

# ***Riding Mountain National Park***

**MANITOBA, *Canada***





*An Ideal Summer Playground*

## *The National Parks of Canada*

**C**ANADA'S SYSTEM of National Parks is one of the largest and finest in the world. Set aside by statute for the use and enjoyment of the people, the national parks include regions of outstanding scenic beauty, natural phenomena, historic interest, and unique fauna and flora. Diverse in character and varied in purpose, they conserve the original wildlife of Canada under natural conditions, help maintain the primitive beauty of the landscape, and preserve sites memorable in the nation's history. As recreational areas they also provide, under ideal conditions, unequalled opportunities for the enjoyment of outdoor life.

The National Park System in Canada was instituted more than 70 years ago when the Federal Government, in 1885, set aside for public use an area of ten square miles surrounding hot mineral springs in the Canadian Rockies at Banff, Alberta. Two years later this area was enlarged and established as Rocky Mountains, now Banff, National Park. Other outstanding scenic areas in the Rocky and Selkirk Mountains were also reserved for national park purposes, and formed the nucleus of the great chain of national playgrounds which now extends across Canada.

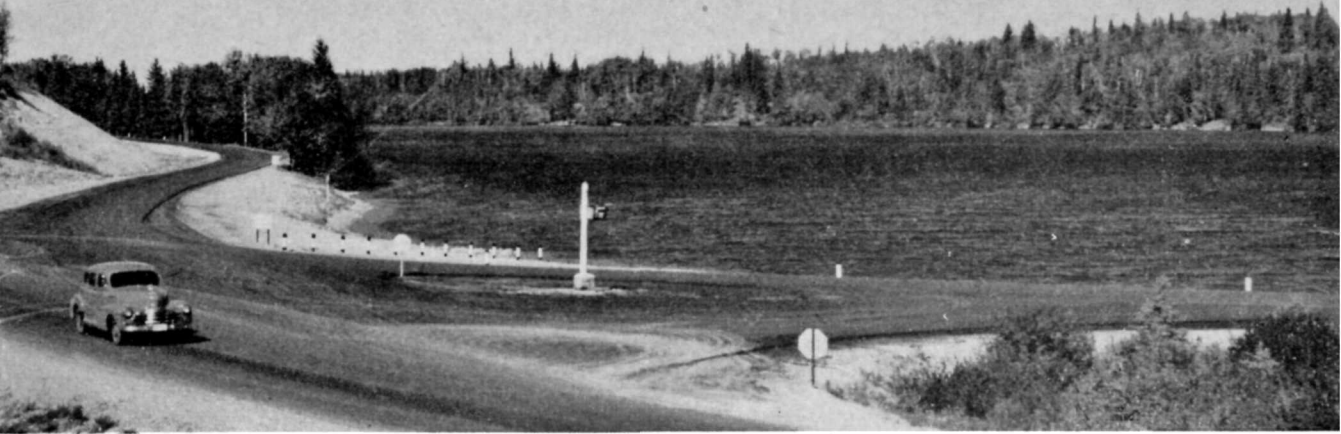
This publication is compiled in co-operation with the National Parks Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Additional information concerning these parks may be obtained from the Park Superintendents, or from the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, Canada.

FRONT COVER PHOTO—*Happy Days at Clear Lake*

Issued under the authority of

**THE HONOURABLE JEAN LESAGE**

Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources



*East End of Clear Lake*

## RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

### M A N I T O B A

**R**IDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK has a setting and character unique for any location in a prairie province. Situated on the fringe of the Great Plains region that extends northwards from the Mississippi Valley into Central Canada, it occupies the vast plateau of Riding Mountain which rises to a height of 2,200 feet above sea-level. On the east and northeast, the park presents a steep escarpment, towering nearly 1,100 feet above the surrounding country and affording magnificent views of the fertile plains below. Sweeping westward for nearly 70 miles, the park contains an area of 1,148 square miles, heavily forested and set with numerous crystal lakes, some of which are several miles long.

The park is a natural home for species of big game native to the region, including deer, elk, moose, and bear. Wild fowl are numerous, song-birds and birds of brilliant plumage enliven the forests, beaver live along the streams, and a herd of buffalo, descendants of the great herds that once roamed the western plains, feed on the rich meadows near Lake Audy.

