

The Commission has under way the large-scale program advocated in the Master Plan of removing railway trackage and yards from the urban area with the co-operation of the railway companies. The abandoned rights-of-way are destined to become roadways which will relieve traffic bottlenecks within the heart of the city; the Queensway, still under construction, runs on a former railway bed. This program, which is expected to be completed by 1965, involves the removal of 32 miles of track, the elimination of 72 railway crossings and the consequent acquisition of 449 acres of high-value land for re-development.

The Master Plan also includes the establishment and development of the beautiful and impressive Gatineau Park, an 80,000-acre forest and lake area in the shape of a triangle stretching from its apex in the city of Hull northwestward for 35 miles into the Laurentian Hills. The National Capital Commission owns more than 63,000 acres of the projected area and the acquisition of private holdings is continuing. The 22 miles of parkway now traversing this area are to be extended deeper into the wilderness. Camping and picnic sites are being improved by the installation of drinking fountains, barbecues and outdoor ovens, and well-designed restrooms, and by the addition of fishing and swimming facilities. At Lac Philippe and Lac Lapêche, two of the four big lakes in Gatineau Park, the Commission has developed or is planning large-scale public recreation facilities with easy road access.

In addition to these major development projects, the National Capital Commission, through its Historical Advisory Committee, plans to conserve and mark historic buildings and sites as mementoes of the past. Such sites are carefully studied and their preservation and suitable identification is an important part of the over-all program.

Planning aid to municipalities in the National Capital Region is given in the form of grants in special circumstances and advice on establishing areas of subdivision control, preparation of basic plans and maps, master plans for communities and zoning legislation. This advice is available upon request and the Commission, having no planning powers, must seek to persuade rather than impose its proposals.

Estimated expenditures for Commission projects in the year ended Mar. 31, 1964 totalled \$28,040,000, which included \$8,178,000 for administration, operation and maintenance and \$19,862,000 for capital projects and assistance to municipalities.

Section 2.—Wildlife Resources and Conservation*

Wildlife in Canada is an important renewable natural resource. In the early days, wildlife was, and in large areas still is, a form of sustenance in the hinterland and trade in fur determined the course of exploration and settlement. During the period of the opening up of the country, a number of mammals and birds became seriously depleted or completely extinct. The passenger pigeon, the great auk and the Labrador duck were extirpated, the buffalo vanished from the prairies, and wapiti, prong horn antelope and muskoxen were reduced to small fractions of their former numbers. The destruction was not limited to birds and mammals but in areas of settlement their habitat was reduced by the cutting and burning of the forests, the diversion and pollution of streams and other changes in the land.

Since then it may be said that wildlife has been changed and influenced by man to the degree that he has changed and influenced the environment for wildlife. The Arctic and alpine tundra, one of Canada's major vegetational regions, has been changed hardly at all; the adjacent sub-arctic and sub-alpine non-commercial forests have been changed principally as a result of increased human travel causing more forest fires; the great forest farther south has not lost its real character through being managed for commercial use; cultivable lands, whether originally forest or grassland, have completely changed, but often they and the managed forest are better for many forms of wildlife than the original

* A series of special articles relating to the wildlife resources of Canada has been carried in previous editions of the Year Book. See the list of special articles in Chapter XXVIII, Part II, under the heading of "Fauna and Flora".