

A black and white photograph of a mountain peak. A person is standing on the ridge of the mountain, looking out over a vast, snow-covered landscape. The mountain is rugged, with rocky outcrops and patches of snow. The sky is dark, suggesting a high-altitude or overcast environment.

Calendar
for
1985

Canada Today/d'aujourd'hui

Volume 15 Number 6 1984

Canada's Marvelous Parks

Nothing has a more precisely limited life than a calendar; nothing on earth is closer to immortality than a mountain. The great natural parks that are literally part of Canada today are also the ageless essence of the earth itself. In this issue of *Canada Today/d'aujourd'hui* we offer a quick and random tour of the parks – peaks, glades, fauna, flowers and wind-swept shores.

Cover photo: Banff National Park, Alberta, 1933

Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan



"In wilderness is the preservation of the world." Henry David Thoreau.

Banff, on the Alberta edge of the Rockies, is Canada's oldest and most popular national park. It was dedicated in 1885, twenty years before Alberta became a province, and it now attracts some four million visitors annually.

It has been joined over the years by thirty other national parks and scores of provincial ones. Eight – Nahanni, L'Anse aux Meadows, Kluane, the Burgess Shale in Yoho, Wood Buffalo, Dinosaur, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and Anthony Island – have been designated World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Some parks have fossils; one (Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump) has bones; and the rest have living birds and beasts, flowers and running water. Most have a mix: Forillon on the Gaspé peninsula, for example, has limestone cliffs, sandy shores, salt marshes, wooded hills and hidden valleys, all kept in their natural state. The original federal law requires that the parks be "unimpaired," and this applies to fauna, flora, the ambient air and the rushing streams.

Though Banff was established with the enthusiastic cooperation of the railroads and hotel keepers, the parks are not intended to be simply recreation havens. Many in the North can be penetrated

only with extreme difficulty, and one may assume the next one scheduled for dedication, the 15,251-square-mile national park at Ellesmere Island, far, far above the Arctic Circle, will always be free of crowds and litter. Parks Canada's grand plan calls for a total of fifty, displaying most, if not all, of Canada's forty-eight natural regions. Twenty are represented now, some more than once. The Rockies, for example, are found in six parks.

The parks attract as many Americans as Canadians and three have direct links with the United States. Kluane in the Yukon shares tree roots, birds' nests and a joint designation as a World Heritage Site with the adjoining Wrangell-St. Elias Park in Alaska, and in 1932 Waterton Lakes National Park was merged with the American Glacier National Park at the instigation of the Rotary Clubs of Montana and Alberta as the "International Peace Park." Visitors to Campobello in New Brunswick, the summer home of young Franklin Delano Roosevelt, cross over to it by bridge from Maine.

The splendors of the parks are there to be shared – part of the common wealth of mankind.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Ontario

January 1985

janvier

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The Pacific
Pacific Rim National Park follows the southwest coast of Vancouver Island, from Long Beach's miles of unsullied beaches, past the Broken Group Islands, to the West Coast Trail from Bamfield to Port Renfrew. The trail, laid out as a telegraph line route in 1891 and developed as a "lifesaving trail" for shipwrecked sailors between 1908 and 1915, is still reserved for serious, well prepared hikers. Grey whales and sea lions cavort off Long Beach and its tide pools hold brightly-coloured anemones, starfish, barnacles and tiny darting fish. The islands have a wild appeal and some have space for tents. One, Box, offers a vertical display of rock layers that suggests an open pack of circular saw blades.



