The Beaver

A MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH



OUTFIT 275
DECEMBER 1944

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
Hudson's Bay Company.
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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

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Simon Fraser and John Stuart explore the canyons of the Fraser River in 1808. From the painting by John Innes in the H B C museum.

WITH FRASER TO THE SEA

by Corday MacKay

SIMON Fraser's fame as the explorer of the great river which bears his name has tended to obscure the fact that he was also, in a very real sense, the founder of the province of British Columbia. As Father Morice has said, "Sir Alexander Mackenzie had discovered the land; Simon Fraser was to establish the first trading posts therein."

To this vast empire of the west, through which he travelled and explored for years, Fraser gave the name New Caledonia. For Simon Fraser, like many of his fellow fur traders, came of Highland stock. His father had migrated to America in 1773 and settled in Vermont, where Simon was born in 1776. The next year his father joined the British cause in the Revolutionary war and died a prisoner in American hands. After peace was made in 1783, the family moved to Canada and eventually settled in the village of St. Andrews, near Cornwall, Ontario. Here Simon went to school, and in 1792, at the age of sixteen, he joined the North West Company as a clerk.

After ten years' service in the west, he became a partner or *bourgeois*. This rapid rise testifies to his abilities as a fur trader and led, no doubt, to his being chosen for the important work of establishing posts beyond the Rockies.

By 1804 sufficient exploration had been done in the new territories to make this step seem practicable. In 1793 Alexander Mackenzie had completed his journey to the Pacific. In 1797 James Finlay had gone up the Peace River and explored the branch which today bears his name. He also followed in Mackenzie's path along the Parsnip River almost to its source.

Thus the groundwork was already laid when the heads of the newly amalgamated companies, the North West and the X.Y., met at their headquarters at Fort William. Here they made their plans for a great expansion westward and chose Simon Fraser as the leader of the undertaking. Probably even at that early date the partners envisioned a broad ambitious plan: the building of posts at many strategic points, their organization into a "Western Department" and, ultimately, the discovery of a convenient water route to the Pacific. For such was to be the work of Simon Fraser. That he failed in the latter endeavour lessens not at all the heroic quality of his great achievement —the descent of the mighty Fraser to the sea.

In the autumn of 1805 Fraser travelled up Peace River and, turning south at the forks, proceeded up the Parsnip as far as its short tributary, the Pack, which Mackenzie had missed. This stream he ascended until he reached a body of water seventeen miles long, later named McLeod's Lake, after another company servant, A. R. McLeod. There he built his first post. Before freeze-up he left three men in charge and, returning to the other side of the mountains, built his second post at the lower end of Peace River Canyon near the present Hudson's Hope. This became known as Rocky Mountain Portage House.

It is at this point in the records that we meet for the first time with a strange and disturbing character, who was to prove a difficult subordinate in Fraser's subsequent travels. This is the man known as La Malice, "than whom," as Father Morice in his history

says, "few people seem to have been more aptly named." Why Fraser should have been saddled with this untrustworthy Frenchman during his momentous journey to the sea is one of the small points in the story that aggravates the curiosity of the reader. For Malice soon proved himself an unreliable rascal. Tiring of the enforced solitude of the post on McLeod's Lake where he had been left in charge, he soon abandoned his two fellow exiles and brazenly turned up at Fraser's headquarters, saying that his men were lazy and would not work. John Stuart's journal, kept at Rocky Mountain Portage House during the winter of 1805-1806, has the following entry, dated February 24: "La Malice arrived with news of abandoning post. No food."

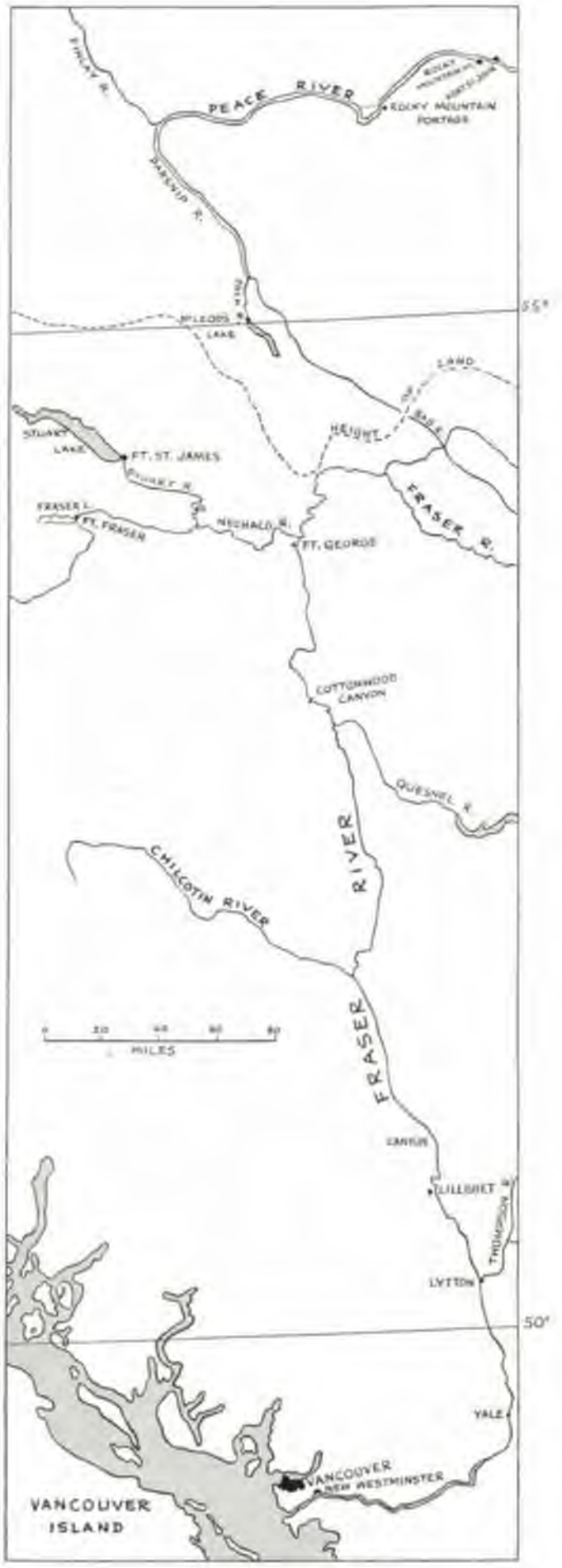
In the meantime, James McDougall, who had been sent to McLeod's Lake with supplies for that post, arrived there to find it entirely abandoned. Later, when making plans for his great adventure to the sea, Fraser was further tormented by the errant Frenchman. Father Morice, in his account of these preparations, says: "Prudence suggested as early a start as possible in May, in order to avoid the June freshets; but one of his [Fraser's] men, the truant, La Malice, did not arrive until the 17th of that month, and a woman he brought with him, and for whom he is said to have paid £300 sterling, caused still further delay. Fraser would have none of her in his expedition, and La Malice refused to go without her. Finally, his employer, short of men as he was, had to yield." Thus did domestic problems, even in the heart of the wilds, impede the march of history!

