


— Sask. Govt. Photo



**THIS MUSEUM OF NATURAL  
HISTORY IS DEDICATED TO  
THE HONOUR OF ALL THE  
PIONEERS WHO CAME FROM  
MANY LANDS TO SETTLE  
IN THIS PART OF CANADA  
A TRIBUTE TO THEIR  
VISION TOIL AND  
COURAGE WHICH  
GAVE SO MUCH TO  
SASKATCHEWAN  
AND THIS NATION**



UNVEILED BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
GOVERNOR GENERAL VINCENT MASSEY  
MAY 16, 1955

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History

By R. G. YOUNG, Director, Conservation Branch,  
Department of Natural Resources

The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History is a monument to the pioneers of the province. It was raised to honour these vigorous people whose determination fashioned the foundation upon which Saskat-

chewan's present and future well-being is laid. The building was opened on May 16th this year by His Excellency, The Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor-General of Canada.



A portion of the 457 foot frieze

chewan's present and future well-being is laid. The building was opened on May 16th this year by His Excellency, The Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor-General of Canada.

Although not the largest of its kind it is nevertheless one of the most modern and certainly one of the most striking museums of natural history on the North American continent.

Located diagonally across a park at the corner of College and Albert Streets in Regina it appears in profile as a long, rather low edifice consisting of two wings adjoined to a higher centre section in which are the lobby and the museum offices. One wing contains the galleries and the other houses a lecture auditorium capable of accommodating more than four hundred persons. The whole building is faced with

Saskatchewan Department of Public Works.

Apart from its general design three items command the attention of the visitor as he approaches the museum from the street. On one side of the completely glazed entrance is a twenty foot high legend carved in relief on the Tyndall stone and bearing the inscription:

*This Museum of Natural History is Dedicated to the Honour of All the Pioneers Who Came from Many Lands to Settle in This Part of Canada. A Tribute to Their Vision, Toil and Courage Which Gave So Much to Saskatchewan and This Nation.*

Each letter is eight inches high and the whole message can be read with ease from the street two hundred feet away. To the right is a thirteen foot high figure of a pioneer farmer

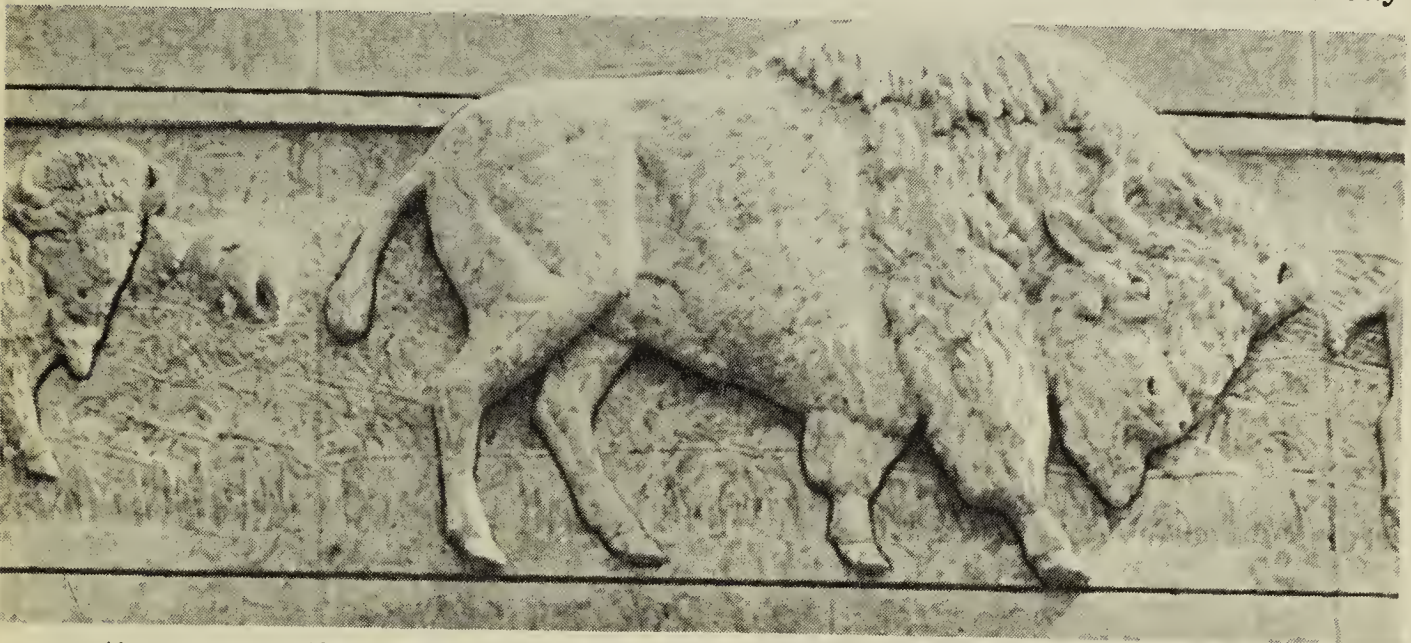
who with his wife and child are looking at a flock of geese in flight.