Long-tailed jaegers



White pelican



Elk



Ptarmigan



Tufted puffin



Sea lions



Tern chicks



Black bear

February 1985

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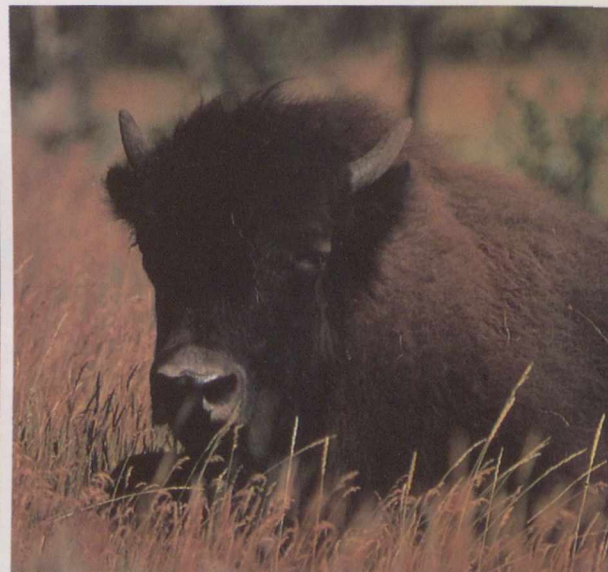
Animals

Banff has grizzlies, black bears, cougars, timber wolves, coyotes, foxes, lynx, moose, elk, woodland caribou, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, deer, grey jays, chickadees, nut hatches, woodpeckers, ravens, bald eagles and golden eagles. Auyuittuq, surrounded on three sides by oceans, has polar bears, walrus, seals, narwhals, porpoises and killer whales off shore; and wolves, barren ground caribou, arctic foxes, arctic hares, lemmings, ermine and weasels on land. L'Ile-de-Bonaventure Provincial Park on the Gaspé peninsula has 50,000 gannets, the largest colony in the world, and on a spring day at Point Pelee, on the edge of Lake Erie, a watcher can spot 100 different kinds of birds.



Arctic hare

Bighorn sheep



Buffalo



Department of Regional Industrial Expansion photo

March 1985

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Glaciers

Glaciers creep slowly across the ages – they do not rust or rot and hardly melt. Some are remote but many of the most spectacular are in British Columbia and easy to find. The glaciers of Yoho and Kootenay rise side by side, and four hundred more, covering fifty square miles, are stacked together in Glacier National Park in the Selkirk Mountains.

The mountains of ice once were as dangerous as they were beautiful; avalanches in Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park killed over two hundred people between 1885 and 1910, but they are now controlled if not tamed. Howitzer cannons are fired at dangerous slopes and the snow slides start before they've had a chance to build up.

*Kootenay National Park,
British Columbia*



April 1985

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Ice

Ayuittuq, pronounced 'Eye-You-ee-tug', means "the land that never melts." The park on Baffin Island covers 8,290 square miles, and all of it, except for some deep, U-shaped valleys, is covered by ice. The Penny Ice Cap sits on top of 1,970 square miles of Precambrian granite, and Coronation Glacier slides slowly down its southern edge to the sea. It is a beautiful but inhospitable land.

Determined visitors fly by jet from Montreal to Frobisher Bay, then by light plane to Pangnirtung, a small Inuit village. They may then go by freighter canoe to the grassy, ice-free valley of Pangnirtung Pass. They should, a guide book says, "be in good physical condition, having considerable outdoor experience," and if they wish to go hiking they should carry great amounts of food since they'll eat more than they thought possible.