On Clear Lake, the largest and most beautiful in the park, a picturesque summer resort, Wasagaming, has been developed, in which is located the park administrative headquarters. Here the natural attractions of the area have been supplemented by facilities for the enjoyment of outdoor life and recreation, and by grounds and buildings designed to harmonize with the surroundings.

Situated about 125 miles north of the International Boundary and 175 miles northwest of Winnipeg, and served by modern highways from the south, east, and north, Riding Mountain National Park is an unsurpassed holiday ground.

#### **Early History**

The origin and early history of Riding Mountain Park are of interest, for many of its natural features were shaped by the great glaciers of the Ice Age. The steep escarpment of Riding Mountain itself is mainly the result of pre-glacial erosion, and later, with the surrounding country, it lay under an immense sheet of ice.

Evidence of glacial movements remains in the depressions now filled by small lakes and by moraine and boulders that are found in many parts of the park. As the ice receded, large lakes formed in the surrounding valleys, and towards the east lay a vast inland sea of which Lakes Dauphin, Winnipegosis, Manitoba, and Winnipeg are all that remain.

Some idea of the immensity of this watery expanse may be gained from the view of the vast panorama that is available from vantage points or lookouts along the eastern escarpment. Here the prairie unfolds in a great checkerboard of farmlands—green, brown, russet, and gold.

These plains were at one time Indian territory—the home of the Assiniboines and Crees. With the acquisition of firearms, tribal



*Cooling off at Clear Lake*

sports and hunting eventually gave way to savage hostilities, and raids into rival territories ensued. As the buffalo, staple source of supply for the western tribes, began to disappear, the Assiniboines moved westward, and left the Crees in possession of the region. The ridges are believed to have been Indian highways for years, and one of the early explorers records that shale outcroppings near the summit of Riding Mountain were used by the Indians for making clay pipes.

The first exploration of the region appears to have been carried out by a Canadian Government expedition under Henry Youle Hind in 1858. This party explored the country between the South Saskatchewan and Red Rivers and, arriving at the southern end of Dauphin Lake in October, climbed the steep heights of Riding Mountain. Hind was greatly impressed by the outlook, describing it in his book *Red River and Saskatchewan Expeditions*: "The view from the summit was superb, enabling the eye to take in the whole of Dauphin Lake and the intervening country, together with part of Winnipegosis Lake. The outline of Duck Mountain rose clear and blue in the northwest, and, from our point of view, the Riding and Duck Mountains appeared continuous, and preserved a uniform, precipitous, bold outline, rising abruptly from a level country lying 800 to 1,000 feet below."

### **Approaches to the Park**

Riding Mountain National Park is easily reached both from Canadian and United States points. It is linked with the main provincial and state highway systems by all-weather roads and is provided with three main entrances accessible by southern, eastern, and northern approaches.

The southern approach to the park is by way of Provincial Highway No. 10, which is a direct route from the International Boundary. From Minnedosa, this picturesque route provides views of some of the most charming pastoral countrysides in the province, and leads to the southern gateway at Wasagaming, the park townsite.

From Winnipeg, the Provincial capital, Highway No. 1 may be followed to Portage la Prairie, and from there, Highway No. 4 leads to Minnedosa. An alternative route from Winnipeg may be followed over Highway No. 1 to Brandon and thence north to the park by Highway No. 10. The distances from Winnipeg to the park over these routes are 175 and 207 miles respectively. Four main routes from the southern part of the province also converge on Brandon.

From the east, approach is made over Highway No. 5 from Neepawa to Norgate, and from there westward over Park Highway No. 5A to Wasagaming. This route provides the visitor with a full realization of the mountainous





*At the Outdoor Roller Rink*

character of the park, as the road ascends the steep escarpment of Riding Mountain by long, easy grades. Within a travelled distance of about 3 miles an elevation of more than 1,000 feet is gained, and at various points are excellent views of the plains below that stretch away into the distance.

From the north, access is provided by Highway No. 10, which crosses the park boundary about 8 miles south of Dauphin. By this route, the northern escarpment of Riding Mountain is climbed, passing through green forests and skirting several small lakes. At Dauphin Lookout, near the summit, an observation platform has been built, where a pause may be made to view the wonderful panorama of prairie farmlands. The town of Dauphin and Lake Dauphin are visible on clear days. About 31 miles from Dauphin, the highway turns eastward and skirts the western end of Clear Lake to merge with Highway No. 5A near the park golf course. Approach from Dauphin also may be made by Highway No. 5 to the Norgate intersection and from that point west to Clear Lake.

