## A NEW PARK FOR CANADA

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An historic event took place in Regina n 19 June 1981 with the signing of an greement to establish a Grasslands lational Park in southwestern Saskathewan. The signing follows 16 years of iscussion, public hearings and egotiations since the idea for the park as put forth by the Saskatchewan latural History Society.

The agreement to establish the park as signed by Senator Hazen Argue on ehalf of the Honourable John Roberts, linister Responsible for Parks Canada, nd the Honourable Reg Gross, Minister Saskatchewan Tourism and enewable Resources.

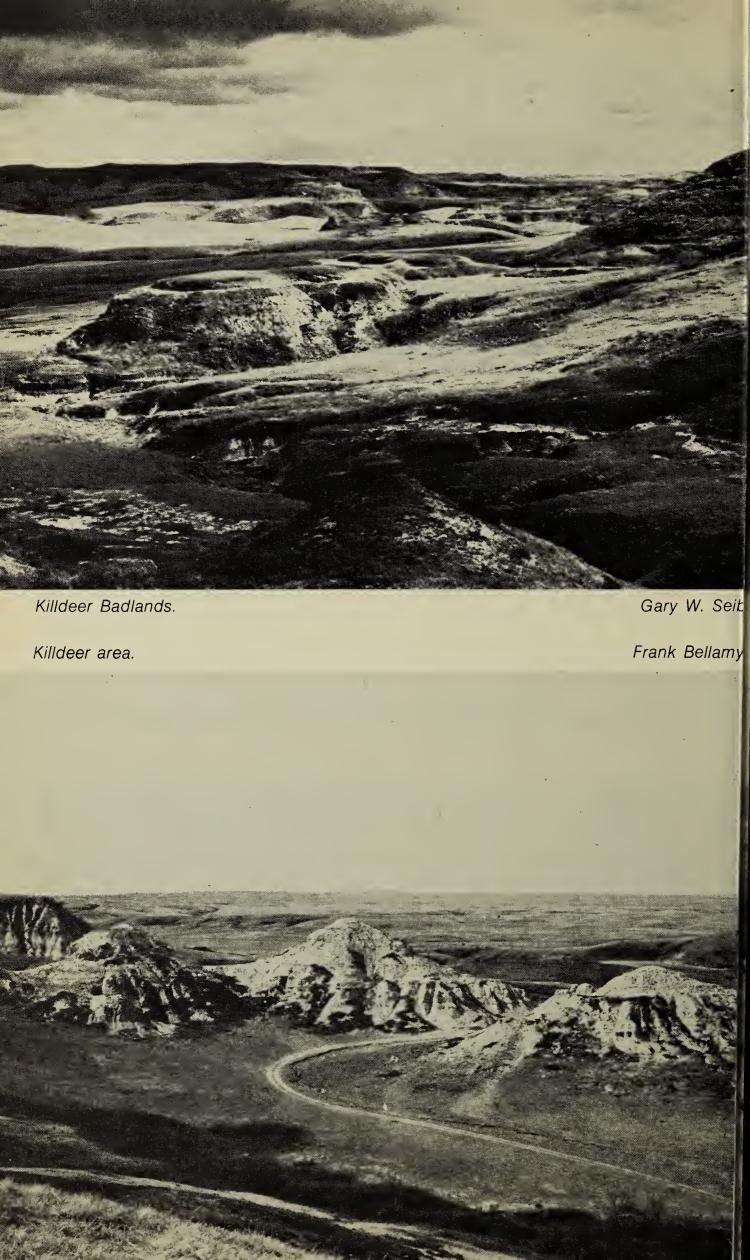
To create Canada's 29th national ark, Saskatchewan will transfer to arks Canada a maximum of 350 quare miles in two blocks, an East lock in the Killdeer area, and a West lock in the Val Marie area. The two locks will be connected by a road.

