

# Blue Jay Chatter

In a Dominion Day message printed June 30, 1956, in the Leader-Post, our Governor General, Mr. Vincent Massey, describes "Canadianism". In his discussion of some of the less attractive features of our natural life, he says, "Everywhere, or nearly everywhere, we see an erosion of natural beauty. How strangely have we shown our love of our wilderness." Saskatchewan Natural History Society members will realize that this criticism is deserved. How often have we passed some spot where natural beauty has been needlessly marred and the home of wildlife destroyed. Let's all try to do something constructive about these "erosions of natural beauty." Oftentimes a society or organized group of people has many times the influence of a single person. This was demonstrated when the Prince Albert Natural History Society protested the trapping of beaver along the Little Red and North Saskatchewan Rivers in the city of Prince Albert. The beaver add to the attractiveness of this beautiful area, and through the efforts of the society they have not been trapped in 1956. The success of such ventures gives us another good reason for asking others to join our society. It is also a very good reason for organizing a natural history society in your community.

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Our society was formed for the purpose of printing the **Blue Jay**. Approximately one fifth of our members live in Manitoba and Alberta. These people have no representation on our executive or on our list of directors. Previous discussions on this subject at our Annual Meeting two years ago stressed only the difficulties of further dispersal of officers; it is hard to get the executive and directors together for meetings now. There were no representatives from either Manitoba or Alberta at this meeting. If there are advantages to be gained by the formation of a Prairie Natural History Society then perhaps societies in each of the provinces could select representatives to consider this question.

In addition to printing the **Blue Jay**, the Saskatchewan Natural History Society has only two recognized activities: the Annual Meeting and the Summer Meeting. To both of these we welcome Manitoba and Alberta naturalists. Each October we hold our Annual Meeting, usually in Regina. Last year our guest speaker was Mr. Dick Sutton, Director of the Provincial Museum in Manitoba; this year, October 27, in our Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History our guest speaker will be Dr. D. Leechman of Alberta. The Summer Meeting has been held only twice, but it has already proved itself extremely successful. This year our meet was held at Madge Lake on the very border of Manitoba, and several Manitoba members attended. During the brief business meeting it was unanimously agreed that our next Summer Meeting should be held in June, 1957 in the Cypress Hills so that Alberta members may join us. Summer Meetings are important because they give us the opportunity to learn new natural history facts in the field and because they allow us to meet together, to form friendships, and to share mutual problems.

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This issue of the **Blue Jay** records a considerable number of important observations; many of them are "firsts" for the province of Saskatchewan. We are pleased that we have so many good observers, and that the **Blue Jay** is available to record these observations. Saskatchewan is young and there are still many things that are unknown or unrecorded. While at Madge Lake I took an early morning hike with the warbler experts. F. Brazier drew our attention to a toad that was unusually red. M. Callin, W. Anaka and I looked at it and wondered what kind it was. When we returned to Regina, Mr. W. A. Benson told us that we must have seen the Northern Red Toad which has never been collected in Saskatchewan. This would have been another "first" if we had only brought it home with us or taken a colour photograph. But even when we know all of our birds, mammals, other vertebrates, invertebrates, and all of our plants, there will still be changes. As conditions change, wildlife change. Let's try to prevent the extinction of any living thing in our time. If you have noticed a decrease in any form of life in your district, please write in; we can make inquiries as to whether the condition is widespread and take appropriate action.