On the outside near the top of the walls is a twenty-eight inch high sculptured frieze which is said to be the longest in the world. This fine piece of work runs four hundred and fifty-seven feet around three sides of the building and it contains more than three hundred figures of mammals, fish and birds. Most of the fauna thus shown are indigenes of Saskatchewan. The frieze and memorial legend were sculptured by Mr. H. Garnier of St. Vital, Man.

The third point of interest about the building is the absence of win-

The wing containing the exhibits is constructed on the split-level principle thus reducing the number of stairs to be negotiated by the public. This also has the advantage of making the galleries more readily accessible. The whole display area contains a total of one hundred and one display cases.

The lower level of the display area is divided lengthwise into two sections with both having two galleries off a central hall. This floor has seventy-four cases in all. The galleries are further divided into bays composed of four cases. Two of these go to form the back of the bay



near the top of the walls

dows in the two wings. Experience in the field of museum display elsewhere in Canada and the United States, has established that direct sunlight has a deteriorating effect on the mounted wildlife exhibits. Then too, each display case can be illuminated much more effectively and dramatically by artificial means if there is no daylight to create confusing cross-lighting effects on the glass front of the exhibits. The whole building of course is ventilated by an elaborate air-conditioning system.

Running completely across the top of the glazed entrance is a planter filled with a variety of shrubs and small evergreens. The walls inside the lobby are finished in an erubescient Italian marble and in the middle of the Terrazzo floor is an attractive design of interlocking red circles which stretches from one side of the rotunda to the other.

while the others make up the two sides. The displays in each bay are related which arrangement helps to provide a logical and space-saving grouping of such exhibits. It tends also to obviate aimless wandering by the public from one exhibit to another and it helps the visitor to get the complete visual story offered by each group of displays with a minimum of Zoology, one to Geology and the other to Archaeology.

The cases in these galleries vary in width from three to ten feet. They are all five and a half feet high but are quite shallow having a depth of only two feet. Their purpose is mainly educational. Some of the bays for example, show visually the ecological relationships of one group of animals to another. Other bays portray the geological history of the earth while others show how the aboriginal folk of Saskatchewan lived prior to the ad-

vent of Euro-Canadian civilization. Considerable reliance is placed on art work, models, maps and sketches to present these stories. More will be said about these exhibits later on in this article.

The upper floor of the display area contains an entirely different type of exhibit. The cases housed here are the so-called Habitat Cases in which a three dimensional effect is created. The animals on display in these exhibits are shown in their natural state. The floor has twenty-four such cases on exhibition and is divided into two galleries having twelve each. In both galleries there are two rows of these exhibits (four to a row) set back to back so to speak to form something akin to a quadrangle in the centre of the gallery. Eleven of the cases are fourteen feet wide, eight feet high and eight feet deep. The other nine are twelve and a half feet wide with the same depth and height. Around the outside of these cases is a corridor sufficient in width to give the visitor ample viewing distance to appreciate the panorama presented by each exhibit. The lighting in the corridor is set into the ceiling and is quite subdued in order that there will be no reflection from the glass panels on the front of the exhibits. In addition at both ends of the gallery is a larger habitat case twenty feet across, ten feet deep and ten feet high. These exhibits are designed to depict large mammals such as the Bison and the Moose in their native habitat.

