



THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA MONTHLY LETTER

VOL. 51, No. 3

HEAD OFFICE: MONTREAL, MARCH 1970

About Exploring Canada

HAVING IN THIS CENTURY issued a mandate to our rulers for ever-increasing leisure, we are now faced with the problem of using it to our greatest benefit. We are finding true what Nero's tutor said nineteen hundred years ago: "Empty leisure is a form of death."

There is no reason why anyone should have empty leisure anywhere in Canada. Merely to list the natural attractions Canada holds out to a traveller, without using any adjectives to describe them, would appear to be a gross exaggeration of the truth.

Canada has a broad assortment of real estate in its 3,851,800 square miles of land and lake, varying from sea level on the Atlantic and the Pacific to 19,850 feet at the top of Mount Logan. There is a climate and an environment to suit every person and every mood.

Anywhere in Canada offers the lure of a new frontier to the traveller from another part. Every tourist bureau in the country could use the whole 3,000 words in this *Monthly Letter* just telling about the attractions to be found in its own district. The Canadian Tourist Association, representing the travel and hospitality industry, has in operation a major "Explore Canada" project.

Travel in Canada by Canadians is increasing steadily, but statistics of tourists are hard to get. The tourists are like the sheep in the story: they do not stay still long enough to be counted.

To cope with the increase, accommodations have expanded until there are now 30,000 hotels, motels and camps, capable of handling some 350,000 persons every day.

Why do people travel?

It is a sad but undoubted fact that many people go through life only partially aware of the full range of enjoyments that lie beyond their doorsteps. The great artists made it a point to place a doorway or an arch or an opening through the trees in their pictures so that viewers should not feel confined. Everyone needs to pass from the immediate scene to something wider so as to enjoy a largeness of view and a breadth of mental vision.

Every person has his individual concept of a pleasurable holiday. Some are content to watch the quiet swirling of ducks on a picturesque pond; some seek pleasures of the intellect; others want the thrill of stepping where great men have walked. All wish to store up something that can be recalled over many months.

Whatever the main interest you find in travel, it gives you a recess from the commonplaceness of your accustomed environment. You escape the confinement of office, workshop, kitchen and daily work.

R. L. Stevenson remarked: "I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move." If he were writing his essay today Stevenson would say: "The great thing is to get off your launching pad."

But few people go anywhere just for the pleasure of riding an airplane or train or car; of sleeping in strange beds; of eating meals prepared by short-order cooks. People travel because they want to have an experience, to enrich their minds, to enjoy pleasurable relaxation.

Travel has its place in building an effective life. It makes us capable of thinking more thoughts. A man who has not travelled is always conscious of an inferiority arising from his not having seen things and people beyond the bounds of his parish. As Valentine warns in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Home-keeping youth hath ever homely wits."

Discovering Canada

Human beings have a natural disposition to explore, and they could not pick a better place than Canada for their enjoyment. You can see with your own eyes what Sir Alexander Mackenzie saw on his epoch-making overland journey to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. You can drive or walk a few miles up the Whirlpool River which led David Thompson to Athabaska Pass beyond which he found the Columbia River and sailed down it from its source to the sea. You can follow that memorable march by Colonel Benedict Arnold and his troops over the height of

land and along the Chaudière River on their way to attack Quebec in 1775.

We are not yet purely logical animals. There is in us, beyond the reasoning portion of our minds, a whole region which answers to something different. It craves surprise, it seeks the strange, it thrives on differences. Discovery is not necessarily the finding of something hitherto unknown, but something unknown to you. Even if the view has been enjoyed by many people, no one has ever before seen it through your eyes.

Discoverers are not satisfied with idle chatter or vacuous pursuits to fill in the hours until bedtime. They find in Canada a whole series of delightful sensations. They see things they did not know were there. They encounter experiences to which they respond as Keats did in one of his poems: "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken."

Travel provides a relief from monotony; it releases you from the cage of boredom. When you travel seemingly no two days are exactly the same in all particulars.

The enjoyment of travel is based very much on contrast. When you go from a snow-clad winter landscape to a place of constant sunshine, the first thing to do is look at the paper to see how cold the people are back home.