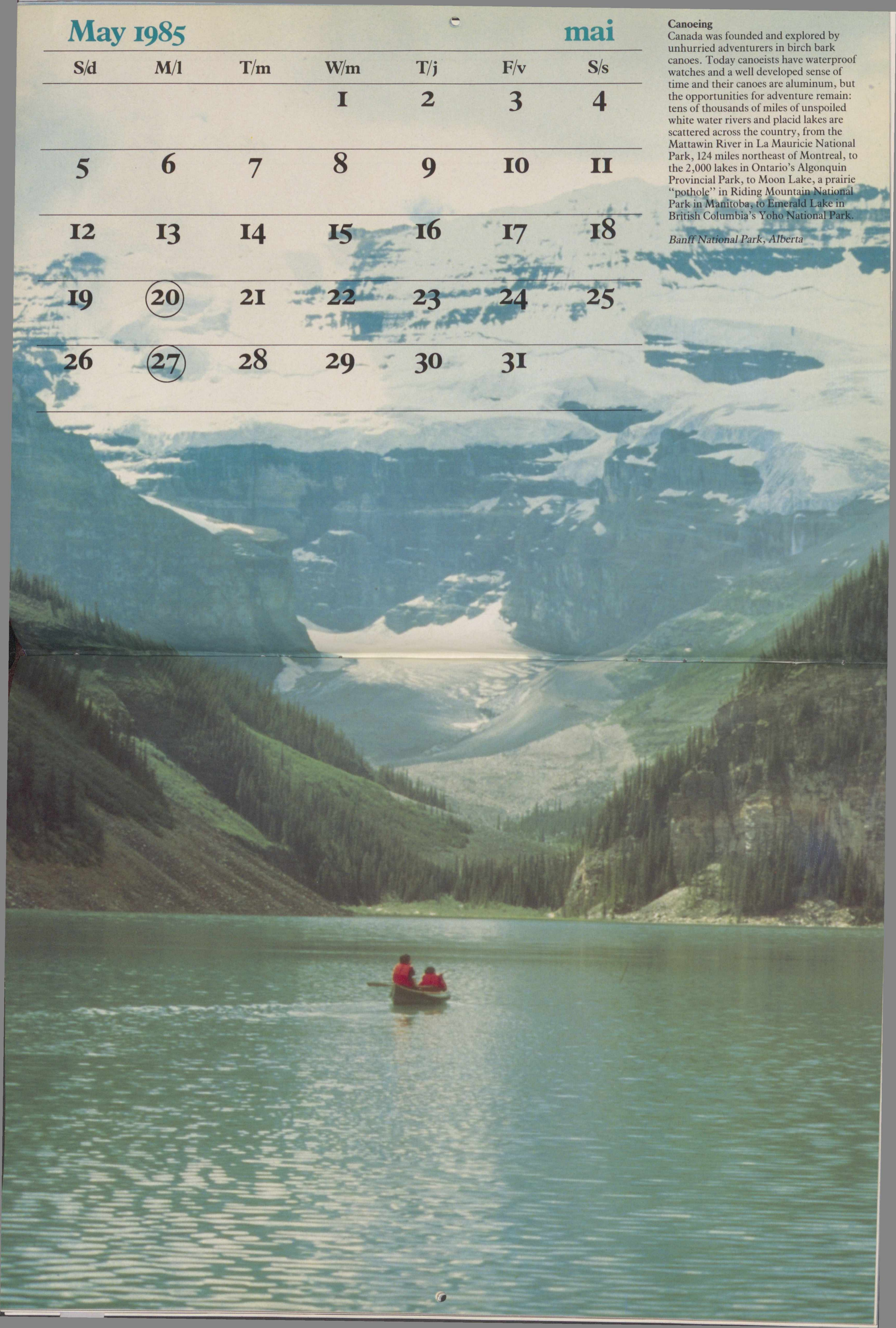
May 1985

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Canoeing
Canada was founded and explored by unhurried adventurers in birch bark canoes. Today canoeists have waterproof watches and a well developed sense of time and their canoes are aluminum, but the opportunities for adventure remain: tens of thousands of miles of unspoiled white water rivers and placid lakes are scattered across the country, from the Mattawin River in La Mauricie National Park, 124 miles northeast of Montreal, to the 2,000 lakes in Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park, to Moon Lake, a prairie "pothole" in Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, to Emerald Lake in British Columbia's Yoho National Park.

Banff National Park, Alberta





Department of Regional Industrial Expansion photo

June 1985

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The Canadian Shield
 Algonquin Provincial Park, 160 miles northeast of Toronto, is one of North America's largest and oldest. It is 3,000 square miles and it was established in 1893. It has bear, moose, beaver and wolves, and 2,000 lakes cupped in the granite hollows of the Canadian Shield. The crimson, orange and golden leaves of autumn, the jack pines that cling to the shores and boulders coated in grey, green and black lichens, inspired Canada's first national school of artists, the Group of Seven.

