



THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

MONTHLY LETTER

HEAD OFFICE: MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1954

YOUR CANADIAN VACATION

FROM the point of view of the individual, the question to be answered about a vacation is: where can I find what I want at a price I can pay? The question before the community is: are we doing all we should to attract, hold, satisfy and entertain visitors?

We must not be hesitant and piece-meal about expanding the tourist industry. Pointing to the natural features which make our country attractive, too many people are content to allow the tourist traffic to develop itself.

It is true that every part of Canada holds out the lure and opportunity of a new frontier to people from other parts, but they will not come to any particular place unless they are told about its attractions and assured of its welcome and satisfied that it has the accommodation they desire.

What is a Vacation?

A vacation can be a dead loss if not embarked upon in the right spirit. There are people to whom a picnic is all ants and mosquitoes. There are others, like Tom Sawyer, who return wishing they had had no holiday, because it makes the accustomed ways more odious. Still others take their bodies for a vacation while they leave their minds at their desks.

A vacation must be something more than a physical holiday. One needs to go in a spirit of joy. It is an utter waste of time, money and effort to go on a vacation to escape stomach indigestion and take our mental colic with us.

Desire is about evenly divided between those who wish to combine diversion with a constructive vacation programme and those who wish to rest. Whichever is your choice, do it thoroughly. You need enthusiasm if you are to have a diverting vacation. If you indulge in a holiday with the sophisticated listlessness of a debutante, or pose as an old soul who knows all of life, the holiday will pay you no dividends, no matter how earnestly your hosts try to make it enjoyable.

Fifty per cent of us believe that happiness on a vacation consists in going places and doing things. When we journey from the place where we have lived for fifty weeks past, even if only to a nearby lake or mountain or farm or forest, we see life and our lives in new perspective. Travel wakes up our minds: one of Shakespeare's characters says: "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits."

Planning and Preparation

The hours of a vacation are too precious to be frittered and dribbled away. It will be found wise, by those who wish sincerely to bring back much intellectual fodder from their vacations to take much with them. It is well to know what to look for at each stopping place, what side-trips are worth while, where the journey may be speeded up for lack of interesting environment, and where to linger for beauty, learning or enjoyment.

Without a survey of the possibilities, and a skeleton programme for making the most of them, we may go about looking curiously at whatever happens to pass before our eyes, but we miss the fullness of pleasure and the satisfaction of knowledge. We pass over fields of fame and through cities of ancient renown unmoved, because we are utterly unconscious of the lofty deeds done there.

How is this planning to be done? How are we to learn what we should see?

Most readily accessible sources of information and guidance are the Canadian Government Travel Bureau at Ottawa; the provincial travel bureaus at provincial capitals; and municipal travel bureaus in the principal cities and towns. If they have not the information you seek, these offices will tell you where to get it.

Besides, there are articles in popular magazines, the Canadian Geographical Journal, the National Geographic, and in travel magazines, telling in interesting detail about particular attractions. A few evenings spent with a good highway map of Canada (to

be had free from the Canadian Government Travel Bureau) and booklets issued by provinces and municipalities, will enable you to plan a trip full of beauty and interest, worth relishing in anticipation and promising you lasting memories.

Our Park System

Canada's first national park was established in 1885 around the mineral hot springs at Banff. Today the parks are Canada's greatest single tourist attraction. From April 1st to September 30th, last year, they were visited by 2,520,000 persons, while historic parks and sites drew an additional 240,000 visitors. By far the most popular of the national parks were Banff, Alberta; Riding Mountain, Manitoba; and Point Pelee, Ontario.

The Canadian Government Travel Bureau has issued a folder, with coloured illustrations and an animated map, telling about the national parks, their location, size and attractions — from Prince Edward Island's coastal strip on the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the largest national playground in North America, Jasper's 4,200 square miles of the Rockies. The first has a story-book appeal for the visitor, because *Green Gables*, the farm house immortalized by Lucy Maud Montgomery in her novel *Anne of Green Gables* has been preserved there, with its *Lake of Shining Waters*, *the Haunted Wood*, and *Lover's Lane*. Jasper Park is a mountain playground and noted wildlife sanctuary, with majestic peaks, great ice-fields, beautiful lakes, and hot mineral springs.