Every road is lined with adventure for the traveller who walks it wide awake. You do not need the imagination of a Don Quixote in order to enjoy travel, and yet a little of it would help. You do not have to indulge in an Odyssey, which Ulysses did for ten years, dallying here and there on enchanted islands. You do not have to follow the century-old trail of Marco Polo, as a young couple did a few years ago. All you need do is get aboard an airplane or a train or a ship or a canoe or your car and head toward any point in Canada. "What matters it how far we go?" as the whiting said to the snail in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. "There is another shore, you know, upon the other side."

Canada is full of entertaining things to learn about, and anyone who fails to dip into the events and spectacles that it offers is depriving himself of one of the pleasures of life. The more things a man is interested in, the more opportunities of happiness he has and the less he is at the mercy of fate because if he loses one thing he can fall back upon another.

It is knowledge-of-acquaintance that provides the surest intelligence. When Charles Darwin voyaged to the south aboard the brig "Beagle" he was in search of data about geology and biology. He said in his *Autobiography*, referring particularly to the care with which he wrote in his diary everything that he learned: "I feel sure that it was this training which has enabled me to do whatever I have done in science."

Not everyone has a mind for nature study, an ear for bird songs, or an eye for painting, but the variety

of Canada's offerings makes provision for everyone's preference. There are scores of vacation-time arts and crafts courses available across the country: music, drama, writing, weaving, ceramics, languages, ballet, stage-craft, sculpture, radio, television, rug hooking, textile painting and graphics.

The people of Canada

If you like to study people, Canada has citizens drawn from 33 ethnic groups. They and their ancestors have been lending a hand to the building of Canada ever since its first settlement 360 years ago. No matter where you go, the people have thoughts in common with you, although their customs may be different.

Travel tends to remove national and provincial antipathies. It puts you in touch with lives beyond your own. It shows you how men and women have either adapted themselves to their environment or have reshaped their physical surroundings so that they may be as comfortable and as well nourished and as happy as possible. Their present-day problems become understood, and understanding takes the place of prejudice.

Look around you for something beautiful and unexpected. Listen to people's stories, hear their songs and give heed to their names for places and natural features. All of these tell a tale of hopes, aspirations, doubts, loves, hates and fears.

There is a glacier in the Rockies which someone long ago named "The Glacier of the Angel." The melt-water dripping from it in several little rivulets is called "The Tears of Sorrow." The tears form a river which is called "The River of Repentance" and it flows into "The Lake of Forgiveness." Here in four scenes is the raw material around which you can plot and write your own story or play or poem.

There are three important points to be remembered when you visit a place that is strange to you. The tone of your reception is, most of the time, a reaction to your approach; it is never wise to affront the customs of the place; your judgment of the people should be magnanimous. You might take a tip from the author of *The Simple Jography*, written in 1908 by Oliver Herford. At the end of every amusing survey of a country he wrote: "The Inhabitants are the Most Moral and Patriotic people in the World and their Army is second to none in Bravery."

Every Canadian, no matter where he lives, has his part to play in the government and economics and society of all Canada. When he travels observantly he qualifies himself to discharge his function better. Instead of learning about things at second-hand he has gotten into the heart of them.

This is the spirit animating the ninety young men and women of the 4-H Clubs, nine from each province, who are sponsored by the Royal Bank every year to visit other provinces.

Upon his return home in 1969 one participant wrote to the bank's President: "I wish that you could come

with us on one of these trips and really find out" how wonderful they are. Other young people wrote: "The memories we gathered will be with us the rest of our lives; You are offering citizens of Canada a chance to more completely know themselves and each other; I can only say that during the exchange I became a better person; It is a good feeling to know that the people are basically the same all over Canada even though their problems vary slightly; When one travels, as I did, for the first time, he has a feeling of pride to be a citizen of such a great country as Canada."

Where to go

If you are tired of traffic lights and gasoline fumes and crowds of people, head into one of the national or provincial parks and get on a first-name basis with nature. These parks include regions of outstanding scenic beauty, historic interest, and unique animal and plant life.