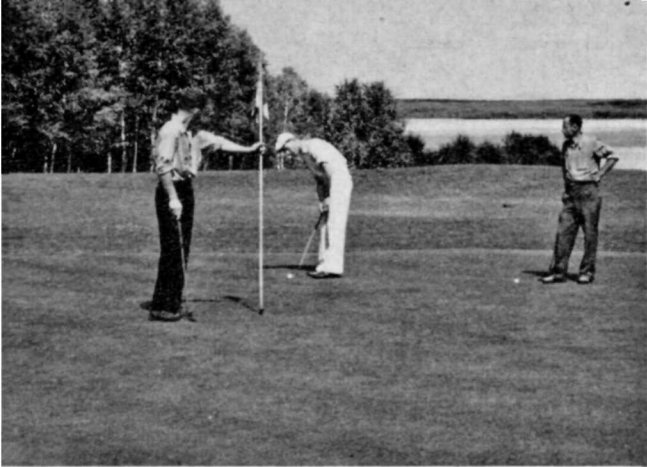
Riding Mountain Park is easily accessible from the United States. Six main highways lead from the International Boundary, four of which converge on Brandon, and two on Winnipeg. One of the most popular approaches is via the Canal-to-Canada Highway through Dunseith, North Dakota, to the International

Peace Garden on the International Boundary. From there, Highway No. 10 is followed north to the park through Boissevain, Brandon, and Minnedosa.

During the summer months, buses connecting with the main provincial bus-line services of Manitoba and Saskatchewan leave Minnedosa and Dauphin twice daily for Riding Mountain National Park. A through bus service from Brandon to Wasagaming also enters the park daily. Points near the park from which railroad service is available include Neepawa, Norgate, Dauphin, and Erickson on the lines of the Canadian National Railways, and Neepawa and Minnedosa on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

### **Natural Attractions**

The natural attractions of the park have a broad appeal. Eighty-five miles of excellent motor roads wind through luxuriant forests of white and black spruce, jack pine, aspen, white birch, tamarack, balsam fir, green ash, elm, and Manitoba maple. The contrasting colouring of bark and leaves, mingled with the deep shade of evergreens, provides a delightful show of Nature's wonders. Smaller trees such as mountain ash, wild plum, and serviceberry are common, and shrubs of many kinds including hazel, high-bush cranberry, saskatoon, and dogwood are interspersed among the trees. In the autumn the shrubs combine with larger species to produce a marvellous



colouring of the landscape. Wild flowers grow in great profusion and blossom in a riot of colour. At varying periods may be seen wild roses, twinflower, marsh marigold, orange lily, pasque flower, bunchberry, wintergreen, fireweed, Indian paint brush, and Indian pipe, as well as golden-rod, violet, and brown-eyed susan.

The park originally comprised the Riding Mountain National Forest, and for over a quarter of a century its timber resources have been under scientific management. A forest experiment station, open to visitors, has been established near Clear Lake for the investigation of problems relating to the growth, development, and wise use of the timber species of the region.

The lakes of the park are among its great charms. Lying between green ridges, they vary in size from small tarns to bodies of water several miles long. Clear Lake—the largest—is also the finest in the park. Nine miles long, it varies in width from one to two and a half miles, and has a shoreline of more than forty miles. Through its crystal-clear waters may be seen bubbles from the many springs by which it is fed. Between the headlands are inviting coves and inlets where canoeists may linger and bathe. On placid summer afternoons its limpid surface reflects the marvellous colouring of trees, boulders, and sandy pebbled beaches. From such vantage points as the golf course at the head of the lake, the breakwater, or main beach, may be enjoyed the full magnificence of the Manitoba sunset.

### Wild Animal Life

The park forms a natural home for wildlife. Black bear, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose are found in the undisturbed forests, and beaver along the streams. One of the largest herds of elk in Canada ranges the plains and woodlands in the park and may often be seen on the meadows near Audy Lake, or on some outlying trail.

In a special fenced area of 2,000 acres near Lake Audy is a small exhibition herd of buffalo. Seen grazing in the lush meadows of the park, these animals recall to mind thrilling stories of the days when Indians, armed only with bow and arrow, pursued thundering herds across the vast reaches of the prairie to the west. Included with the buffalo are a number of native elk, deer, and moose, which present countless opportunities for camera studies.