Not all of Fraser's companions were of this type. One, indeed, might be called an explorer of almost equal ability. This was John Stuart (uncle of the future Lord Strathcona), in whose honour Fraser named the beautiful lake on the shores of which one of the most important forts was soon to be built. A native Scot, three years younger than Fraser, he had joined the North West Company in 1799, and had been sent out to the Peace River district. After their famous voyage of discovery, he succeeded Fraser as superintendent of New Caledonia, and on the union with the Hudson's Bay Company, he was made chief factor in charge of the district, where he remained until 1824. He retired from the service fifteen years later.

The association between these two men, Fraser and Stuart, would make a most interesting study if only more material were available. Bryce, in his *Explorations and Settlements of the Great West*, says that "John

The new Company store at McLeod's Lake, oldest white settlement in B.C.







Simon Fraser, from the portrait in the Archives of British Columbia.



John Stuart, Fraser's second-in-command during the perilous voyage.

Stuart, though second in command of the expedition, was versed in engineering and was a more cultivated man than his leader, Simon Fraser. He is generally believed to have been the brain of the enterprise. Stuart was a man of much information and literary tastes. Far up in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, he kept in touch with the important new books, and from his lofty standpoint discoursed upon the amenities of literature in correspondence with his fellow-traders of kindred tastes."

Such was the nature of Fraser's chief assistant on his explorations. Only one other should be mentioned, for his name also was given to a place now familiar to all residents of British Columbia. This was Jules Maurice Quesnel, after whom Fraser named a river at the mouth of which he cached supplies for his historic journey.

In the spring of 1806 Fraser was relieved of his post duties at Rocky Mountain Portage House and at once prepared for a more extensive exploration. Leaving the fort on May 20, he first revisited Fort McLeod. Here he left the supplies he had brought for them and travelled on up the Parsnip River until he reached the height of land from which the waters separate and flow towards the Arctic and the Pacific. After a difficult passage of the same portages and lakes followed by Mackenzie, he embarked upon the turbulent waters of the Bad River. On July 10, 1806, he reached the waters of the "Great River" or the "Tatcoutche Tesse," known to us today as the Fraser. This, he thought, as had his forerunner in the field, was the Columbia, or one of its tributaries.

Following down this stream, he came to the mouth of the Nechaco. This river too had been missed by Mackenzie, and Fraser allows himself a sly tilt at the great man's expense. "It does not appear," he records, "to have been noticed by Sir A.M.K. as he used to indulge himself sometimes with a little sleep. Likely he did not see it and I can account for many other omissions in no other manner than his being asleep at the time he pretends to have been very exact." Stuart Lake, the Lake Nakal of the Indians, was reached on July 26, 1806, and here a fort was built which, in Fraser's early correspondence, was named Nakazleh but was later to become famous as Fort St. James. It was the first inland fort built west of the Rockies.

In August there seemed danger of a famine at the new fort, for the newcomers depended on the fish and game of the country for food. That year the salmon were extraordinarily slow in making their appearance. Therefore the commander decided to divide his forces and sent John Stuart with two men to the south. The result of this expedition was the building of a fourth fort, on Lake Natleh, which Stuart, returning the compliment already paid him by his chief, named Fort Fraser, and Fraser's Lake. Here the salmon soon proved so abundant that surfeit instead of starvation faced the explorers. Leaving a voyageur in charge of this new post, Stuart returned to Nakazleh to spend the winter with Fraser.

There were by now three forts in the new territory west of the Parsnip, and before spring more ambitious plans were made—the establishment of a post from which an attempt would be made to discover a water route to the coastal region. In a letter to McDougall, then at Fort McLeod, from "Natleh, 31st Jany, 1807," Fraser speaks of his determination to go down the "Columbia" in the spring, and outlines elaborate plans for collecting the necessary supplies by canoe and trail. His mention of the "New Road" in this letter is interesting. It apparently refers to a trail which had been cut between Nakazleh and Fort McLeod—the first highway, if such it could be called, to be built in New Caledonia.

These plans, however, proved premature, for the necessary reinforcement of men and supplies did not arrive in time. Fraser's disappointment must have been keen. It was impossible to carry out his schemes without a large force of men. He, therefore, spent the summer of 1807 diligently pursuing his tasks as a fur trader, collecting furs and establishing friendly relationships with the neighbouring Indians.

In the fall the long expected canoes arrived from the east under the charge of Quesnel and Faries. They also brought instructions from the partners at Fort William that Fraser was to commence his explorations of the "Great River" as soon as possible. For that undertaking he must, of course, wait for spring; but in the meantime he was not idle. That fall (1807), with the aid of the new men sent him from the east, he built another fort which this time would serve the dual purpose of being a centre for the fur trade and a starting point for his great venture. The confluence of the Nechaco and Tatcoutche Tesse was chosen as the site and the name, Fort George, in honour of the King, was given to it—a name that endures to this day. Hugh Faries was placed in charge.