The number of visitors to the national parks has tripled in ten years, from 3.9 million to well over 12 million, and in addition there were 2½ million visitors to historic parks. In one year the provincial parks attracted 33½ million visitors; nearly four million of them were campers. There are ninety camp grounds in the national parks, with space for 10,000 tents and trailers.

Long-range planning distributes the park area into zones: wilderness, where natural features receive maximum protection, with a minimum of access by trails; and semi-wilderness, where the natural scene is made accessible by visitor-service developments such as roads, camp grounds, recreation areas, and commercial accommodation and concessions.

It is the government's policy that recreational activities should not be allowed in a national park if they tend, in themselves, to be a major attraction. These would bring amusements and entertainment commonplace in the city to a place where people are seeking rest, communion with nature, and adventure in the outdoors.

Information about the parks and other desirable vacation places can be obtained from many sources. The Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, will send you booklets and maps. The provincial travel bureaus go under various names, but you can safely address your inquiries to "The Tourist Bureau" at the provincial capital. City tourist offices will send you booklets about local attractions.

If you travel by car, use the services of your automobile association or club. The major oil companies have travel departments. Railways, airlines and bus companies will provide brochures. The travel agent is an expert in the complicated details of figuring out routes and itineraries and costs, and making reservations.

There is a certain pleasure in independent wanderings, but there are distinct advantages in having one or more people along who are interested in the same

things. Conducted tours are often the solution to the problem of seeing the most in congenial company. Reservations are assured, you know the exact cost in advance, there are no time-table problems, hotels are carefully selected, and well-planned sightseeing leaves time for personal activities.

If in doubt about where to go in your car, the Trans-Canada Highway may provide a starting place. It is the longest paved highway in the world, with final stop signs 5,000 miles apart at Victoria, British Columbia, and St. John's, Newfoundland. It has roadside picnic and rest parks about every fifty miles, and overnight parks every 100 to 150 miles. From it may be made rewarding side trips, described in *Circle Tours from the Trans-Canada Highway*, a booklet prepared by the Canadian Government Travel Bureau.

It is easy to travel

Some people are as apprehensive of a trip half way across Canada as they would be of a voyage by dug-out canoe to the headwaters of the Zambesi River.

There are no exotic dangers to be encountered in Canada. The thing to do is to decide where you would like to be, do a spot of paper planning about how to get there, and the project will push you along. It is somewhat like putting your car into neutral on the magnetic hill in New Brunswick: you find yourself moving apparently uphill without effort.

It helps when you become enthusiastic. If you indulge in travel with the sophisticated boredom of a debutante, or pose as an old soul who knows all of life, it will pay you no dividends.

For examples of real enthusiasm, visit a Youth Hostel. The Canadian Youth Hostel Association is a chartered non-profit recreational and educational organization, established in 1933, and it has today 35 hostels and 13,000 members, spread over six regions, each devoted to holiday-making suited to the nature of the environment.

In the St. Lawrence region the hostellers are strong on cycling; in the Rocky Mountain region a party of teen-age girls may be seen wolfing sandwiches after climbing 8,000 feet to the top of Whistlers Mountain; in the North West region the specialties are canoe and kayak expeditions. Rates in self-serve hostels run from 75 cents a night for members under 18 years of age to \$1 for senior members. The Association national office is at 1406 West Broadway, Vancouver 9, B.C.

Planning your trip

Planning — here is the staff work of your proposed expedition. In the army it is called logistics. It applies to movement and supply: where do you go, where do you sleep, and what are your eating arrangements.

For trouble-free travelling, time and material planning are crucial ingredients. Some of your plans will have to be re-edited because of circumstances, but this is a happier state of affairs than getting up in

the morning with no idea of how you are going to fill the day, or arriving somewhere at night without knowing whether you can get a place to sleep.

The purpose of a vacation plan is not to confine you to an inflexible programme but to provide you with a firm base from which you may venture out with assurance. The wise traveller solves minor crises in advance. As advised by the western trail riders, he sees that his saddle sits comfortably, and that his cinch is tight, and then he sits back to enjoy the ride.