Inset into the central wall separating the two galleries on the upper floor are comfortable seats for those who wish to study the cases in detail. At the northeast end of the whole wing there is a large rest area comfortably furnished with chairs and chesterfields. This is adjacent to an exit which like the entrance to the building is glassed in from the ceiling to the floor.

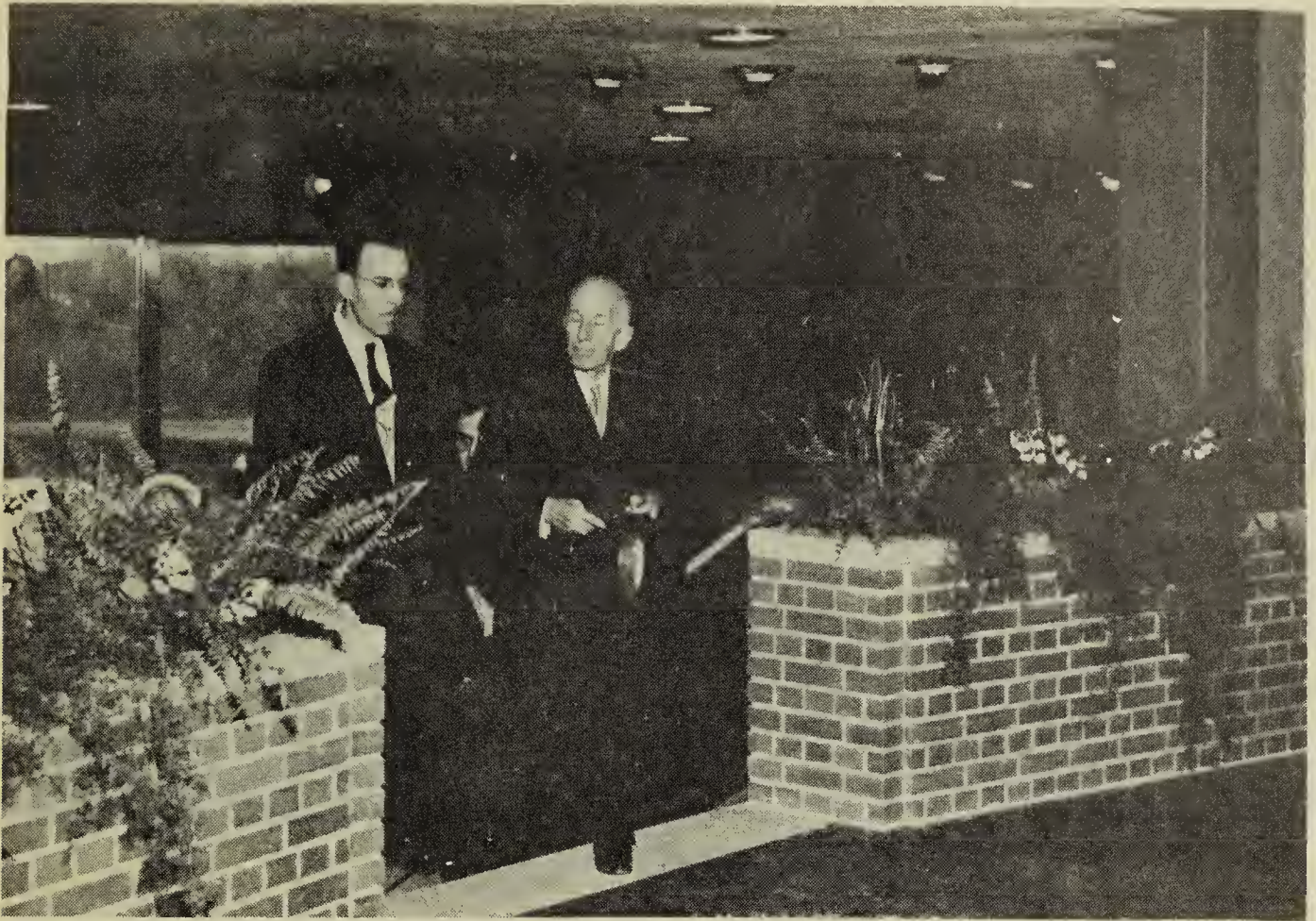
The other wing houses the auditorium behind which is a small conference and study room along the southwest end of the edifice. Certainly the most arresting feature of the auditorium is the perpendicularly waved effect of the side walls. Lights hidden behind these waves provide a subdued and restful illu-

