This spring the Canadian Embassy in Washington and the consulates general and consulates across the country presented collections of Canadian books to two hundred senior high schools in the United States and Puerto Rico. They also sponsored a competition in which

The Stamp of History

One of the winners, Warren Bailey, of John Dewey High School, Brooklyn, New York, approached his subject through postage stamps. As he put it, "Canada is tremendous in size and variety, so large that written words will never describe it completely. The stamps, though,

the students in the schools were invited to concoct projects based in at least a general way on the books. The response was varied, enthusiastic and sophisticated; the entries were graphic, auditory and cinematic as well as written. Fifteen winning teams were chosen and the winners made two-week trips in August to Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Stratford, Calgary and Banff. add a new dimension to the written part of this paper. The Post Office designed all of them very well." Excerpts from Mr. Bailey's excellent essay follow; for reasons of space, we were forced to leave out many of his thoughts and his stamps, but we hope those which remain suggest the quality of the land, the Post Office's graphics and his winning entry.



"First coming to my mind . . . is the scenery and the wild inhabitants. The climate and terrain is varied: so are the inhabitants themselves. In the severe northern areas hardy creatures live, the polar bear, walrus and the narwal. . . . In the populated east . . . the forests are beautiful and unpolluted. Animals like . . . the beaver, who graced the first stamp issued in Canada, live here. . . . The rare and beautiful bird, the whopping crane . . . was saved from extinction by the establishment of wildlife preserves in Canada, the bird's summer home.

... Plant life is also quite varied. . . . The famous pines cover large parts of northern America.

. . . The land, of course, did not go without human inhabitants. . . The stamps reproduce a picture of various artifacts utilized by the people and a painting of their way of life. . . . The nomadic Indians of the Plains . . . were among the hunters who challenged the buffalo.

. . . The original Canadian innovation, ice hockey, was directly related to a game played by the Indians, Lacrosse. They took the game . . . added ice and skates and called it 'hockey.' . . . Practically the only group of natives who still exist on their own are the Eskimos . . . they still hunt and live off the narwals, walrus and seals.

... The first white man to witness the beauty of the Great Plains came in 1690; Henry Kelsey worked for the Hudson Bay Company and searched for possible trading areas on the Plains. ... Among the explorers of the East, two Frenchmen are outstanding. Samuel de Champlain ... (and) Louis de Buade de Frontenac. ... From the Northwest Company, which traded furs, came Alexander Mackenzie ... hired to find a route to the Pacific.

... While the Indians and explorers dominated the West, the French dominated the relatively civilized East . . . the centers were Quebec and Montreal, especially Quebec. . . Jeanne Mance came to New France and set up the first hospital . . . the Hotel Dieu in Montreal. She treated Indians, settlers and soldiers, even those from opposing forces. . . But war in North America . . left the British in control . . . more English people settled in Canada . . . many were Loyalists escaping the rebellious colonies in the south. ... It is generally agreed that the first responsible government set up in Canada was organized in 1848... Although the government was assuming more liability and power, British North America was still a wild and disorganized place. ... The thought of a united British North America was farfetched but possible.

As early as 1858, George Cartier and John A. Macdonald of Canada suggested a union. The first step . . . was a conference at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. . . . Besides internal objections came the threats from the ever present expansionist south-of-the-border. The purchase of Alaska in 1867 scared the Canadians but the Americans didn't try anything. In 1865, the present Canadian capital was established in Ottawa.

... The Northwest Territories were dominated by a settlement on the Red River ... inhabited by the Metis, a group of mixed people, half Indian and half Scotch or French. They were led by Louis Riel, a man who was highly respected by the Metis and their Indian friends.... After the Confederation ... Prime Minister John Macdonald ... sent settlers west without consulting the Metis, who arrested the settlers or sent them back. Finally, Riel decided to teach them a lesson. He executed an Irish politician, Thomas Scott. . . . Louis Riel was forced into exile in Montana.

It was around this time, 1873 to be exact, that the great symbol of Canadian law and order was created . . . the Northwest Mounted Police; the name was later changed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

. . . Ottawa's pet project was the railroad to British Columbia. British Columbians were pushing for a link to the East. Unfortunately, they inadvertantly overlooked many of the problems of living in areas with territorial status. . . At this point, Canada was fairly independent of the English although to date most Canadians are loyal to the present monarch.

... In 1905, Alberta and Saskatchewan joined the Confederation; Newfoundland joined in 1949. ... The Confederation's membership has not since changed ... of course now Canada is a modern developed nation where small groups cannot go around setting up little republics nestled away in the wilderness...."