

Railway relocation, possibly the most important element of the National Capital Plan, will be largely completed by 1967. It involves removal of 32 miles of track, much of it in the central sections of the city, elimination of 72 level crossings, many in high density urbanized areas, and is a prime consideration in Federal Government redevelopment of LeBreton Flats, the old Union Station sector in downtown Ottawa which has now been cleared, and sections of Sussex Drive near the approaches of the new Macdonald-Cartier Bridge across the Ottawa River.

North of Ottawa and Hull, in Quebec, an 88,000-acre recreation area known as Gatineau Park has been developed by the Commission. It is a wilderness area, extending northward from Hull for 35 miles. With 25 miles of parkway, magnificent lookouts, lakes, fishing streams, beaches, picnic areas, camping sites and walking trails, the park is one of the finest recreation areas in Canada, enjoyed by tens of thousands of visitors yearly.

In addition to its own programs, the National Capital Commission extends planning aid and advice to municipalities in the National Capital Region but only on request; at no time does the Commission seek to impose its proposals on the autonomous governments concerned with local affairs in the region. Financial aid in the form of grants is made to municipal governments in special circumstances.

The Commission has 20 members, including a chairman, and employs between 600 and 800 people, depending on season, in carrying out its development and maintenance programs. It reports to Parliament through the Minister of Public Works.

## Section 2.—Wildlife Resources and Conservation\*

Wildlife in Canada is an important renewable natural resource. In the early days wildlife was, and in remote 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 extinct. The passenger pigeon, the great auk and the Labrador duck became extinct, the buffalo vanished from the prairies, and elk, prong-horn antelope, and muskoxen were reduced to small fractions of their former numbers. Wildlife habitat has been reduced by the cutting and burning of the forests, the pollution of streams, industrial and urban development, drainage of wetlands, building of dams, and other changes in the land.

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 subarctic and subalpine 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 some forms of wildlife than the original wilderness. There are more moose, deer, ruffed grouse and probably more coyotes than in Indian days. Fur species, such as beaver and muskrat, are easily managed and many small mammals and birds thrive better in fields and woodlots than in the virgin forests, provided that they are not poisoned by pesticides. At the present time, the harvestable surplus of game and fur species across Canada is seldom fully utilized and it is quite clear that wildlife will remain abundant wherever there is suitable habitat and enlightened management.

Thus, Canada today is known throughout the world for the wealth and variety of its wildlife. It maintains most or all the existing stocks of woodland caribou, mountain sheep, wolves, grizzly bears and wolverines, to mention a few. And these animals exist not only

\* 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 XXVII, Part II, under the heading of "Fauna and Flora".