

A Message from the President

By FRANK ROY, Saskatoon



Boys born on the prairie are indeed close to Nature. They know the warmth of a winter sun on the southern side of the oatstack, the inquisitive squeaking of the gopher, the first furry buds of the crocus, and the clamorous honks of Canada geese as they fly over golden stubble fields. They have felt moist earth beneath their bare feet as they planted potatoes; they have lain on their backs in a lily-spangled meadow watching a red-tail swing in giant arcs a mile overhead; they have trudged home from school, knee-deep in snow, awed by the pink fullness of the December moon. But prairie boys are frequently uncommunicative; they regard the outdoors with a silent, unspoken affection. They have learned to enjoy Nature in solitude, often because there is no one else with whom they can share that experience.

I was such a boy, fifteen years ago, when I first heard of Mrs. Priestly. The Western Producer an-

nounced that a Yorkton woman had just published the first issue of a little magazine entitled "The Blue Jay." She was trying to contact nature-lovers from all over the province. How wonderful — there were others, and in this province, interested in wildlife! I subscribed immediately, and thus began my acquaintance with Mrs. Priestly and her young protege, a boy named Stuart Houston.

How things have changed since 1942. The mimeographed bulletin with the hand-coloured cover has become a compact, well illustrated journal, respected across the continent. The total of 80 initial subscribers has swelled to 2,500. Mrs. Priestly, the founder, is dead, but her work lives on in the pages of the Blue Jay and in the Natural History Society across the province.

The Provincial Society has accomplished a great deal since its foundation in 1949. Its members have assisted in co-operative bird migration studies, added new species to the plant, bird and mammal lists for the province, led in efforts to promote conservation of our wildlife resources, urged the government to build a Natural History Museum, organized summer expeditions to various areas of the province—to name but a few activities. The Society must continue to face up to its growing responsibilities. Above all, we should work constantly to support the editor and staff of the Blue Jay by contributing articles and observations, and by bringing the magazine to the attention of an ever-widening circle of readers.

We are happy that Saskatoon has been chosen as the site for next year's annual meeting. We feel sure that 1958 will be a year when members from the northern half of the province will be able to attend both the summer outing at Emma Lake and fall meeting in Saskatoon in greater numbers. I know that the provincial organization will be able to count on the loyal support of the Saskatoon Natural History Society and the staff of the University of Saskatchewan in our preparations for the meeting next October.