mination. The auditorium is designed solely for lectures and film showings. Accordingly the amount of illumination issuing forth from the ceiling fixtures can be controlled to different degrees of intensity to facilitate the taking of notes. The spacing between the rows of seats is greater than normal to add to the comfort of the audience and each row is staggered relative to the one in front in order to permit a better view of the stage.

There are two other things deserving of mention which add to the general attractiveness of the museum. At points in both the upper and lower floors in the display area amplifiers provide salon music on occasions during the day. At night after the museum is closed the whole facade of the building is illuminated by flood lights set on the ground. The shadows caused by this lighting on the stone facing, the frieze and the dedicatory legend give a most dramatic effect.

As part of the original planning of this institution visits were paid by the Director and Architect to several museums elsewhere on the continent to study their designs, floor plans and programs. As a result of these studies many features were incorporated into Saskatchewan's Museum of Natural History which are generally regarded as essential in assisting such an organization to play its role as a cultural and educational centre in the community. Some of the physical features in the design of the building which enhance considerably its general attractiveness already have been mentioned. Reference too has been made to the functional nature of the floor plan which helps provide for an orderly and meaningful arrangement of the exhibits. It remains now to elaborate upon the major programs with which the museum is concerned.

By and large museum programs can be divided into three broad categories, viz: the acquisition and display of exhibits, education and research. Saskatchewan's museum of natural history will devote all of its attention to the first two of these activities for the time being. The immediate scope of the museum is to encourage a greater under-



Mr. Fred Bard, Curator, and Governor-General Vincent Massey during the opening ceremony.

standing of the intrinsic values of the province's natural resources — particularly wildlife. In this regard it might be mentioned that the museum has commanded a surprisingly high level of public interest averaging as it has between 25,000 to 30,000 visitors annually in the past few years. This is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that prior to 1955 the museum was tucked away in the cramped confines of the basement of one of the public buildings in Regina. That the attendance under these conditions was so high is a credit to the inventive genius of the present director and his staff who were able to present exhibits of such quality as to more than offset the uninviting surroundings of the museum. In its new location and with its expanded programs it is anticipated that attendance should climb to between 75,000 and 100,000 visitors annually.

As a result of the move to its new quarters, the museum is faced with the problem of redesigning many of its exhibits to take advantage of the new surroundings. This will take several years. Several of the Habitat Cases in the upper galleries

were built while the museum was in its former less spacious location. They were simply dismantled and transplanted to the new building. It is planned that these will be enlarged at a later date, to have a standard size of fourteen feet in width, ten feet in depth and ten feet in height.

These cases endeavour to create the impression that the wildlife are being viewed in their natural environment. Each case consists of a background painting on a curved surface and a foreground with mounted specimens so arranged as to blend into the backdrop. One interesting feature about this gallery is that most of the cases are based on actual scenes from Saskatchewan. Thus every visitor from the province can see at least one case which is reminiscent of his home area. The painting of the background is done usually from color photographs following visits to the actual site being portrayed. As might be expected there is a wide variety of scenery depicted. The areas chosen vary geographically from the Cypress Hills in the southwest corner of the province to the Reindeer Lake region



One of the 24 museum habitat cases.

six hundred miles away in the north-east part of Saskatchewan.