The Sea

Atlantic Canada's coastal parks, from Terra Nova in Newfoundland to New Brunswick's Kouchibouguac, have terrains as varied as their names. Prince Edward Island National Park begins with a long spit of land striking out into the warm and shallow waters of New London Bay. At Fundy the tides rush in and the tides rush out. Sand bars parallel the coast and dunes build up; marine grass holds them in place and encourages the growth of fragrant bayberry, the wild rose and stunted white spruce. The beaches that are not backed by dunes are often bordered by red sandstone cliffs that provide homes for black guillemots, other nesting sea birds and arctic-alpine flowers, planted 2,500 years ago by the retreating Wisconsin Glacier.

Fundy National Park, New Brunswick

July 1985

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August 1985

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The Wild Lake Shore

Pukaskwa National Park is a cool place for hikers. It is on the northern edge of Lake Superior, the largest and deepest body of fresh water in the world.

This is a cold, cold lake and it chills the air that seeps in over the land. The average temperatures in July and August range from 45 to 65 degrees F.

The park, called the "Wild Shore of an Inland Sea," offers a thirty-six-mile trail for bundled-up hikers along the lake shore, from Hattie Cove to the North Swallow River. (It takes an average hiker seven days to go one way.) Canoeists paddling along the coast from one end of the park to the other should assume they will be grounded by the wind one day out of three.

Pukaskwa National Park, Ontario





September 1985

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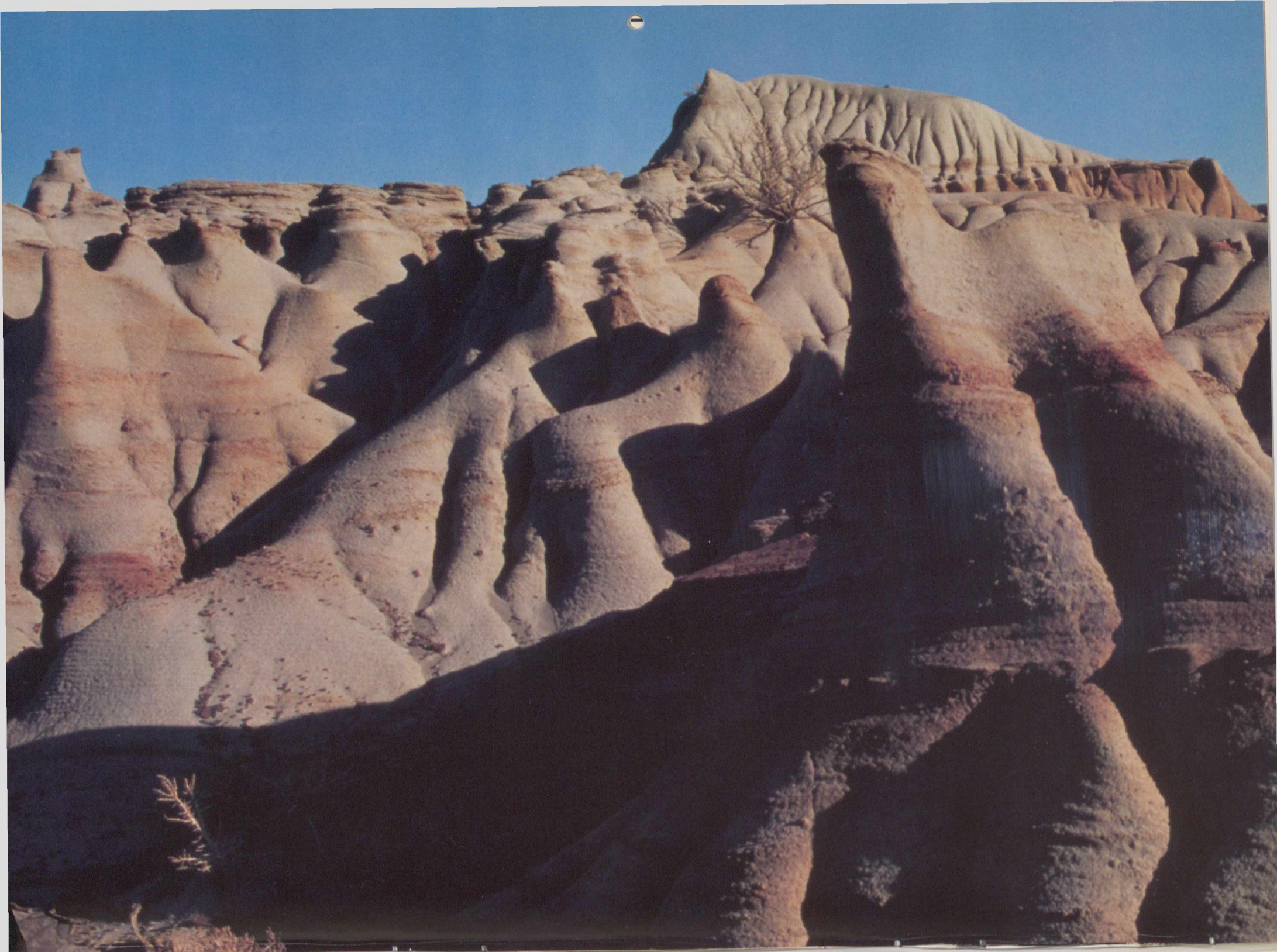
Waterfalls