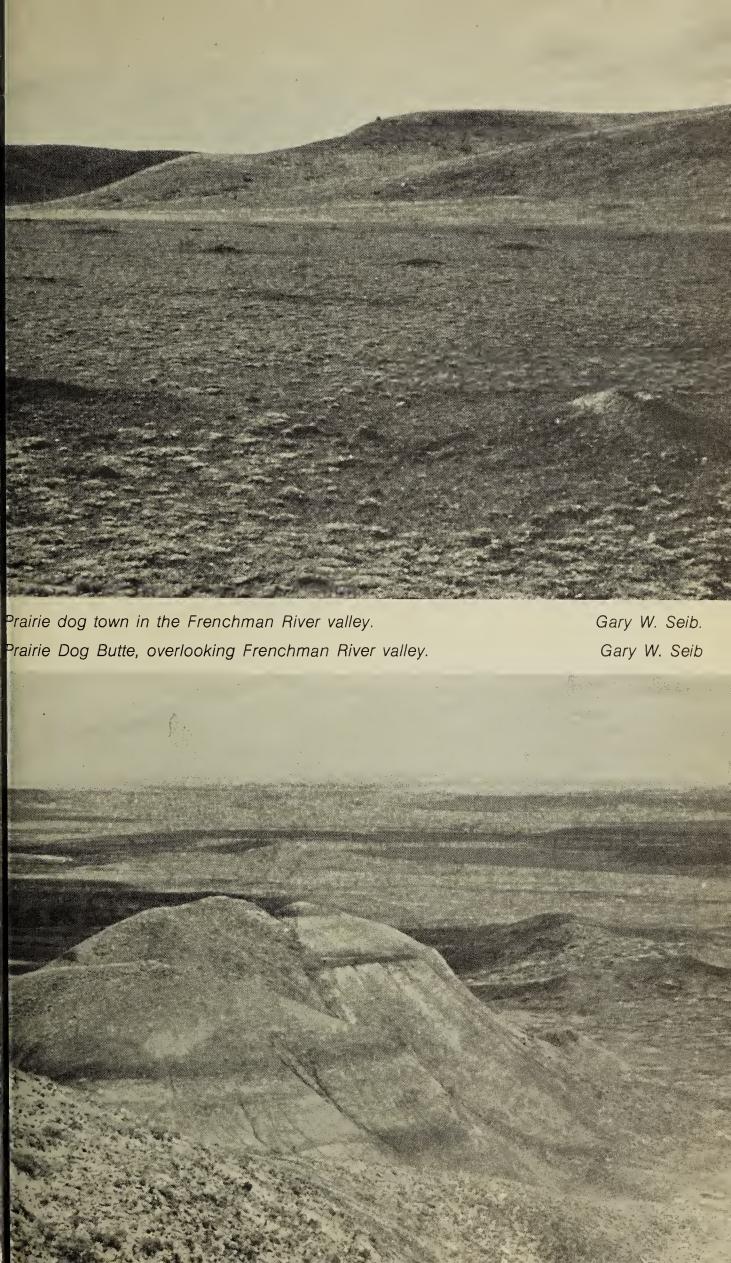
There will be no expropriation of land. Parks Canada may only acquire land through the voluntary sale process, and the federal government will pay relocation costs to any vendor who has sold his land to Parks Canada. Canada will pay 100% of the costs of acquiring leasehold interests and relocation costs. It will pay 50% of the cost of acquiring freehold lands and existing mineral rights, and Saskatchewan will pay the other 50%, transferring their freehold interests to Canada at no cost.

Under a separate agreement, Sask-atchewan has five years, subject to approval from Canadian and Saskatchewan environmental authorities, to conduct and complete an oil and gas exploration program. At the end of this time the province must identify for the park a minimum of 100 square miles, with at least 36 square miles in each of two core areas. Where oil and/or gas reserves are discovered, these lands will



signing. Left to right: Ralph Goodale, Sen. Hazen Argue, Reg Gross, John Kowalchuk. Gary W. Seib







Clay hilltop, Killdeer Badlands, Grasslands Park.

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not be immediately available to Parks Canada. Cost of the oil and gas exploration programs will be shared on a 50/50 basis up to a maximum of approximately 10.6 million 1981 dollars. Saskatchewan will reimburse the federal government from net profits for its financial contribution if oil and gas are produced. Once Saskatchewan has identified lands for the park, neither the province nor the government of Canada will explore or exploit any minerals, oil or gas which may be there.

Existing water use agreements and international commitments will be honored. Where landowners' and lessees' access roads are cut off by the park boundaries, Canada will provide alternative access routes to the nearest public road.

Both the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan have agreed to form a federal/provincial consultative committee to make decisions on the development and maintenance of the park, including grazing administration, fire protection, road maintenance and other areas of management. Saskatchewan agreed to manage the propos-

ed park areas to maintain their existing natural state prior to transfer of the land to Canada.

The establishment of the Grassland National Park sets aside the first representative portion in North America of the original short-grass prairie. The park will preserve the area so the present and future generations can experience its grandeur, beauty an solitude.

Naturalists worked long and hard bring the park into being, but must n now rest on their accomplishmer Initially the park will be small, only 10 square miles, and that is at least five years away. It will take more years grow to its 350 square mile size, ar during that time we must be involved the master planning process to ensuthat the park fulfills its potential to preservation of a unique area.

We congratulate the governments Canada and Saskatchewan on reaching the agreement for the park, and was them that we will be following their attions with renewed interest in the conting years.