The entry of May 22, 1808, which begins Fraser's record of his memorable journey, simply reads:

"Having made every necessary preparation for a long voyage, we embarked at 5 o'clock a.m. in four canoes at Fraser's River. Our crew consisted of nineteen men, two Indians, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel, and myself, in all twenty-four."

The story of the ensuing weeks, of almost superhuman struggles to overcome the difficulties of crag and canyon, rapid and flood, is well known in all its larger, more dramatic aspects. But a few of the more exciting passages from Fraser's account will bear repetition. The following extracts give some idea of the difficulties they met with getting through the Cottonwood Canyon above the junction of the Quesnel River:

"We found the rapid to be about 1½ mile long and the rocks on both sides the River contract themselves in some places to either 30 or 40 yards of one another; the immense body of water passes through them in a zig-zag & turbulent manner forming numerous Gulphs and whirlpools of great depths. However as it was deemed impossible to carry the Canoes; it was the general opinion that they ought to be run down; indeed there was no other alternative than either that or leaving them here. . . .

"Five of the best men embarked with only about 11 or 12 pieces, they immediately entered the rapid, but the whirlpools below the first cascade made them wheel about and they remained a considerable time without being able to move one way or the other, and every moment on the brink of eternity; however, by the outmost exertions they went down two others till between that and the fourth which is the most turbulent the eddies and whirlpools caught [hold] of the canoe and spite of them brought ashore in a moment and fortunately it was it so happened, or that they were not able to get out again for had they [gone] down the fourth cascade it would have been more than likely they would have remained there. . . .

"We went down immediately to the place they were thrown ashore which we reached with much difficulty on account of the steepness of the banks; I often supported myself by running my dagger into the ground to hold myself by it. . . ."

On June 9 the explorers came to the dread *rapide couvert*, so named from the rocks that overhang the torrent. Fraser describes it thus:

"Here the channel contracts to about 40 yards, and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height, which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water, which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity, had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were *a corps perdu* upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once launched, the die was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium, or, *fil d'eau*, that is, clear of the precipice on the one side, and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction."

Below that spot, the river became even more tumultuous, and the travellers decided they would have to cache their birch-bark canoes and proceed on foot. They were now about fifteen miles north of Lillooet. At this fortified Indian village, Fraser traded a file and a kettle for a dug-out canoe, and resumed his voyaging for a while.

There were other vexations with sick members of the crew and the ever-recurring incidents with the malevolent La Malice and his woman. At times they were near starvation, for they lived "off the country" and were entirely dependent on the good will of the Indians for their provisions of salmon, dried or fresh, and nuts or berries. At every point, in their interrogation of the natives they were told that they should turn back, for the river was absolutely impassable and the natives nearer the coast bitterly hostile. In the face of all these obstacles the indomitable Scotsmen pushed on.

On June 19 they came to the mouth of a large river flowing from the east. Fraser named it after his friend, David Thompson, whom he imagined to be established on its headwaters. Actually, Thompson was at that time on the great river that Fraser thought he was descending—the Columbia.

The voyagers were now approaching what was perhaps the most dangerous part of their journey. It is thus picturesquely described in Howay and Scholefield's *British Columbia:* "Between Lytton and Yale the Fraser forces its way through a series of deep chasms, the rocky walls of which in many places tower high above the water. The great river, swollen with melted snows, surged magnificently through the canyons. On every side rugged snow-crowned mountains, like grim sentinels, stood guard over the foaming cataracts; the banks were so steep that they could only be scaled at imminent risk. Such was the Fraser River between Lytton and Yale in flood time, in the old days before the railway. The track of the explorer lay directly through this region of wild grandeur and Titanic upheaval."

Below Black Canyon, the party had to follow the narrow Indian trails cut in the face of the canyon wall. Fraser afterwards wrote:

"We could scarcely make our way with even only our guns. I have been for a long period in the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human beings should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rocks by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of deep precipices and fastened to both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the Natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example."

On June 28 the expedition arrived at another Indian camp. Here they found a tribe of another language still, who wove fine blankets of dog's hair and wore hats of cedar bark, some brightly coloured. New canoes were obtained from this friendly people and the travellers embarked on the beautiful reaches of the lower Fraser. Several features of the magnificent country through which they travelled for the next few days which are noted in Fraser's Journal sound familiar to present day residents of that district—the "noble forests" and "great meadows," the "clouds of mosquitoes" and a "large round mountain," called by

the natives *Stremotch*, no doubt the Sumas of to-day. Everywhere they found populous native villages, the inhabitants of which appeared familiar with whites for they showed no fear of them nor of their guns.

On the 2nd of July they passed the site of the present city of New Westminster, at that time a steep hill covered with huge cedars. To-day, on the hillside, a monument to Fraser commemorates their passage. Here the river divides into four channels, and Fraser, following the North Arm, finally came in sight of the Gulf of Georgia, which had been entered and named by Vancouver in 1792.

Two great disappointments awaited Fraser, now so near the end of his perilous journey. The natives at the village of Musqueam, where he landed on July 3rd, 1808, were so hostile that he had to turn back without seeing the Pacific Ocean. Moreover, the river was not the Columbia. His entry reads simply, "I must again acknowledge my great disappointment in not seeing the main ocean, having gone so near it as to be almost within view; we besides wished very much to settle the situation by an observation of the longitude. The latitude is 49° nearly, while that of the entrance to the Columbia is 46° 20′. This river therefore is not the Columbia."

Thus the "Great River" became a "Disappointment River" for its explorer just as the great river of the north had been to its discoverer, Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

The return journey up the Fraser was not lacking in difficulties. The natives, alarmed perhaps by tales sent them by their brethren at Musqueam, continually threatened the lives of the travellers. The voyageurs were by this time nearly worn out by continual watching and paddling, and on the 6th of July they mutinied. It was only after hours of admonishing and persuading that Fraser won the victory over his rebellious crew and they resolved to stick it out. They had been thirty-five days descending the river; it took them thirty-four to make the ascent. On August the 6th the party arrived back at Fort George.

