

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

FIELD WORK OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF CANADA, 1930

THE National Museum of Canada, in continuance of a fixed policy of conducting investigations among the aboriginal inhabitants of the country and of making zoological and botanical surveys, will have ten parties in the field during the summer of 1930. The National Museum profits also from the field work of the Geological Survey. Between the two institutions there is the closest cooperation, and the mineralogical and geological sections of the museum are assembled and maintained by the Geological Survey.

In the realm of anthropology efforts are being made to conduct vigorous research among the Indians with a view to obtaining information from the older people regarding the customs and culture of the race uninfluenced as far as possible by contact with the whites. The longer this work is delayed the less satisfactory are the results, as Indians have shown a great readiness to adopt from European civilization anything that will serve their needs. C. M. Barbeau, who has made extensive observations on colonial influences on the Indians of eastern Canada, will continue this summer his work in certain parts of Quebec, Ontario and New York, studying modern handicrafts and designs used by the Indians and concentrating on bag-making, basket-making, wood-carving and quill and moose-hair work with a view to getting a better comprehension of the original native art and culture.

An ethnological study of the Indians living around Lake Abitibi will be undertaken by J. T. MacPherson. This will include an investigation into the economic life of the Indians in earlier times, their original material culture, their social organization and the presence or absence of totemic clans, shamanism and its connection with the puberty fast, and their religious beliefs.

The summer will be spent by I. A. Lopatin among the Indians living around Kitimat, British Columbia, and an investigation will be made of their social and religious life, special attention being given to the phratric, clan and family systems with their crests and privileges, to their government, the institution of property and the potlatch system, social customs, religious beliefs and practices including secret societies and their rites and intercourse with neighboring peoples.

Dr. J. C. B. Grant, of the University of Manitoba, will make among the Cree Indians of Wabasca and of the reserves south of Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta, a complete series of physical measurements of adults and children. This is in continuation of the anthropometric investigations that Dr. Grant has been con-

ducting among the Indians of the western interior of Canada.

Archeological excavations will be made near New-castle, New Brunswick, and on the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, by W. J. Wintenberg. It is hoped that some light will be thrown thereby on differences in handicraft between the Micmac Indians of eastern New Brunswick and those of the Nova Scotia coast. Excavations on the Magdalen Islands may reveal a southward extension of Eskimo cultural influence, evidences of which have been detected on the west coast of Newfoundland.

The biological division of the museum will have five parties in the field. Jacques Rousseau will carry on a botanical survey of parts of Nova Scotia and collect flowering plants for the herbarium. This is in connection with the preparation by Dr. M. O. Malte of a comprehensive work on the systematic flora of the Maritime provinces. Dr. H. M. Raup will complete a botanical survey which he has been conducting since 1928 of a part of Wood Buffalo Park west of Slave River.

A study of the mammals of southeastern British Columbia will be continued by H. M. Laing; collections will be made and observations recorded with regard to their distribution and the relation of distribution to variations in topographical features. Collections will also be made in Jasper Park and Rocky Mountain Park. P. A. Taverner will commence this season a thorough ornithological investigation in the vicinity of Churchill on the west coast of Hudson Bay, making observations on the migration of birds and their habitat and making extensive collections for detailed study. Jos. Rochon will spend a part of the season in collecting mammals in the vicinity of Ottawa.

The National Museum is an outgrowth of the Geological Survey and is dependent on it for exhibition material in geology, paleontology and mineralogy. Fine specimens of ores and rocks from leading mining districts are obtained by economic geologists, and invertebrate fossils by stratigraphic paleontologists. It is expected that a good collection of vertebrate fossil material will be obtained this season by C. M. Sternberg from the Peace River block. A. T. McKinnon will collect mineral and rock specimens from different parts of Ontario and Quebec. The greater part of this material will be used in preparing sets for prospectors and for educational institutions, but the choicest specimens will be added to the permanent collection of the museum.

W. H. COLLINS