There are provincial parks, too, with an area of 34,000 square miles, and in addition there are forest preserves, fish hatcheries, and bird sanctuaries. In the Northwest Territories and Alberta is an immense region (17,300 square miles) of forests and open plains which is the home of the largest remaining herd of bison on the continent.

Historic Sites

Enlightened people among us have been energetic in preserving the historic sites of Canada, believing them to be vital links with the past and strong attractions in the present.

Tourists do not want only plaques and cairns; they wish to stand and walk on the shores where history records Champlain walked; to touch the wall of the farmhouse where Madeleine de Verchères stood off an Indian raid; to meditate on the ground where the martyred priests Brébeuf, Lalemant and their companions spoke their last message to the Hurons; to photograph the rock on which Mackenzie, first to reach the Pacific overland from Canada, wrote his famous lines.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum at Regina is a unique treasure house of western lore; Bytown Museum in Ottawa and Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal display fascinating memorials of the birth of Canada, the American invasion, the French and

British regimes; and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto has treasures of history and culture from all the earth and from all ages.

As tourist attractions, however, it is important that we revive the past by restoring old trading posts and forts, marking portages which were of significance in our history, and preserving such remains as there are of the original structures and natural features. Let us locate and publicize our legends. Evangeline and the Maid of the Mist and the Woman in White were not historical characters, but the legends woven around them add zest and interest for the tourist at Acadia and Niagara Falls and Montmorency Falls.

We have folk-songs, too. Marius Barbeau has collected them, with their music, in books obtainable from the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, for 25 cents each: *Folk Songs of Old Quebec* and *Come A Singing! Canadian Folk Songs*. The latter has more than 20 illustrations by Arthur Lismer.

The stream of history has deposited across Canada a variety of culture and tradition, so that each region has something to set it off from others. It is four and a half centuries since John Cabot's ship first scraped our shores; Jacques Cartier, brave and skilful Breton sailor, arrived in 1534; Wolfe and Montcalm, each patriotic for his own homeland, are now commemorated jointly in a monument on the battlefield which was fatal to them both in that long-ago war. In all these four and half centuries great events have happened, stirring deeds have been performed, which would make our countryside from Atlantic to Pacific come alive in the eyes of visitors, if only we told about them in a lively way.

Holidays for Canadians

Canadian holidays are not for visitors from other countries only, but for Canadians, too. Inter-provincial travel is a remarkable eye-opener, and a vacation in Canada will enhance the pride which Canadians already have in their country.

The Canadian Tourist Association set up a committee at its annual meeting in October to study the development of inter-provincial travel. This seemed necessary because closeness of United States cities all along our southern boundary is a potent attraction: Canadian travellers spent \$293½ million in the United States in 1952.

Evidence of growing interest in awaking Canadians to the attractions of their homeland is found in the adjoining provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Booklets describing the tourist facilities of Quebec are distributed in English in Ontario, and just last year the Hon. George H. Doucett, Minister of the Ontario Department of Highways, issued in French a booklet describing and picturing the roadside parks of Ontario: *Les Parcs de Tourisme de l'Ontario*.

Interest is growing, too, in telling Canadians about the year-round vacation possibilities we have. Every month can be a holiday month in this country;

there is no reason for clinging to the old-fashioned idea of a twelve week vacation period.

There are some benefits to be had from taking a holiday in winter rather than in summer. Many industries and businesses offer their employees a two-week vacation in summer, but three weeks if the vacation is taken in November to April. This offers an opportunity to employees for an extra week of holiday, and to resorts for an extension of their business if they make out-of-season holidaying interesting.