In this group of twenty-four cases, there are two which are not designed primarily to illustrate the habitats of various forms of wildlife. These are fondly referred to by the museum staff as "Fantasy Cases" and they have been included for the benefit of the small children who may visit the museum. One case contains a number of mounted young animals and birds grouped around the foot of a tree upon which "the wise old Owl" is perched. Under the museum's educational program (which will be outlined later) groups of young children are taken specifically to this case and are told the "story" by the Museum Extension Officer which the Owl is supposed to be giving to the young animals. The idea for this exhibit was prompted by Walt Disney's film "Bambi" and permission was kindly given to the museum by Mr. Disney to reproduce that particular scene for educational purposes.

The other case depicts a forest scene and includes a wide variety of birds and mammals. Its purpose is to illustrate to children the food chains that become established among animals co-existing in a common area.

Most of the work of preparing these cases was done by the museum staff. This includes the design, the carpentry, the mache and plaster casts, the acquisition and preparation of the specimens and of course the art work. The unique nature of this accomplishment becomes more apparent when it is realized that until very recently the total permanent staff numbered three.

It is part of the museum's plans to add continually to its acquisitions in order that all displays including the habitat groups will be changed from time to time. Nothing harms a museum of this kind quite as much as a static group of displays. Without periodic changes the public soon comes to realize that there is nothing further to see or to be gained through repeated visits.

During the time the museum was in its former quarters there was little possibility of preparing new exhibits other than the habitat groups. Nevertheless in the two years prior to its transfer to the new building the museum staff was actively engaged in procuring new specimens for exhibition in the cases provided in the galleries on the lower level of the display area. Still some time will have elapsed before all of the final details of the exhibits in



Antelope habitat case.

Sask. Govt. Photo

these galleries are completed. However, the general arrangement of the exhibits in the Zoology, Archaeology and Geology galleries is such that the visitor in going through each can get some idea of what is covered by the field which the gallery represents. The exhibits in each bay are related to the ones in the bay preceding and following it. The Geology gallery for example is not simply a repository of the rocks and minerals found in Saskatchewan. Its exhibits are so arranged as to give the visitor some idea of how such specimens are formed and where they are found. Thus the first bays in the gallery present by means of art work, models and maps the geologic history of the earth and the dynamic forces which shaped it period by period. As work progresses plaster models will be on display in these cases depicting the various faunal forms that were known to have existed during the various stages of the earth's history. Other cases will show by the same method some of the effects that the glaciation of the Pleistocene period has had on Canada, with particular reference to Saskatchewan. The Paleontological portion of this gallery has on display only those fossil invertebrates and vertebrates found in Saskatchewan. These cases ex-

plain what fossils are and how they are used to relate the rocks in which they are found to the geologic time scale.

A similar graphic approach is followed with the bays covering the field of Archaeology. The purpose of the exhibits is to summarize in general fashion what is known of the early inhabitants of Saskatchewan. Maps are employed to show the probable routes of migration of these aboriginal folk into Canada. Along with the artifacts on display are sketches and other illustrative materials to show how these tools were used. Other cases are given over to the types of plant and animal foods upon which these people subsisted.

Saskatchewan appears to be quite well-endowed with sites of archaeological interest. The existence of several middens is known to the museum and one of these was excavated near Mortlach, Saskatchewan during the summer of 1954. This particular site is located on the lower slopes of a former glacial spillway. Nearby are several piles of Bison bones. The method used by the Indians to kill these animals was to herd them over the edge of the spillway so that they would be killed in the fall or injured badly

enough that they could not escape being slaughtered by the Indians themselves.

Aside from skeletal remains this midden yielded a large supply of flints, pottery and other artifacts. The Carbon 14 method was applied to bones taken from the nine foot level and the age of this culture was established at approximately 3,400 years. The lower reaches of the site therefore date to between 1000 and 1500 years B.C. Widespread interest was displayed in this site with the result that the museum plans to set up one case reproducing the excavation to show how such research is carried on in the field.

