

WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL NATURAL HISTORY PROJECT?

Since, in 1967, the Saskatchewan Natural History Society is publishing the twenty-fifth volume of the *Blue Jay* we should be making special efforts to celebrate and to show that we as a society as well as a nation have reached a considerable level of maturity in which our responsibilities are accepted and our problems vigorously attacked.

As a society we can be proud of our regularly produced quarterly magazine and newsletter. To allow everyone the privilege of membership our fee, two dollars, is kept as low as possible and barely covers printing costs. Hundreds of schools and junior members pay only one dollar and the extra costs are met by supporting and sustaining memberships. You may help this year by gaining new members for the society, or by taking out a supporting membership.

As a society we aim in the near future to publish or assist in the publication of several special works of real natural history worth. One of these is a book, *Hours and the Birds*, by R. D. Symons, which will appeal especially to those interested in birding experiences over the years in Saskatchewan. Because of the many color plates, the University of Toronto Press required a financial guarantee before beginning the publication. Because of the authenticity of the work and the way in which the text, paintings, and sketches of the author reflect his lifetime interest in birds, our Society felt that we should try to raise funds to guarantee as much as \$5000 toward this publication, as a very suitable centennial project. Generous support has already been received from members and we hope that others will give donations for this project and that they will further support it by buying the book through our book shop when it becomes available.

As members of a natural history society each of us can have a special centennial and 25th anniversary natural history project. One that I would suggest is the seeking of an answer to the question, "Are there any Greater Prairie Chicken (Pinnated Grouse) in the Prairie Provinces today?" Mr. Pegg of Ontario (see page 34) thinks he may have seen some in the Cypress Hills last year. Earl Godfrey, in his new *Birds of Canada*, gives three rather recent records which he appears to regard as authentic — at Old Wives Lake (August 25, 1959), Stoughton (October, 1960) and Sidewood (1959). If we can find a small population anywhere in the Prairie Provinces I'm sure that the Wildlife Department of our Government would be very interested and would co-operate in every way to protect the birds, undertaking habitat studies to see how their future in Saskatchewan might be insured.

I would also suggest that members especially interested in conservation form an active committee within the society. They should meet for day-long discussions at least once a year. They should have a conservation section in the *Blue Jay* and they should publish items regularly in the daily and weekly press to help make the public more conservation-minded. First, who is willing to work on such a committee? Second, what are the main conservation problems in Saskatchewan, or in the Canadian prairies? What areas are especially in need of protection? To what extent should we co-operate in the elimination of skunks, foxes and coyotes? Do our birds of prey get the protection which the law allows and are they numerous enough to play their particular role in nature? What about Agriculture in this day of rapidly growing cities—are too many lands being converted to production? Let's get active for conservation in 1967. If you have opinions and if you are willing to work, please write to the Editor, 2335 Athol Street, Regina.

Whatever 1967 projects you have, I hope you will have a special natural history project and that you will tell us about it. Perhaps this year you can take time to enjoy the beauty of flowers or bird song or blizzard, or perhaps your project will be in photography or writing, or perhaps this year you will gain new recruits by taking time to share your enthusiasms with others. Let's hope that the projects started this year will have lasting values.