Encouraging Tourism

How can we most effectively encourage visitors to come to our communities? The first essential for any sales programme is to have the product right. This means, in terms of the tourist industry, having something worthwhile to offer in the way of scenery, historic remains, or sport, and then providing the sort of environment the visitor will like. The best of advertising effort will not make a poorly operated hotel or resort successful: there must be, basically, clean, comfortable accommodation with adequate, good quality meals, in an establishment operated on modern business lines.

All resort advertising should be truthful. It is better to understate what is offered than to colour it by exaggeration.

Many booklets and pamphlets are issued in Canada in the interests of the tourist industry, and anyone who looks them over keenly will find that they adhere to this rule: they are factual rather than flamboyant.

Today's travel literature is well-illustrated descriptive writing designed to tell prospective tourists where they can find things that interest them. Among the more pretentious of these pieces put out in Canada is the Canadian Government Travel Bureau 48-page booklet entitled *Canada — Vacations Unlimited*. It has 76 coloured photographs, a brief description of every province, chapters on fishing, canoeing, camping, mountain-climbing and skiing, and information about how to get to the place that has everything the tourist wants.

The Travel Bureau also issues booklets on various parts of Canada, and one, written by Gregory Clark, complete with paintings of Canada's game fish, entitled *With Rod and Reel in Canada*. The National Film Board of Canada has a catalogue of 16mm motion picture films — 99 of them — available for showing in Canada or the United States.

The provinces, too, publish vacation literature. One noteworthy publication is Ontario's *Official Weekly Road Bulletin*, telling for every route every week the state of the highway, what construction is underway, the location of roadside parks, and much else of use to the traveller.

Municipalities in scenic or historic country frequently publish literature, usually distributed through their Chambers of Commerce or their tourist bureaus, and most resort hotels have booklets or leaflets describing their facilities.

It is natural that people will talk about the places where they spend their vacation, and it is on the level of the municipality and the resort that greatest care is needed to provoke favourable publicity. Visitors in these days are not content to sit around in the sun. They want something interesting to do or to see. It will pay the community to sponsor recreational facilities, regattas, carnivals, rodeos, festivals, habitant fairs, exhibitions of the district's handicraft and commercial productions — any sort of attractive entertainment that is natural to the locality.

A publication of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce points out that a motorist dashing through a village contributes little to the life of that place. Something needs to be done — and can be done by co-operative effort in most places — to induce the tourist to spend an hour, or a day, or a week, there. Merchants should be persuaded to feature tourist merchandise in original and eye-catching window arrangements. Old homes of historic interest can be renovated; forts can be restored and battlefields marked; Indian portages which are now highways should be named; an aura of interest can be thrown around a village, a city or a district.

What Should We Do?

Something dramatic is required, because Canada has stiff competition. The United States has outstanding tourist attractions, and tourist promotion people there are working hard and are doing an excellent job.

We might attempt a mass approach, enlisting as many as possible of Canada's citizens, and making use of every appeal of picture and word. Canadians should be organized and guided, not merely asked, to invite their friends from across the border and from other provinces.

Children in all grades in school might be given as a composition exercise the writing of letters to their opposite numbers in the United States and in other parts of Canada. These would describe the attractions of the children's environment and features of tourist interest, such as exhibitions.

Bundles of letters could be exchanged between classes of the same grade in eastern and western schools; pupils in the higher grades in Ontario studying French could profit, as would their neighbours in Quebec studying English, by such a friendly exchange.

The daily and weekly newspapers would doubtless be glad to assist in this project; they might offer prizes for the best letters in their circulation territories, and they would print some of the replies. An imaginative plan like this would grow under its own momentum.

It would bring about a great exchange of ideas, widen the children's interest and knowledge of both Canada and the United States, and it would be of social importance by promoting visits which would strengthen the already strong bonds between our people.

To the extent that we discover one another, and find the similarities in our aspirations and ideas, to that extent we will deepen our friendship in a world where friendliness and helpfulness are increasingly important. There is, humanly speaking, no more potent force to allay the suspicions of neighbours and broaden our culture than the tourist movement.