Top—Wasagaming Golf Course

Centre—Northern Pike

Bottom—A Riding Lesson for Junior

## Bird Life

Lovers of bird life will find many interesting varieties. Migratory birds, following the skyways to and from their nesting grounds in Northern Canada, find rest and shelter on the lakes and marshes. Wild ducks, Canada geese, swans, cormorants, and pelicans are picturesque transients; loons and bitterns feed around the lakes and sloughs. Songsters which gladden the air include the white-throated sparrow, song sparrow, purple finch, red-winged blackbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, baltimore oriole, catbird, and meadowlark. Birds of brilliant plumage, such as the blue jay, kingfisher, pileated woodpecker, cedar waxwing, Bohemian waxwing, evening grosbeak, and ruby-throated hummingbird gather in numbers. The Canada jay, also known as "whiskey-jack" or "camp robber", is particularly active around camp-sites at mealtime, and sharp-tailed grouse, owls, and hawks are also native to the park.

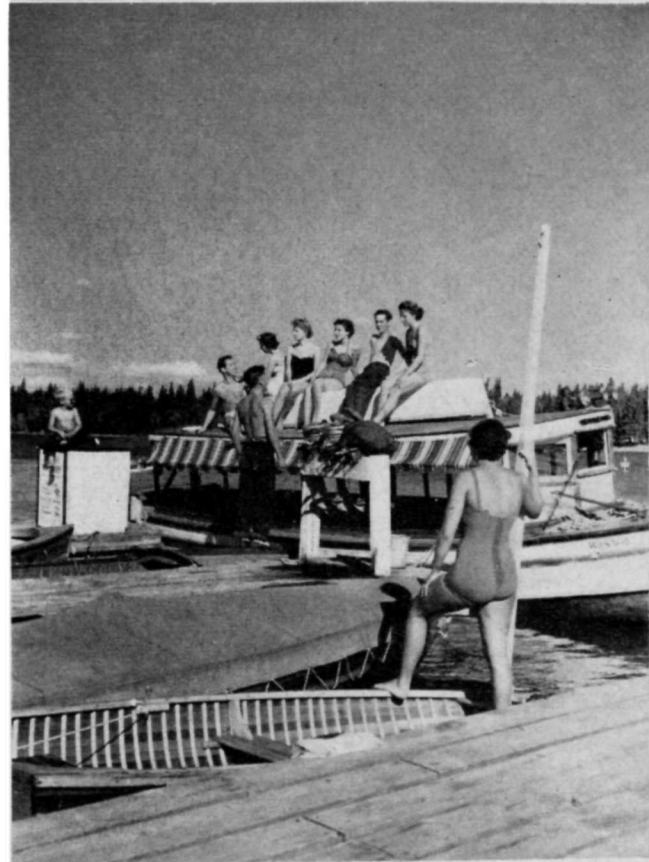
## Townsite and Headquarters

Wasagaming, an attractive summer resort on the southern shore of Clear Lake, is the park townsite and contains the administrative headquarters. Here are graded and hard-surfaced streets, smooth green boulevards, well-kept walks, and buildings constructed to harmonize with the natural beauty of the surroundings. The townsite contains a number of hotels, several stores, restaurants, outdoor roller skating rink, beauty salon, drug store, theatre, souvenir shops, service garages, and other business concessions. Nearly 250 summer homes have been constructed, and sites for more are available.

In the centre of the townsite, adjoining the lake shore, a large park area has been laid out, with artistic walks, pergolas, flower beds, hedges, and other botanical displays. Near the centre of this area is the park administration building, which also serves as a bureau of information for visitors.

An outstanding point of interest in the townsite is the Museum Building, constructed of natural logs and stone. It contains mounted wildlife exhibits and Indian, geological, and other displays relating to the Riding Mountain area. In the building is also a lecture hall where conferences, church services, and entertainments are held. Community rooms, suitably furnished, are available to visitors. At the rear

Top—Visitors from California  
Centre—At the Boat Dock  
Bottom—Bull and Cow Moose







*Picnicking on the Trail*

of the building is a small garden, landscaped in English style with a small rustic summer-house, fountain, and flagstone walks, making a delightful resting spot.