Natural parks illustrate natural laws. Photosynthesis turns spring leaves green, the wind carves rocks and water seeks its own level.

The results are often awesome. Melting mountain snows fall to the sea, run over boulders and precipices and leap, spray and splash in the sun.

At Nahanni National Park the Nahanni River drops four hundred feet over Virginia Falls, twists through the Figure-8 Rapids and then rushes through canyons 4,000 feet deep.

Laughing Falls and Angel's Staircase cascade in Yoho; Upper and Lower Bertha fall in Waterton Lakes. None is more enchanting than the shining hooped skirts of the falls that billow down behind Cap-des-Rosiers in Forillon National Park in Quebec.



October 1985

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Dinosaurs
 Dinosaur Provincial Park, fifty miles northeast of Brooks, Alberta, has the richest dinosaur fossil field in the world. Its spectacular badlands, barren cones of stratified clay and sandstone shaped 10,000 years ago by retreating glaciers, are stretched along the banks of the Red Deer River. The lumpy landscape that emerged as the ice departed holds the remains of dinosaurs, crocodiles, sharks and winged reptiles that lived in and on the shores of the shallow Bearpaw Sea 75 million years ago. Some 150 complete dinosaur skeletons have been uncovered, and three displays show the bones left on the ground as they were when discovered.



November 1985

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Forests

Canada is forever green. Trees – maple, pine, Douglas fir, birch, spruce, aspen, cedar, hemlock and balsam fir – cover hills and crowd lakes. The Pacific Coast is a rain forest, the Laurentian Shield a piney woods. At Kootenay National Park in British Columbia you can hike through moist forests of Engelmann spruce and sub-alpine fir trees. At Kluane National Park in the Yukon you can climb from the dense lowland forests to flowery meadows and bare mountain slopes.

*Kootenay National Park,
British Columbia*



December 1985

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Camping Out

One may camp with ease in Canada from sea to shining sea. Each park has places to pitch a tent or park a van.

Banff, the ultimate one, has thirteen campgrounds with 2,323 car sites. Some are by lakes, some in thick conifer forests. The largest are near Banff Townsite and Lake Louise. Each site for tent or car has a fire grate with free wood for burning. Many have kitchen shelters and flush toilets. There are back-country campsites along the more popular hiking trails at intervals of about six miles. There are also six youth hostels with beds and propane cooking, that charge a minimal fee.