It is wise to read about a place before visiting it. The more you know about it the more likely you are to get your time's worth. If your vacation period is two weeks, that gives you 336 hours. Of these you will spend 112 hours in sleep and 42 hours at meals. You have 182 hours left to see things, and every minute of these hours counts toward your satisfaction.

Find out what seasonal events there are in the vicinity, like festivals, sports events, and local celebrations. Make a broad programme to cover your whole vacation, and then plan the days in two or three varied activities. Eight hours of unrelieved bird watching or canoeing or shopping or mountain climbing is too much at one clip.

One common despoiler of vacation travel is trying to see everything people tell you that you should see. Look for representative things along your own line of interest. You do not have to visit every little port on the Avalon Peninsula, or every room in the Royal Ontario Museum, or every mountain on the Pacific coast.

If you are visiting a district where local bus tours are available, that is an excellent way to get an overall view. Many features, like municipal and university buildings, churches, the residential districts, waterfalls, parks, and so forth, are covered adequately. By surveying these on the bus tour you are free to choose the places of special interest where you can spend time.

Some bonus features

Your objective in travelling in Canada is to get off the paths you tread regularly, to get interested in something you know nothing about. Go out as a child goes, with his mind on what there is to see. Merely deciding that a trip will be interesting helps to make it so, because interest is a faculty within us which we transfer to the things we see and do.

Travel provides the observant person with information, and information is the basic ingredient of new thoughts. You wish to combine the pleasure of visiting places with the advantages that come from a bit of orderly investigation, because you know that things have one appearance when far away and quite another when looked at closely.

When Thoreau claimed to have "travelled a good deal in Concord" he meant that within a few acres he had observed much and had imagined more. He had the curiosity to investigate, and that is one of the characteristics of a vigorous intellect.

Stop and talk with the man who is spreading eelgrass on chicken-wire frames to dry. You will find that he retired from business and has made this preparation of eelgrass to be used in insulating buildings his hobby. Pause to compliment the woman in the little home surrounded by gorgeous dahlias. She will tell you that she has developed her own strains and sends the tubers all over the continent.

These are bonuses that make your journey memorable. They enlarge your range of experiences and stock your mind. Years later you may give birth to an idea that would not have come to you had you not seen this or that and deposited it in your memory for combination with a current situation or happening.

Travel stores the mind with impressions which stimulate imagination. A street in a strange city is a theatre of romance, drama, humour and adventure to the observant visitor. A stream pursuing its mysterious course through tree- and rock-strewn land, hurrying toward the sea which is its eternity, appeals to the poetic in you. A hiking trip in the woods or a canoe trip on lakes and streams provides plenty of challenging creative exercise. To walk where heroes fought stirs us more than reading the story of their lofty deeds.

To learn or to feel something we have never known before is a profoundly stirring experience. To record it in a vacation diary or in photographs makes it forever ours. Churchill's advice was: "Go to a peaceful spot and stay there long enough to paint some canvasses."

Travel expectantly

When you pack your bags to explore the beauties and interests of Canada, travel expectantly. Every place you pass through is like a surprise package to be opened.

Travel hopefully. Look forward to the next experience. What is around that bend in the highway, or over the next hill?

Everyone strives to be associated with what is best of its kind. Well, Canada has much that is best of its kind. Whatever your interest, you can reach it without strenuous discomfort, but you must respect certain realities. To one who cannot climb, a holiday on a mountain is impracticable unless the mountain has a cable car. As Nietzsche put it: "He who is not a bird should not camp above abysses."

There is no need to regiment a vacation. If you know what you wish to see and do, have information in your head, and your luggage is so packed that things are at your finger-tips, then you can be completely relaxed and leisurely in your sightseeing.

If circumstances forbid your travelling far, or even to a neighbouring province, consider this: the superiority of the distant is enhanced in our minds by the bulk of the pleasures promised there, yet you can enjoy only one pleasure at a time. The pleasures that lie near home can be savoured one by one so that in a year they provide a well-rounded full experience.