Another attraction in the vicinity is a promenade that extends for more than 8,000 feet along the main beach providing an excellent vantage point from which to view the lake. Wasagaming Drive, the main artery of travel through the townsite, is completely hardsurfaced. The name Wasagaming is an Indian word meaning "clear water".

#### **Accommodation**

Good accommodation is available to visitors at moderate rates. Several modern summer hotels and bungalow camps are operated by private enterprise. The bungalow camps contain both single and double cabin units, which may be rented either completely or partly furnished. Meals may be obtained at the restaurants in the townsite. In addition, there are a number of rooming and boarding houses where visitors may secure accommodation. Summer cottages are also available for rental for varying periods, and particulars concerning them may be obtained at the office of the park superintendent.

For visitors travelling with cabin trailers or carrying their own camping equipment there is ample accommodation in the Government camp-ground. It is situated in a beautiful grove west of the business section of Wasagaming facing Clear Lake, and within easy reach of stores, restaurants, and garages. Camp privileges are available on payment of a small fee, and include the use of a camping lot and community kitchen shelters equipped with stoves, tables, firewood, and running water. Individual lockers are available for rental in community icehouses for the storage of perishable supplies. Convenient taps furnish an ample supply of clear, pure water. Campgrounds, less completely equipped, are also available at Lake Katherine, Moon Lake, Lake Audy, and Whirlpool Lake.

#### **Opportunities for Recreation**

Riding Mountain National Park is admirably suited for the enjoyment of outdoor recreation. Sports open to visitors include swimming, boating, riding, hiking, tennis, golf, and lawn bowling—in addition to motoring along the scenic roads. A special area for baseball, softball, and field sports, as well as horse-shoe pitch and children's playground, will be

*Fishing Party at Lake Audy*





*Practising for the  
Tournament*



found near the public camp-ground at Wasagaming. A picnic ground, equipped with tables, benches, and stoves is also available. A motion picture theatre, an outdoor roller skating rink, bowling alleys, and a fine dance pavilion operated by private enterprise in Wasagaming extend the day's enjoyment.

Of the numerous beaches in the park, the one on Clear Lake, which stretches for a mile and a half along the townsite of Wasagaming is outstanding. A breakwater constructed in the lake forms a sheltered bay. With a clean, sandy bottom shelving out gradually, it provides safe and delightful bathing. Boating, yachting, and canoeing are popular forms of sport, and boats may be rented at the pier. Motor launches also make regular sightseeing trips up and down the lake.

For tennis enthusiasts there are eight clay courts at Wasagaming which rank with the best in the province, and are available for use at a nominal fee. A large pavilion with spacious verandas and dressing rooms overlooks the courts.

Another outstanding attraction is the park golf course. Built to a high standard of play, it has eighteen holes that are exceptionally interesting and challenge the skill of the average golfer. The course commands a magnificent view of Clear Lake and includes rolling terrain crossed by a winding stream appropriately known as Bogey Creek, which forms interesting hazards at several points. An attractive club-house overlooks the eighteenth green and contains facilities for rest and refreshment. A nominal fee is charged for the use of the course, and a full line of supplies is carried by the professional shop.

Fishing, riding, hiking, and motoring help to make leisure hours more enjoyable. Clear Lake has been stocked with lake trout and angling for this fighting species is now possible. Great northern pike, whitefish, and perch are also taken.

Riding enthusiasts have a choice of several fine trails over which to explore the region. Popular rides include those to Lake Katherine, 6 miles; Ministik Lake, 5 miles; and the Bubbling Spring near the golf course, 3 miles



*A Popular View-point along Clear Lake*



*Trailer Park at Wasagaming*

from Wasagaming. A bridle path follows the north shore of Clear Lake for about 5 miles and offers a fine ride or hike within sight of the water's edge.