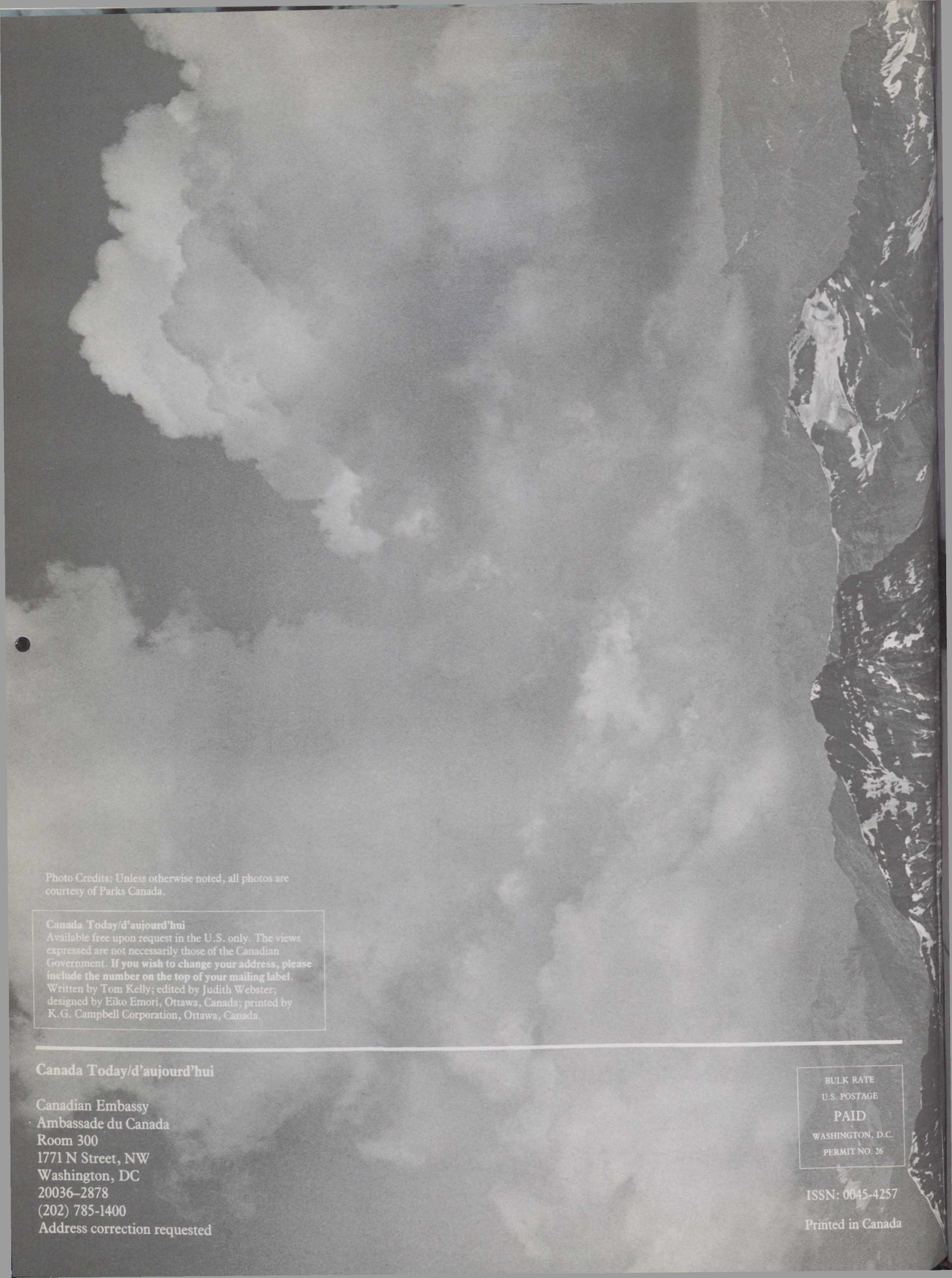


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