The Zoology section of this floor fills two galleries. The specimens on display are all native to Saskatchewan. In the main the exhibits are given over to Mammals and Birds although indigenous species of other classes such as the Fishes, Reptiles and Amphibians are represented. There is also quite a large collection of insects.

Aside from displaying representative native fauna, the cases give the viewer some idea of the variety of habitats in which such animals live as well as general information on the effects of various environmental controls on their total numbers. With respect to the latter an attempt is made to relate these to the management programs currently in effect in order that the visitor may have a clearer understanding of Saskatchewan's Fish and Game Laws.

The other major function with which the museum is involved is its extension or informational program. Before going on to outline in detail the nature and purpose of this program it should be explained that this museum is one of three divisions under the Conservation Branch of the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources. The whole branch is responsible for executing an informational program designed to increase general acceptance by the public of the need for conserving the fish, fur, wildlife and timber resources of the province. In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in the number of people in the province participating in angling and hunting. With re-

spect to the latter the number of hunting licenses issued has increased tenfold in the last fifteen years. In 1954 one in eight persons held a hunting license.

This increase in hunting and fishing has had two results. In the first place the pressure on the fish and game animal population has risen markedly. This has necessitated further research in order that these resources might be more skilfully managed. Some of the laws and regulations which are based on the results of the biological research are not understood by many outdoorsmen. This emphasizes the need for an informational program explaining the significance of these regulations and the biological principles upon which they are based. Then too this increase in hunting and fishing has been accompanied by a pronounced rise in interest on the part of the public about the wildlife of the province and the department through such agencies as the museum is endeavouring to provide the information which this heightened interest demands.

The Museum of Natural History heretofore has not had sufficient opportunity to put into effect its extension program due to limitations in staff and space. However this will all be changed by the fall of this year. Plans are currently being made under which every school class in Regina and in many of the rural areas outside the city will be invited to spend at least one morning or afternoon in the museum. During its visit to the building each class will be taken on a guided tour of the exhibits and will receive talks from museum personnel explaining the nature, purpose and significance of the exhibits. The talks will be graded to the educational level of each visiting class and using the exhibits for illustration will endeavour to impart to the children some information on the basic ecological principles governing animal populations. Printed material on the various fields of natural history will also be given to the students to take home. In addition the children will spend an hour or so in the auditorium viewing films on conservation. During the films commentaries will be interjected relating the main theme of the film to Sas-





Bobcat habitat case.

katchewan. Similar guided tours and lectures will also be given to adult groups.

Another project which will be embarked upon at a later date is the children's workshop. In the basement of the museum a room has been set aside for this purpose. It is outfitted with storage cupboards for working specimens and a large work bench runs around the three walls. The children will be taught the rudiments of taxidermy including the preparation of skins, etc. They will also learn how to make mache models and will be given the opportunity to sketch the animals in the habitat cases. This program will take place on Saturday mornings in the workshop and all interested youngsters will be welcome to attend. During these sessions they will receive talks about the life habits of the animals they are studying.

One aspect of the extension program which was begun several years ago and which will be intensified is the preparation of documentary films and slide sets on Saskatchewan fauna. Three years ago an excellent fifteen minute documentary color film on the life of the Pelicans of Last Mountain Lake was produced by Mr. Bard, the Museum's Director. This film received many favourable comments and won an

international award. At the present time Mr. Bard is in the process of producing a second documentary film on the bird life of Wascana marsh on the outskirts of the city of Regina.

Plans are in effect for the production of sets of slides illustrating the phases of the museum's activities in the field of Natural History. These slides will be sent out to the Department of Natural Resources' field staff in order that they might give illustrated talks about the museum in the communities within their respective districts.

One obstacle with which many museums in North America have to contend is the fact that people in communities situated more than a hundred miles away get little if any opportunity to take advantage of the facilities offered by such institutions. This objection has even greater validity in the case of Saskatchewan's Museum of Natural History, being as it is a part of a department of government and therefore supported by public monies.

