

RECREATION IN ALBERTA

Provincial Government grants to communities employing a full-time recreation director, or part-time leaders, have aided 14 Alberta centres in establishing programmes providing services and recreational opportunities for all age groups. The community recreation movement is growing rapidly in Alberta, reports the publication "Within Our Borders", and more than 40 centres have a recreation programme of some magnitude.

The Community Recreation Bureau of the Department of Economic Affairs assists communities in establishing a recreation programme. Professional personnel guide local leaders and administrators, and suggest activities to meet specific or general needs.

Grants ranging from \$1.00 per hour to \$4.00 per week for certified recreation leaders, and from \$300 to \$1,000 per year for a qualified superintendent of community recreation are available through the Bureau. To be eligible for the maximum grant, the superintendent should have a university degree in recreation, physical education or an allied field, and two years successful field work.

Recreation leadership training, leading to recognized certification, is available at four-week courses conducted each summer at Red Deer. Sponsored by the Bureau, the school is staffed by professional personnel. Complete training calls for attendance at the course two successive years.

A recreation board or commission oversees the recreation programme in its own community. Such boards investigate the recreational needs of all age groups in their areas and make plans to fill these needs. Operation and supervision of programmes at playgrounds, athletic fields, and other public recreation areas also fall within the scope of the board's activities. The board also works in close co-

operation with the community's church, school and service organizations to avoid duplication of programmes.

Typical recreation programmes may include supervised competitive sports, camping, singing, drama, recreational dancing, basketball, bowling, badminton, curling and figure skating instruction. Adult handicraft instruction includes leather-carving, fibre-flower craft, metal tooling, plastic lacing and wood carving. Choral, drama and music appreciation workshops are also popular with adults.

Supervised playgrounds, complete with paddling pools, are being built in more and more Alberta communities. Youngsters happily pass many hours of the summer months at these havens.

Highlight of many of the programmes is an annual social night, at which awards are presented for the year's work and handicrafts displayed.

Such recreation contributes to the physical and mental well-being of participants, and provides an opportunity for expressive and joyous living. Recreation is defined as leisure time activity in which an individual engages from choice, because of the enjoyment and satisfaction it brings him.

The growth of community recreation programmes is spreading throughout the province. Officials are confident that in the near future all Alberta cities, towns and villages will have qualified directors and leaders, and a wide variety of recreation activities available to their citizens.

Communities which now have organized programmes include: Red Deer, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Wetaskiwin, Camrose, Stettler, Peace River, Nanton, Carmangay, Nobleford, Standard, Rimbey, Black Diamond, Wembley and Grimshaw.

INCREASED SALES: Consistent quarterly gains in both cash and credit sales brought the annual totals in 1956 to an estimated \$9,012,200,000 and \$5,076,500,000, respectively, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports in its quarterly report on retail credit. Cash sales were up 8 per cent from last year's \$8,348,300,000, and credit sales rose 6.6 per cent from 1955's \$4,763,600,000.

Credit outstanding at year's end was at an unprecedented high of \$982,500,000, comparing with \$924,600,000 a year earlier, and resulted from a net change of 4.5 per cent since September 30 last. The rate of increase in new credits over repayments was slower than a year ago, but customers were \$57,900,000 deeper in debt than on December 31, 1955.

Cash sales in the full year 1956 accounted for an average of 64 per cent of total sales, up from 63.6 per cent in the preceding year,

but instalment sales fell to an average of 12.9 per cent from 13 per cent and charge sales to 23.1 per cent from 23.4 per cent. At the end of the year instalment receivables accounted for 42.2 per cent of the year-end total versus 41.3 per cent a year earlier and charge receivables for 57.8 per cent compared with 58.7 per cent.

General gains were posted in cash sales among the trades in 1956 as compared with the preceding year: independent grocery and combination stores, \$1,180.7 million (\$1,103.8 in 1955); motor vehicle dealers, \$821.7 (\$764.5); department stores, \$771.3 (\$710.8); garages and filling stations, \$531.7 (\$513.1); general stores, \$377.6 (\$360.1); furniture, appliance and radio stores, \$180.0 (\$166.7); women's clothing, \$185.3 (\$172.8); men's clothing, \$171.2 (\$161.0); hardware, \$170.2 (\$157.6); family clothing stores, \$149.3 (\$142.5);