"Reviewing the whole journey," says Professor Morton in his *History of the Canadian West*, "one feels that by the test of sheer physical endurance and of the will to overcome difficulties at which the bravest might quail, the achievements of Simon Fraser must rank above those of Alexander Mackenzie." Certainly the actual dangers encountered by Fraser and Stuart were far more terrifying than those met with on either of Mackenzie's voyages. Yet today, though their names are perpetuated by river and lake, their deeds, except for a few fragments of journals and letters, are unrecorded. Similar achievements today would be accompanied by a terrific fanfare of publicity. But these men belonged not only to a more modest age, but to a silent service, noted for its application to duty and its lack of self-esteem.



Fraser's party follow the Indian trail below Black Canyon. From the painting by John Innes. Courtesy Native Sons of B.C.

HARVARD TO YORK FACTORY
IN 1888

by Franklin Remington

Fifty-six years ago, Mr. Remington, then a young man of twenty-one, journeyed to London via Winnipeg and Hudson Bay. The second stage of his journey, from York Factory to London, was described in the September 1943 Beaver. *Here he relates the adventures that befell him during his canoe trip from the mouth of the Red to the mouth of the Hayes.*

TIME, early June 1888. Footloose, no parents, just out of Harvard, with a small sum of money which I had inherited. The wanderlust hit me hard. Where away? In the library of my old home was a huge revolving globe of the world. I studied it —looked at all the fringes of civilization. Nearest one to me appeared to be in the direction of the North Pole. It began at Winnipeg.

From there on, there seemed to be nothing but rivers and lakes. Closer inspection indicated the possibility of getting to Hudson Bay by way of Lake Winnipeg and rivers, lakes and streams to the north and east of it. That settled it. Winnipeg seemed to be the jumping off place, so to Winnipeg I would go.

The announcement of my prospective trip brought various reactions from my home-town friends, complimentary and otherwise. Lifting of eyebrows and tapping of foreheads and a general conclusion that sixty days at the most would see me back again in good old Mudville. This was natural. In 1888 Americans knew as little about Hudson Bay and how to get there as they do about Central Arabia today. Much less than they do now of Central Asia or Central Africa, thanks to the great publicity given these regions. So off I went one fine morning to Hudson Bay, knowing as little as anybody else as to where it was or how to get there.

In three days I arrived at Winnipeg, the end of civilization on my globe. What a hole! It was recovering from the fever and subsequent exhaustion of a violent boom, utterly and completely deflated. Grass growing in the middle of the wide main street that led up from the railroad station.

Well, here I was at the jumping off place, but to all intents and purposes no nearer Hudson Bay than I was at home. I didn't know a soul. But Winnipeg, even in those early days, had made a reputation for itself in rowing and had sent out crews and single scullers of championship calibre. As I myself had rowed on the Harvard crew at New London two years before, I was accordingly introduced at the Winnipeg Rowing Club. My experience stood me in good stead and opened the door wide to their kindness and helpfulness.

These men were Canadians and knew their country well. They told me it was hopeless to think of going to Hudson Bay without the help of the Hudson's Bay Company. Without it I would starve. There were no maps or charts. Indian guides were a necessity. There was the language difficulty. The Indians knew no Eng-



Below: Main Street, Winnipeg, as it looked in the 1880's. The drivers of the Red River carts have doubtless entered the Winnipeg Hotel for an exchange of salutations.



Above: Main Street to-day. The Winnipeg Hotel has had its façade lifted, but is still doing business at the old stand.



Commissioner Wrigley and some of his officers at Fort Garry gate, 1887. Left to right, bottom to top: Capt. W. H. Adams, retail store manager, Winnipeg. T. R. Smith; J. Wrigley; R. Hardisty, Edmonton. Wm. Clark, who looked after Mr. Remington; Colin Rankin, Mattawa; Dr. W. M. Mackay, Lesser Slave L.; P. W. Bell, Chapleau. W. J. McLean, Lower Fort Garry; C. Sinclair, Oxford House; A. R. Lillie, Manitoba House. A. Matheson, Rat Portage (Kenora).

lish. Only at the Hudson's Bay posts could arrangements be made to get Indian guides.

The headquarters and main office of the great Hudson's Bay Company in Canada was located in Winnipeg. The Commissioner at that time was an Englishman, Joseph Wrigley, a most charming gentleman. I lost no time in calling on him. He was very courteous, but he ran true to form. What possible object could I have in going to Hudson Bay? Eight hundred and fifty miles in a small canoe through an unbroken wilderness; three hundred miles of rapids where a wrecked canoe and loss of supplies spelt finis. "Really now, Mr. Remington, go back to your hotel and think it over, and come back to me in a few days. I am sure you will think better of it, etc., etc."

After two weeks of backing and filling I got nowhere. I had about made up my mind to go anyway, when I received a telegram from a classmate of mine in Boston, who had also rowed on the same Harvard crew with me and was one of the strongest men I have ever known, stating that if I had not started for Hudson Bay he would like to join me. That settled it. I joyfully wired him to come on.

The day he arrived I had everything ready—a brand new Peterborough basswood eighteen-foot canoe, Winchester 45-90, blankets and minimum of equipment. I called on the Commissioner, thanked him for all his kindness, told him of the arrival of my friend and that we were pushing off at daybreak the following morning. He seemed greatly surprised, hoped I wouldn't regret it and wished me good luck.

Next morning bright and early we loaded our canoe and shoved off for Hudson Bay. Paddled thirty miles down the Red River to the little village of Selkirk. As we grounded our canoe on the beach a tall, fine looking, rather elderly man walked down to meet us. "Which of you gentlemen is Mr. Remington?" he asked. I said I was. "Well, have you really decided to go to Hudson Bay?" "Yes," I said, "we have." "Very good, then, we are going to do all we can to help you. My name is Clark. I am the chief factor of the region you are going into, and the Commissioner has instructed me to see that you start off properly equipped with letters to our people."

