

Location, year established and characteristics of national historic parks and sites were carried in the 1972 and 1973 editions of the *Canada Year Book*. Many more are in process of restoration or development and full details may be obtained from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's publication *Canada's national historic parks/sites*.

Another undertaking of the Branch is the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building. This Inventory, begun in 1970, is a computerized program to survey, analyze and categorize old buildings in Canada. So far the exteriors of more than 150,000 buildings have been surveyed and, of these, almost all have been entered in the computer and indexed; interiors of approximately 1,200 structures selected from these have been surveyed by the CIHB.

An important step toward the preservation of the nation's historic resources was taken in 1972 with the establishment of Heritage Canada, an independent organization concerned with the conservation of buildings, sites and natural and scenic areas of importance to the country's heritage. It received an initial federal capital endowment of \$12 million and the interest on this fund is used to further its work. Heritage Canada enlists the support of the general public and of foundations and corporations; membership is open to anyone.

**National parks.** Canada's National Parks are the evidence of the federal government's efforts to preserve natural areas of outstanding scenic and biological interest for the benefit of the public. The national park concept, which began with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in the United States in 1872, was soon afterwards applied in Canada. In 1885, the Canadian government reserved from private ownership the mineral hot springs of Sulphur Mountain in what is now Banff National Park. Two years later, this 10-sq mile reserve was extended to 260 sq miles and named Rocky Mountain Park, the first federal park in Canada. Two land reserves in southern British Columbia — Yoho and Glacier — were made by the federal government in 1886, a reserve of 54 sq miles in the Waterton Lakes area of southern Alberta in 1895, and an area of 5,000 sq miles around Jasper, Alta., in 1907. These four reserves, all in the western mountain ranges, together with Rocky Mountain Park, formed the nucleus of the national park system after the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act was passed by Parliament in May 1911. A National Parks Branch was created that year by the federal government to protect, administer and develop the parks.

By 1930, nine more national parks had been established. Three of these were in Ontario and consisted of federally owned Crown land or land held in trust for Indians: St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Point Pelee National Park and Georgian Bay Islands National Park. One in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert National Park, and one in Manitoba, Riding Mountain National Park, were former federal forest reserves. Elk Island National Park near Edmonton was established as a preserve for buffalo and Wood Buffalo National Park, a 17,300-sq-mile area straddling the Alberta-Northwest Territories border, was established as a refuge for the largest surviving herd of buffalo in North America. In British Columbia, through agreement between federal and provincial governments, two scenic areas were established as National Parks — Mount Revelstoke National Park and Kootenay National Park.

Between 1930 and 1973 the following were added to the chain of Canada's national parks: Northwest Territories, Nahanni and Auyuittuq (Baffin Island); Yukon Territory, Kluane; British Columbia, Pacific Rim; Ontario, Pukaskwa; Quebec, La Mauricie and Forillon; New Brunswick, Kouchibouguac and Fundy; Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Highlands and Kejimikujik; Prince Edward Island, Prince Edward Island National Park; Newfoundland, Terra Nova and Gros Morne.

In the case of parks in the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories, lands have been reserved from all alternative disposition by Orders in Council. Within provinces, land is acquired by the province acting within a federal-provincial agreement to establish a national park. These lands are transferred to Canada and the establishment of the park is formalized by Parliament, adding the boundary description in a schedule to the National Parks Act.

In 1971, *The national parks system planning manual* was published, in recognition that new and comprehensive measures are needed to preserve Canada's natural heritage. With a view to protecting not only unique and outstanding areas of the Canadian land and sea-scapes but also those representative of its physical, biological, and oceanographic characteristics, 48 distinctive natural regions were identified for which natural history themes have been defined.

Encompassing more than 50,000 sq miles, the system is now the largest and most rapidly expanding in the world.