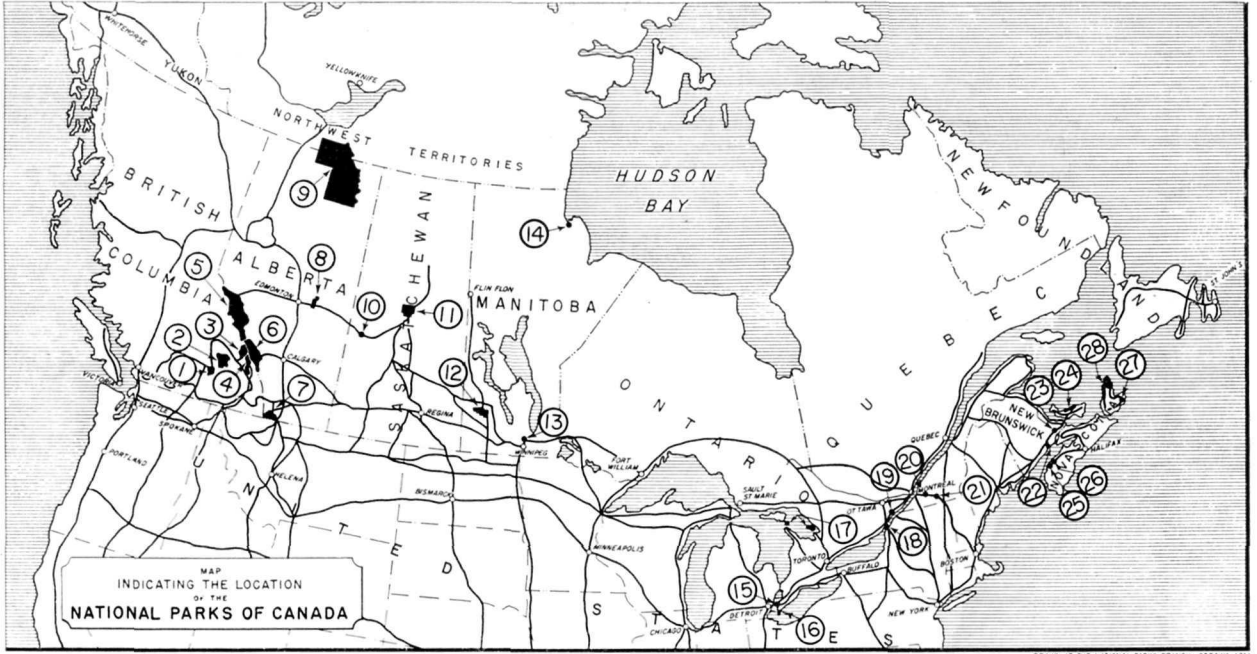
The motor roads of the park reveal a varied and ever-changing panorama. One of the fine shorter drives starts at Wasagaming and skirts the eastern end of the golf course for 3 miles to the "Wishing Well", a bubbling spring flowing into Bogey Creek near the golf course. From there, the "Glen Beag Drive", built through a delightful wooded area, may be followed, returning by way of main Highway No. 10 which circles the golf course. The park highways also lead to Dauphin Lookout, 29 miles distant, and to Norgate Lookout, 19 miles away, where fine views of the prairies

may be obtained. To the visitor interested in wild animal life, the trip to the animal enclosure at Lake Audy, 25 miles from Wasagaming, is well worth the time and effort.

In vivid contrast to the surrounding plains, Riding Mountain National Park is a revelation to the first-time visitor. The environment of dense green forests, blue lakes, and glistening sand beaches is far from the popular conception of a park in the Prairie Provinces. With its natural beauties unspoiled, its trees, flowers, wild animal and bird life carefully conserved and protected, and its gradual development adequately supervised, Riding Mountain Park is rapidly becoming one of Canada's most popular summer playgrounds.