He took us to a house not far away. The first thing he said was, "Have you any money? If you have you had better turn it over to me. It won't be of any use to you. The beaver skin is the medium of exchange and the Indians don't know what money means. I will give you a letter of credit which will be good for supplies at any Hudson's Bay post and you can cash the balance when you come out." We did as he suggested, keeping a small amount of American money in bills which I sewed into the watch pocket of my trousers. Our chief factor could not have been nicer and gave us no end of good advice.

We found a small schooner was going a short distance to a trading post on Lake Winnipeg, so we put our canoe aboard and took passage. Arriving there, the Hudson's Bay Company agent found us an Indian guide who said he could guide us to the Hudson's Bay post at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, about two hundred and fifty miles away.

So we shoved off. It was like skirting the ocean. The lake in places is over sixty miles wide. Storms come up quickly and unexpectedly and raise enormous waves. At times we were wind bound and couldn't move. The eastern shore—the only one we could see—was densely wooded and consisted of a series of points ten to twelve miles apart with deep bays between. The temptation of course was to short cut these bays and go from point to point.

Several days of paddling brought us to the head of the lake, where the Nelson River starts to flow to Hudson Bay. The lake, or mouth of the river, here is about five miles wide. We had to cross at this point. Everything seemed propitious. Our course was almost due north. We were about half way over when suddenly, out of the blue, down swooped one of the dreaded northers they have in those regions. We could see it coming over the water and we knew we were in for it. It hit us hard and in five minutes it was blowing an icy gale. We knew we had to dig as we had never dug before if we were going to make shore. I was in the bow and of course setting the stroke, the Indian in the stern, my partner on the middle thwart. "Got to stick 'em faster, Frank, or we'll never get there!" my partner Bill sang out. I raised the stroke and thanked God that behind me was the strongest man in the Harvard crew.

I was watching the shore to see what progress we were making, but to my horror found we were making none. It was physically impossible to keep this up much longer. Three hundred miles of open water lay behind us. Suddenly Bill shouted, "My God, the Indian's quit." I looked around. He had. His paddle was in the bottom of the canoe and he sat there in the stern with his arms folded. He just looked at us, shrugged his shoulders and shook his head. As far as he was concerned, it was all over. He guessed wrong. Partner Bill turned around while I did my best to balance the canoe, raised his paddle high in the air over the Indian's head and pointed to his paddle. It didn't take him long to decide. He picked up his paddle and we went to work again.

Slowly, inch by inch, we gained. Those gruelling, heart-breaking four mile races at New London, and the preparation for them, stood us in good stead now. The inches grew into feet and the feet into yards as we gradually got in under the protection of the bank on the other shore. At last came the grating sound of the bow on the beach, but we were too gone to get out. In five minutes or so we crawled out and lay on the shore, and no Simmons Beauty Rest ever felt as good to me as that strip of sand. A kettle of hot tea—the best bracer ever made for muscle-tired humanity—soon had us on our feet again.

Later on, sitting around the camp fire in the evening, we asked Poor Lo why he had given up the struggle on the way over. He shook his head. All he would say was, "Many Indians die that way." Poor Lo; good man, but a bit shy in the guts.

The next day we made Norway House, one of the largest Hudson's Bay Company's posts. Many Indians were camped about. A few days before had been Treaty Day, when the Canadian government, in accordance with a treaty made with the local Indians in 1875, distributed blankets, clothing, foodstuffs, etc., to them. Comical lads, these Indians. If in the shuffle one of them drew down three or four shirts and two or three coats, he put them all on, one on top of the other. The "pièce de résistance" was what they called a capote—sort of a double breasted frock coat made of heavy blue broadcloth, with shiny brass buttons down the front and a large hood which one could pull over one's head. This went on top of everything else.

Here we discovered what mosquitoes could be like. The humming in the woods sounded like the subdued noise of a factory in operation. Two oxen, brought there with great effort over the ice from Winnipeg, had recently died while apparently in good health. An autopsy revealed that they had been choked to death by breathing mosquitoes. Solid balls of mosquitoes were found in their windpipes.

Most of the inhabitants of those Hudson's Bay posts—and there were a very large number of them scattered over northern Canada—were Scotch. They had been born and brought up in the business. Many of them had never been in to civilization, and spoke of going to Canada as though it was a foreign country. At least it was so fifty years ago. The wife of the factor of Norway House, a woman in her fifties, was born at some post on the Yukon and had spent all her life either on the Yukon or the Nelson River. She had never been to what she called Canada and knew nothing of modern civilized appliances.

We were most hospitably treated at Norway House and spent several days there. We were given head nets to protect us from mosquitoes, without which life would have been a burden. Here we parted with Poor Lo and took on two Indians who were to guide us for the next two hundred miles. These lads had their treaty money on their backs, shirt on top of shirt, several of them, topped off with the blue frock coat and shiny brass buttons. It was all right at night, for they slept under the canoe, but they sweated mightily by day.

At least a thousand shirts and half as many coats and capotes must have been represented in the miscellaneous crowd of Indians, Scotch and French Canadians assembled on the beach to bid us *bon voyage*. We paddled down the Nelson River a short distance, when we came to the mouth of the Echimamish. We went up this river to its source, the river getting smaller and smaller until it was nothing but a narrow creek with bushes on either side. At the head of navigation is a large flat rock. This is the divide. We carried our canoe over this rock into waters which flow into Hudson Bay.

In due course we arrived at Oxford House, a small post of the Hudson's Bay Company on Oxford Lake. There we changed guides for two who knew the way to the coast. They were an odd pair. One was quite old, a medicine man. Claimed to be in touch with the spirits of the rivers and lakes. We got into trouble at once.