Publicity of the "gadget" sort is not widely used in Canada, and it might be worthwhile to broaden our consciousness of its usefulness. Stickers for cars, labels for suitcases, and paper pennants announcing "I have been to" — all these have their value in making a resort known. Hotels and municipal tourist bureaus might enclose picturesque suitcase labels with their replies to inquiries, so that all the way from his home to his destination the traveller would display publicity for the resort.

Let's be Canadian

In some districts of Canada we go out of our way to greet visitors with shows of what they expected to leave behind them when they came on vacation. We have been ingenious in making them feel at home, whereas the whole idea of taking a vacation is to feel away from home.

If we want visitors from the United States, there is no use in trying to imitate slavishly things which are done in the United States. The tourist who has come all the way from his home is not going to be satisfied with a copy, however good it may be (and some are pretty bad) of what he is accustomed to seeing. He doesn't want to visit cafes and hotels aping United States prototypes, even to their names. There is a Canadian way of life, and visitors should be shown it.

This does not mean that standards should not be the same or better — standards of food, living accommodation, service and efficiency. Visitors will not endure hardship just for the sake of enjoying our scenery. The Canadian Association of Tourist and Publicity Bureaus said in a publication several years ago: "We must progress beyond the position of allowing some slovenly people, some unsanitary places, some backward proprietors, and some hesitant governments, to spoil a great business for our country."

There are Canadian dishes which, besides being good food, have the glamour which attaches to things that are different. Some provinces operate schools which give short courses in cooking and general hotel management.

Each region should put the accent on its native dishes. The Maritimes, for example, could specialize in shore dinners: their sea food is just as good as that of the United States seaboard states south of them. Ontario might publicize more extensively its freshwater fish and its fruit; Quebec its maple products, soups and ducklings; the Prairies their meat products,

and British Columbia its fruit, crabs and salmon. These specialties should be worked over, practised and perfected, and served with a flourish. "Three such star turns," said a magazine article, "can make a reputation: 300 run-of-the-mill ones may keep the bailiff away, but they'll leave the customers cold."

In an effort to encourage the sort of cooking that will rival in provinces of Canada the *pâté de foie gras* of France, the *wiener Schnitzel* of Austria, and the *ravioli* of Italy, the Cuisine Committee of the Canadian Tourist Association issued in 1953 a booklet called *Recipes for Regional and Provincial Dishes*. It gives sixty recipes geared to the special products of all provinces: from Alberta's *Chuck Wagon Stew* to Saskatchewan's *Jellied Mossberries*, from British Columbia's *Okanagan Brown Betty* to Newfoundland's *Baked Cod Tongues*.

Courtesy and Information

The human factor is the only thing which can destroy what Canada provides for travellers to enjoy. Besides doing things — those suggested here and the others which will develop through earnest local community thought — we need to be pleasant people to meet, friendly, kindly, and courteous.

When travellers return home what they say about their reception and treatment will do more to determine how many tourists we get in the next five years than will all the advertising that money can buy.

Municipal officials, clerks in stores, waitresses in restaurants, attendants at filling stations, taxi drivers — all these are our representatives. Boys and girls — often asked by visitors to direct them to some spot of interest — are in the picture, too.

Besides a column in the local newspaper telling citizens how to direct visitors to the district's points of interest, there might be a short evening or afternoon course for those whose work brings them closely into touch with visitors, and an hour's session in every school, just before the tourist season opens, when the importance of courtesy and helpfulness to visitors would be taught.

Canada has the merchandise: it is the second largest country in the world, with 3,845,774 square miles of prairie, mountains, lakes, streams, and forests, as beautiful as can be seen anywhere.

We have the market: our own 14,812,000 people, the 160,228,000 people in the United States, and travelling people from all other continents.

But we must do something if we are to encourage travel: make access easy by highway, airway, railway and seaway; get and keep our living facilities for visitors up to date in a superior way; train the personnel of all services in courtesy and efficiency; tell the people in Canada and elsewhere about the superlative attractions we have, and make it easy for people to find them.

To develop our tourist industry, bringing visitors from one part of Canada to another and visitors from outside Canada, we need to come out from under our top-hat restraint and really sell Canada.