*Sheltered Pier at Clear Lake*





DRAWN AT THE NATIONAL PARKS BRANCH, OTTAWA, 1951

## THE NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

1. **MOUNT REVELSTOKE, British Columbia.** Rolling mountain-top plateau on west slope of Selkirk Mountains. Established 1914; area, 100 square miles.
2. **GLACIER, British Columbia.** Superb alpine region in Selkirk Mountains. Great peaks, glaciers, forests. Established 1886; area, 521 square miles.
3. **YOHO, British Columbia.** On west slope of Rockies. High peaks, beautiful lakes. Yoho and Kicking Horse Valleys. Established 1886; area, 507 square miles.
4. **KOOTENAY, British Columbia.** Encloses Vermilion-Sinclair section of the Banff-Windermere Highway in Rockies. Broad valleys, deep canyons, hot mineral springs. Established 1920; area, 543 square miles.
5. **JASPER, Alberta.** Mountain playground and game sanctuary. Contains majestic peaks, ice-fields, beautiful lakes and famous resort, Jasper. Summer and winter sports. Established 1907; area, 4,200 square miles.
6. **BANFF, Alberta.** Magnificent scenic playground in central Rockies. Contains noted resorts, Banff and Lake Louise. Summer and winter sports centre; big game sanctuary. Established 1885; area, 2,564 square miles.
7. **WATERTON LAKES, Alberta.** Canadian section, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. Mountain playground with colourful peaks; varied flora and fauna. Established 1895; area, 204 square miles.
8. **ELK ISLAND, Alberta.** Fenced preserve near Edmonton, containing a large herd of buffalo; also deer, elk and moose. Recreational and camping resort. Established 1913; area, 75 square miles.
9. **WOOD BUFFALO, Alberta and N.W.T.** Immense regions of forests and open plains between Athabasca and Great Slave Lakes. Contains a large herd of buffalo and other game. Established 1922; area, 17,300 square miles.
10. **FORT BATTLEFORD, Saskatchewan.** Former North West Mounted Police Post established in 1876. Surrounded by log stockade. Original buildings house interesting museum collection. Established 1951; area, 36.7 acres.
11. **PRINCE ALBERT, Saskatchewan.** Forested region dotted with lakes and interlaced with streams. Summer resort and recreational area. Established 1927; area, 1,496 square miles.
12. **RIDING MOUNTAIN, Manitoba.** Playground and game sanctuary on summit of Manitoba escarpment. Fine lakes; summer resort and recreational area. Established 1929; area, 1,148 square miles.
13. **LOWER FORT GARRY, Manitoba.** Stone fort built by the Hudson's Bay Company between 1831-39. Located on west bank of Red River about 20 miles north of Winnipeg. Established 1951; area 12½ acres.
14. **PRINCE OF WALES'S FORT, Manitoba.** National Historic Park at Churchill. Ruins of fort built 1733-71. Established 1941; area, 50 acres.
15. **FORT MALDEN, Ontario.** National Historic Park with museum at Amherstburg. Site of defence post built 1797-99. Established 1941; area, 5 acres.
16. **POINT PELEE, Ontario.** Recreational area on Lake Erie. Camp-grounds, remarkable beaches, southern flora. Resting place for migratory birds. Established 1918; area, 6.04 square miles.
17. **GEORGIAN BAY ISLANDS, Ontario.** Recreational and camping areas. Unique pillars on Flowerpot Island. Established 1920; area, 5.4 square miles.
18. **ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS, Ontario.** Mainland area, and 13 islands in "Thousand Islands". Recreational facilities. Established 1914; area, 189.4 acres.
19. **FORT WELLINGTON, Ontario.** National Historic Park with museum at Prescott. Defence post built 1812-13. Established 1941; area, 8.5 acres.
20. **FORT CHAMBLY, Quebec.** National Historic Park with museum at Chambly. First built by French, 1665. Established 1941; area, 2.5 acres.
21. **FORT LENNOX, Quebec.** National Historic Park on Ile-aux-Noix in Richelieu River, near St. Johns. Established 1941; area, 210 acres.
22. **FUNDY, New Brunswick.** Located on the Bay of Fundy between the cities of Saint John and Moncton. Forested region, game sanctuary, rugged terrain. Recreational and camping resort. Area, 79.5 square miles.
23. **FORT BEAUSEJOUR, New Brunswick.** National Historic Park with museum near Sackville. Site of early French fort. Established 1926; area, 81 acres.
24. **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.** Strip 25 miles long on north shore of island province. Recreational area; fine beaches. Established 1937; area, 7 square miles.
25. **PORT ROYAL, Nova Scotia.** National Historic Park at Port Royal. Restoration of "Habitation" or first fort built in 1605 by Champlain, De Monts and Poutrincourt. Established 1941; area, 17 acres.
26. **FORT ANNE, Nova Scotia.** National Historic Park with museum at Annapolis Royal. Well-preserved earthworks. Established 1917; area, 31 acres.
27. **FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG, Nova Scotia.** National Historic Park with museum near Louisbourg. Ruins of walled city erected by the French 1720-40. Interesting excavations. Established 1941; area, 340 acres.
28. **CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS, Nova Scotia.** Rugged Atlantic coastline with mountain background. Fine seascapes from park highway. Recreational opportunities. Established 1936; area, 390 square miles.

BACK COVER—Golf Course, Clear Lake, Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba.

**CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TRAVEL BUREAU**  
Ottawa, Canada, 1955