Norway House in the 80's, at treaty time. Note the Canadian flags on the tents and the schooner. The flag with the Company coat-of-arms (now used only by the Governor) shows that Chief Factor Belanger—seen below the left hand tent—was in residence.





Shooting rapids on the way to York Factory. **Wallace Kirkland, Jr.**

On the afternoon of the day we left Oxford Lake, just about the time to look about for a good camping site for the night, we ran across a good sized encampment of Indians. They were evidently friends of our Indians and a lively conversation started up. The shore Indians wanted our Indians to stop and spend the night there. Our Indians couldn't speak a word of English, but soon got over to us in sign language that this was the place to camp. We didn't like the idea. We were hundreds of miles from anywhere. We had rifles and equipment and a canoe, which could not fail to excite their envy and cupidity. It would mean a night of watchful waiting. It wasn't worth it. We wigwagged to go on. They shook their heads. Encouraging shouts came from the bank. Protests in sign language from our men. Equally strong ones from us. To settle the matter, we started paddling the canoe ourselves away from the camp. Our Indians said nothing and did nothing. They put their paddles in the bottom of the canoe and never touched them again for two hundred miles. They lapsed into a dark, deep abysmal grouch. It was a sit-down strike with a vengeance.

Ordinarily, it was their job, when we landed, to put up the tent, cut firewood, start the fire, carry up supplies, etc. They did nothing. A quick getaway on their part in the canoe that night would have left us in a nice mess; so we put the paddles under us and slept with one eye open. Next morning it was no different. They paid no attention to orders. Simply ignored us. We got our own breakfast, broke camp, loaded the canoe and beckoned them to come. They came all right; but did they paddle? Not a bit. They sat themselves down in the bottom of the canoe amidships, and we paddled them for two hundred miles down the Hayes River until something happened which brought them to their senses and they couldn't do enough for us.

The worst of it was that we were now in fast water, one rapid succeeding another. Fortunately, both of us were pretty good in a canoe and well up in the technique of the game. Being the lightest, I was in the bow, Bill in the stern. It was his job to pick the general direction to take in approaching a rapid, mine to avoid the rocks and boulders immediately ahead of us. It was hair-raising stuff. Our passengers, while seemingly in a coma, kept their weather eyes peeled for fear we would dump them. Several times Old Boy Medicine Man would sit up quickly, wave his arms and point in another direction when we were headed for the wrong channel. Two or three times we jumped overboard and held the canoe when I saw we were headed into trouble which we couldn't avoid.

Every day was packed with thrills. The grand climax came at the end of two hundred and fifty miles. By the distant roar we judged we were approaching the biggest rapid of all. The Indians shook their heads and pointed to the bank at the head of the rapids.

We drew up on the shore. All hands got out. The Indians sat down. We walked on down stream to a point where we could get a full view of the whole rapid. There was a sharp drop all right, and the water was running fast, but what made all the roar and fuss was a huge rock which rose high out of the water about half way across. The rest of the rapid did not seem to us any worse than some we had already come through. The whole thing hung on avoiding the rock. There was plenty of water in the river and we figured that, by hugging the other side and paddling hard, we could fight the drag to the centre and come clear. We decided to try it, and went back to the canoe. The Indians were giving a good imitation of their wooden cigar-store ancestors.

We unloaded the canoe and sign-languaged them to take the stuff and meet us at the other end. Then they woke up. They shook their heads. They pointed at the rapid. They pantomimed us dead and buried, they belched up their Cree language by the mouthful. Something was stirring their very innards. When they



Arrival of the annual ship at York Factory in the 1880's. From "Picturesque Canada."

seemed to realize that all this show was being wasted on us, Old Boy Medicine Man came up to me very solemnly, put both his hands on my shoulders and looked me straight in the eyes. He then slowly shook his head three or four times. I must say for a second or two he had me a bit jittery.

Looking back upon it, I suppose we did a pretty foolish thing; but the sullen, sulky behaviour of these two Indians had stirred in us such a spirit of hatred and resentment we could hardly keep our hands off them, and we vowed that, when the time came that we were no longer dependent on them to guide us, we would give them the beating of their lives. We had such contempt for them, we felt after looking at the rapid that this was a good time and opportunity to show them something. This probably was the inner motive which actuated both of us.

We jumped in and shoved off and made for the other side. Our calculations proved correct. We missed the rock, but we struck the first big wave at the foot of the drop with such an impact that it knocked me backwards and nearly swamped our canoe. Knowing that there is always a back current along the bank under such conditions, I slipped my paddle forward, gave it a twist and shot us over into the back current, which permitted us to land, rid the canoe of water and continue on down to the foot of the rapid. There we met our Indians; but they were not the same Indians. They were all smiles. They shook our hands. Old Boy Medicine Man came as near to giving me a hug as I imagine an Indian ever does.

