

# BLUE JAY CHATTER

Since the material for the December issue is collected in October immediately after our annual meeting it seems logical for the editor of the **Blue Jay** to comment briefly on the year's achievements of the Society. Looking back over my eight years as editor, I find that this has been my thought each year at this time, and so the December **Chatter** gives some picture of the progress and the achievements of the Society as the years go by.

I have attended all fifteen annual meetings of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, and I feel that this year's meeting was the best one ever. The Moose Jaw people are so friendly and enthusiastic that the meeting could not help being an immense success. In addition, a wealth of new ideas were brought forth, and there were new people taking an active part and offering to share the work. One of the suggestions—the designing of a crest to be worn by society members—may do much to publicize the Society and its work.

With printing costs continuing to rise, we went to the annual meeting prepared to vote on the motion to increase membership fees, which was proposed at the summer meeting in the Cypress Hills Park. However, this increase in fees was forestalled by the mood of optimism that pervaded the Moose Jaw meeting; everyone resolved to bring in new members so that we could retain our basic membership of two dollars. If everyone would just get one new member in 1964, the membership would increase in this one year more than it has done in the past eight years, and we would have no need to talk of raising the fee! Can we have 5,000 members by this time next year?

Although the basic membership fee of \$2.00 was retained, the Society encouraged additional contributions by establishing two further classes of membership—supporting memberships at \$3.00, and sustaining memberships at \$5.00. These special memberships, together with the larger donations which are always acceptable, will help promote the special projects of the Society.

The year's end is a good time to ask what membership in the Saskatchewan Natural History Society means. Paying membership fees does more than bring the **Blue Jay** to each member. Paying fees helps to support the Society itself which, as an organized group, has provided an effective bulwark against unwise use of natural resources, and which, through its varied programmes, furthers each year an understanding of wildlife and of the need for its conservation.

Apart from the publication of the **Blue Jay**, one of the most substantial things that the Society does is to encourage and finance the publication of special studies that have been carried on in some phase of natural history in the prairie provinces. This year's outstanding contribution was the printing of R. W. Nero's **Birds of the Lake Athabasca Region, Saskatchewan**. This is an extensive report (143 pages of text and illustrations) based on a careful review of previous reports from other observers in the area and on personal observations made in the course of three summers spent in the North. It is a book of wide appeal, for it is more than a check-list; it is an introduction to the bird life of the area, studied in relation to this unique environment. Special support for this publication came from the Institute for Northern Studies, University of Saskatchewan. The book is being sold for \$2.50, and can be ordered—like our other special publications—from the **Blue Jay**, Box 1121.

This publication is the fifth sponsored by the Saskatchewan Natural History Society in the last six years. Surely a fine record for a \$2.00-membership society!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL