49 metres and fill the air with rainbows, mist and thunder.

The churning waters of Niagara produce almost two million kilowatts of electricity. The water is diverted upstream on the Canadian side of the river to plunge, unseen by tourists, through rocky tunnels to turn turbines in two huge power stations. Then the water returns to the river, below the Falls, to begin another tumultuous ride through the lower rapids. The flow is controlled precisely and the sharing of the waters is fixed by international treaty.

Niagara Falls freezes in mid-winter and an ice bridge forms between Canada and the United States. It may be 12 or more metres thick. Some years it is almost flat, some years it has ridges 24 metres high.

The Niagara River is only 56 kilometres long. It has an average width of over one kilometre, and it falls 100 metres between Lakes Erie and Ontario. It is the only river in the world to turn completely around and flow under itself, as it does at the Whirlpool below the Falls.

It is crossed by six international bridges.

The Whirlpool Rapids Bridge, three kilometres north of the cataracts, was built in 1897 on the site of two earlier bridges, the first built in 1848.

The Peace Bridge opened in June, 1927 and is the most important traffic artery between Canada and the United States, connecting Fort Erie, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York.

Rainbow Bridge opened in November, 1941. It reaches gracefully from Niagara Falls, New York, to Niagara Falls, Ontario. Its predecessor, called the Honeymoon Bridge, collapsed under the stress of an ice jam in 1938 after 40 years of use.

The suspension bridge between Lewiston, New York, and Queenston, Ontario, is only 256 metres long and the



From the revolving restaurant at the top of the Skylon Tower visitors have a spine-tingling bird's-eye view of Niagara Falls, illuminated after dark all year round.

only bridge within the walls of the Niagara Gorge. It is only 18 metres above the water.

There are also two railroad bridges — the International Bridge at Buffalo, two kilometres north of the Peace Bridge, which is owned by the Canadian National Railway, and the New York Central Bridge near the Whirlpool Rapids Bridge.

The Welland Canal connects Lakes Ontario and Erie. It was the first lake canal and is an essential link in the St. Lawrence Seaway. It is 40 kilometres long and it lifts lake freighters 100 metres over the escarpment. The first canal had locks of timber and was only two and a half metres deep. The second, built in 1842, had locks of escarpment stone. A third was built in 1870, with locks 14 metres wide and 82 metres long. An 11-kilometre-long bypass around the centre of the city of Niagara Falls was built in 1973.

The State of New York and the Province of Ontario set up separate park systems around the Niagara in the 1880's.

Today Ontario's Niagara Parks Commission holds and operates a chain of parks from Fort Erie to Fort Mississauga at Lake Ontario and a parkway to go with it. The whole area contains some 1,215 hectares of land, an 18 hole golf course, a school of gardening, museums, shops, restaurants, a game and wildlife refuge on Navy Island, Queen Victoria Park, the Oakes

Garden Theatre and a floral clock.

In New York, the Niagara Frontier States Parks Commission maintains Goat Island and Prospect Park on the mainland, which extends along the rapids in the upper river, and parks at Devil's Hole and on Grand Island.

The Falls were first illuminated electrically in 1879, by a 36-horsepower generator, during the visit of the Marquis of Lorne, Canada's Governor-General, and Princess Louise. It produced 32,000 candle-power. Since 1976 the Falls have been lighted year round by 22 xenon lamps with an intensity of 4.2-billion candle-power. They are illuminated until midnight in summer and until 9.30 p.m. in winter.

One may ride past the American Falls and into the heart of the pool below the Horseshoe Falls on the Maid-of-the-Mist (any one of the four sturdy boats bearing that name), while wearing a hooded raincoat. There will be spray in one's face and a great roar in one's ears. It is even possible to see the Falls from behind, thanks to a series of tunnels cut into the rock. The table rock tunnels lead visitors down to balcony windows.

Niagara Falls has been associated with honeymooners since the early 1800s when, supposedly, Napoleon's younger brother brought his bride up from New Orleans.

Today most of the 14 million people who show up annually are not on their