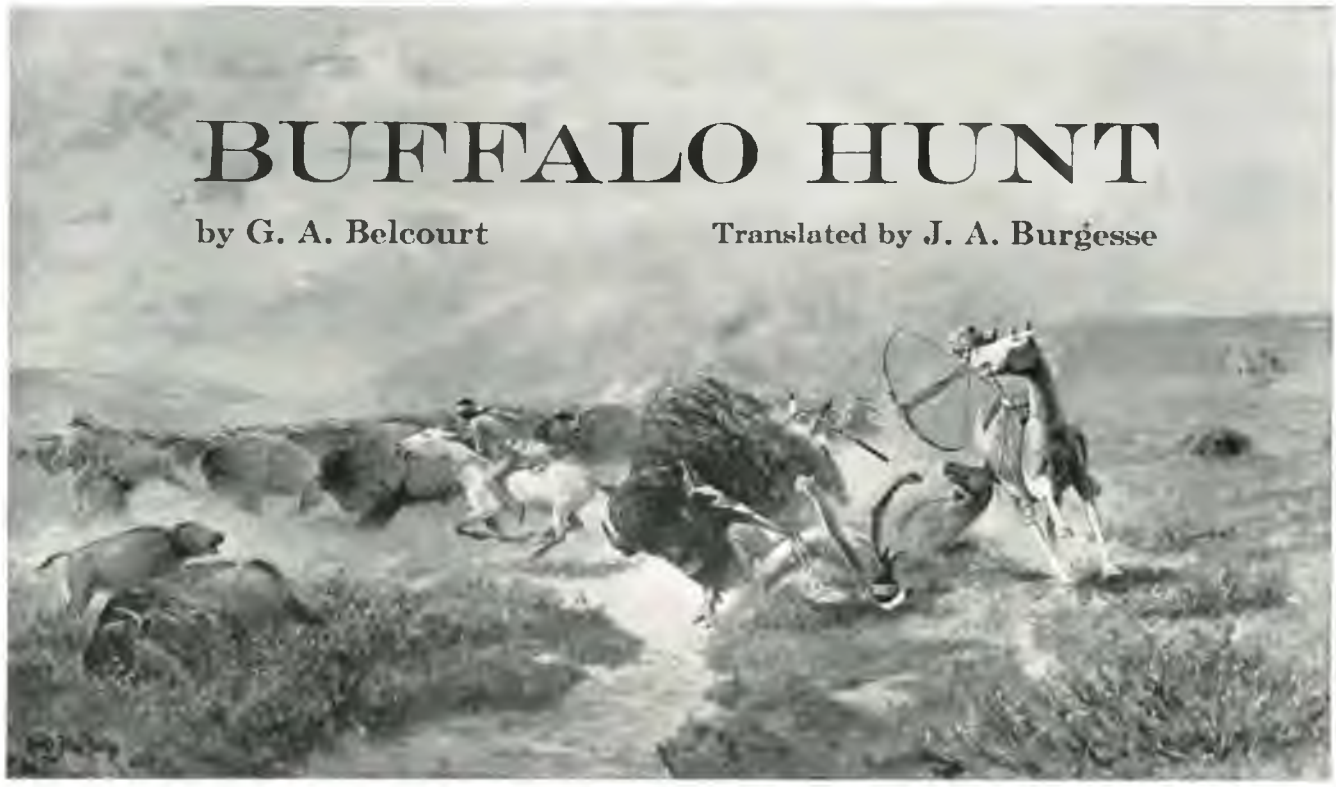
They wouldn't allow us to paddle any more. That was the last rapid. From then on the river flowed smoothly and silently to the sea. When we halted about six o'clock to make camp for the night our Indians outdid themselves. They cooked us a fine supper, and then came the climax. It was a gorgeous night. The moon was full. The faintest breeze rippled the water. They took the blankets and spread them in the bottom of the canoe. They made pillows of the duffle bags. They led us to the canoe and motioned to us to get in and lie down. We did, and they paddled us all night long while we smoked and dozed and chatted and wondered whether it wasn't all a dream. The reason for their change of heart we learned later when we got to York Factory.

Shortly after we arrived, the Scottish factor came to us considerably excited. "Your Indians," said he, "say you ran the Rock Rapid. Is that true?" "Which one is that," we asked. "The last one," said he. "Yes, we did." "Good God," said he, "that's never done. You can thank your stars you're alive. The last time one of our big Hudson's Bay boats came down with nine men in it they were all drowned. They are buried there now on the bank." As a matter of fact, I did notice some small crosses on the bank near the foot of the rapids. . . .

From York Factory, the author and his friend worked their way on the Hudson's Bay ship across to London. This part of their journey was described in The Beaver *for September 1943.*

BUFFALO HUNT

by G. A. Belcourt — Translated by J. A. Burgesse



"When the Blackfeet Hunt," a painting by John Innes in the H B C museum at Winnipeg.

Father Georges Antoine Belcourt came to the West from Quebec in 1831, and three years later founded a mission for the Saulteaux at St. Paul, on the Assiniboine about thirty miles from Fort Garry. In the 1850's he composed his celebrated French-Saulteaux dictionary, the manuscript of which is in the Archives at St. Boniface. He returned to the East in 1859, where he died in 1874. Of an extraordinary versatility, he organized a bank, and invented a horseless carriage in which he travelled the roads of Prince Edward Island. The following letter to "M.C." was published at Quebec in 1847 as part of a report on missions.

St. Paul, November 25th, 1845

MY dear friend, I can now speak with some knowledge of the manner in which the buffalo is hunted in this country, having had the opportunity of taking part in one of these expeditions. However, before beginning, I must explain that the fall hunt attracts the fewest hunters, and for the following reasons. Some of the Halfbreeds cannot afford to winter in the settlement so that, during the cold season, they go off into the interior where they live on deer, moose and bear. Others keep to the rivers and lakes in order to hunt fur bearers as well as buffalo. The result is that but a third of our men are available for the [organized] buffalo hunts.

Last summer's hunt was pitiful, for after having suffered the rigours of a long march under a burning sun, all the men returned with but a quarter of their accustomed loads. This was due more to a lack of unity among them than to the scarcity of game. Also, many of them had quite lost all ambition. However, their spirits revived as soon as word got around that a priest was to accompany them [on the next excursion]. At St. Boniface and White Horse Plains preparations were pushed to completion with renewed vigour and, one after the other, the hunters set out until, finally on November 9th, I departed in my turn. The rallying point was Pembina—not the old post, but another about a day's march further on. Here I arrived on the third day after leaving.

From the summit of a hill, 200 feet above the river, I looked down upon our camp of about 60 lodges. There it lay, in the very centre of the prairies across which wound our waggon train of some 300 horses and over a hundred oxen. Beyond were the younger hunters, returning along the river bank to camp, loaded with game. Closer in, a group of children could be seen coming home from their fishing. Carts wove a criss-cross pattern throughout the camp as they transported, thither and yon, such things as fire-wood, spare axles, lodge poles, drying frames and hide-stretchers. All these articles were important parts of our equipment, for we were leaving behind us the woodlands and heading into the boundless prairies.