To get around this situation the museum has planned two schemes to bring some of its exhibits to those communities too far removed from Regina for their residents to make periodic visits to the museum. One of these will go into effect in the

fall. About a year ago the museum manufactured and distributed around the schools in Regina and environs a set of seventeen portable display cases containing small mammals and birds. Each case was accompanied with a printed talk which the teacher could use in explaining the case. It was an overwhelming success and thousands of children saw the cases. Because of this the number of such cases is to be increased and they will be distributed to the Department's Conservation Officers who will tour their districts giving lectures based on the cases to adult and school groups alike.

There are other informational projects to which some thought has been given of which the most interesting is a museum on wheels. The idea here is to outfit a large trailer with representative exhibits from the museum and send it on a planned lecture tour of the rural areas of the province during the summer months. This mobile museum would be outfitted with projection equipment to give showings to children in the schools during the day and to adults in the community halls in the evenings.

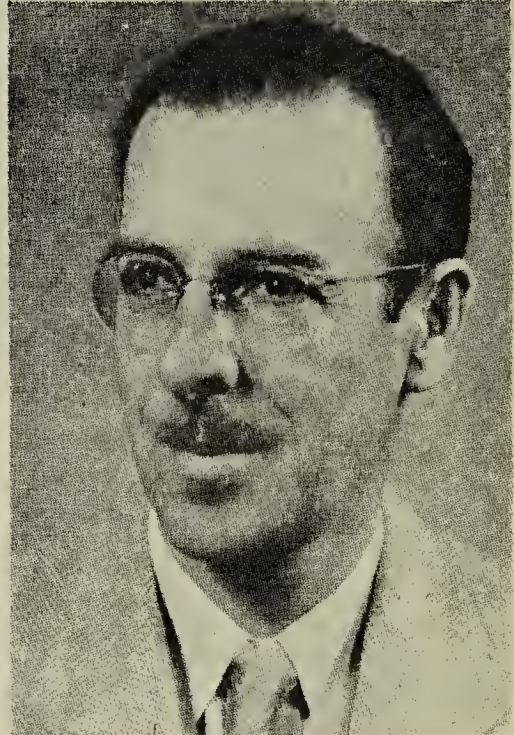
Saskatchewan's museum of natural history is primarily concerned with fostering a greater realization of the need for the conservation of the province's fish and wildlife resources. It is striving to achieve this by creating a deeper appreciation of the aesthetic and practical value of this heritage through its exhibits and through its extension program.

In the field of resources management there is a growing recognition of the fact that this wealth can not be safeguarded solely by enforcement and by legislation based on the findings of research. Such legislation is only as effective as the degree to which it is understood and appreciated by the average citizen. Getting people to recognize individual responsibility towards their natural resources is perhaps the greatest problem confronting those responsible for managing these resources today. This can be accomplished only by an active informational program. In Saskatchewan part of this task has been given to its Museum of Natural History. There is little doubt about the contribution it will make in this regard.

## FRED BARD, Museum Director

From "The Dome"

From the period when our province was young, when little money was voted and less space made available for museum purposes—to the present when three outstanding men in particular (all "Fred" by name)



see the realization of a beautiful dream, time has marched along a path often hindered by the stones of discouragement, and once swept by a disastrous cyclone. These three stumbled and never looked back in the struggle to meet their goal—a Museum to house relics and treasures.

In 1928 Mr. Fred Bradshaw was appointed the first Director of the Museum, to be succeeded in 1935 by Mr. Fred Dunk who continued in the post until 1947. Since that time our present Director, Mr. Fred Bard, has been in charge. Dedicated to the task of building and maintaining the museum in spite of terrific odds and great difficulties and discouragement, and because of their dedication, we today have a Museum, second to none on this continent, and worthy of our province and its people.

The third "Fred," a man of great personal modesty, claims little of the credit for attaining this goal, and is

(Continued to page 15)