On the 14th we struck camp and scaled the heights which lay before us, under a hot sun. From the top, we had a fine view of these endless prairies as they rolled on, wave upon wave, like a mighty ocean, as far as the Missouri; or even, I dare say, to the Rocky Mountains.

The time had now come when we must make up our minds as to what direction we should next take. Seeing that the hunters from the Red River had not joined us, we felt that we ought not to skirt the mountains in that direction lest we cause them trouble by beating up the buffalo in front of them. On the other hand, it was

known that a number of Halfbreeds were wintering in the Turtle and Souris Rivers country and, consequently, we could not hope for any great hunting in that neighbourhood. We decided, therefore, to take a middle course and work down to the SSE. changing later to SSW. This route would bring us via Lac des Branches, Buttes des Trous, Devil's Lake, the Little Forks of the Sheyenne, Lac du Bois Blanc and Maison du Chien. Public notice was given of our intention, the guides were appointed, and off we set.

Our 213 carts, some of which were hauled by horses and others by oxen, were formed into three columns, and each of these columns was much longer than would be supposed by one who did not know that each one of them had a number of fifteen or eighteen foot poles tied on top of it.

In the meantime, the mounted members of our band had scattered off into the interior and were lost to view until evening when they would rejoin us at a previously agreed upon camping place. As does an experienced navigator upon the ocean, these children of the prairies can travel all day long through hills and vales which an unaccustomed eye cannot distinguish one from the other, and yet arrive in the evening, often enough after darkness has fallen, at the appointed rendez-vous.

We camped early and awaited the reports of the scouts in eager expectation. The first to appear was my own huntsman. He had seen no buffalo but, in revenge, he had shot down a couple of cranes, one of which measured eight feet three inches between the wing tips. These birds feed on roots which they dig up with their beaks. When they are wounded they are redoubtable adversaries. Raising their heads to about the height of a man, they chase after the hunter and attempt to gouge out his eyes. Indian children have been known to have been disembowelled by these ferocious birds.

When night fell all save two of the scouts had returned and had reported fresh tracks. Next day these good reports were more numerous and, about ten o'clock, the two young men who had spent the night on the prairies arrived with a load of fresh meat. Towards evening this article was quite plentiful. But the meat of the bull buffalo is not very agreeable to the palate, nor is it easy to digest. The tongue, which is the best morsel, was served to me for, as they told me, "you are not accustomed to this meat and would catch *mal de boeuf* if you ate any other part." As can be imagined, *mal de boeuf* is nothing but indigestion. This meat seems to have the consistency of boot-leather and the hunters, glowing as they are with health, do not give themselves the trouble of masticating it. Thus they are often its dupes. However, we expected to catch up with the cows next day.

I joined the hunters who were giving vent to their exuberance in a very noisy manner, and we had not ridden very far before we caught sight of a herd of bulls. They can be recognized, quite easily, from a distance because of their habit of keeping farther apart, one from the other, than do cows. We approached at a brisk trot to within seven or eight arpents* while they continued to graze peaceably. Then we pulled up our horses to a walking pace, for they do not stampede until the very last minute when approached quietly.

Nevertheless, apparently not very pleased to see us, they showed some signs of ill humour. Some stamped their hooves, tossing up clouds of dust. Others rolled on the ground like horses, jumping to their feet again with all the agility of a hare. A few, apparently more conscious of their dignity, watched us fixedly and let escape, from time to time, sharp, hollow bellows. The sharp, jerky twitching of their tails left no doubts that they found our presence just as disagreeable as did their fellows.

The signal is given! We whip up our chargers and the dense, heavy mass before us breaks and flees with surprising speed and lightness. Several buffalo are bowled over by the first shots. Others, mortally wounded and furious, stand at bay, tearing up the ground with their horns or stamping their hooves like rams. From beneath their tight, tangled poll locks their eyes are seen to sparkle with rage, bidding the most intrepid of hunters to keep his distance.

This chase, which lasted a scant half hour, was scarcely over when we perceived a cloud of dust rising from beyond a small hill, a few miles away. I had hardly time to demand what this could mean before each man leaped into his saddle and galloped off, crying, "The cows! The cows!" They did not even wait to cut out the tongues of the dozen or so big bulls which lay dead upon the prairie. Soon all the horsemen had gained the heights from which had come the signal.

I had hoped that I would be close to this scene, which had been announced with so much assurance, when I reached the spot. What was not my surprise when, no matter in what direction I turned my gaze, nothing could be seen! Presently, a number of dots,

*An arpent equals 64 yards.

A Metis Red River cart brigade sets out for the buffalo hunt. From a sketch of William Armstrong's by courtesy of J. P. Turner.





Drying buffalo meat after the hunt. From a sketch by William Armstrong. Courtesy J. P. Turner.

which appeared to be trees, were pointed out to me. Our hunters had recognized them to be not trees, nor bulls, but cows.

The hunters now gathered at this point numbered fifty-five and their horses seemed to share the joy and ardour of their riders. It was difficult to curb the steed, but more so to curb the master. The secret of a successful buffalo hunt is to approach quietly to within two gunshots' distance of the prey. If, as happens often enough when there is no one around to take charge, the better horses are given free rein, the weaker are unable to overtake the quarry. Discord, quarrels, bad feeling and all their consequences are the result.

Instinct causes the buffalo to mass together when attacked. The bulls, which are usually to be found at some little distance from the cows, draw together first and move off before the pursuit. As they approach the cows these, in their turn, mass together and flee before the males, but at a more rapid pace. Thus, in order to overtake the cows, one must thrust through a solid phalange of bulls—a most dangerous undertaking. Let me illustrate: Last year one of the Indians, who had been unhorsed after his mount had been knocked over by a buffalo, was tossed and gored for over a quarter of an hour by the infuriated animal. Without slackening its mad career, the brute tossed and re-tossed the unlucky hunter fifteen or twenty feet into the air, catching him each time on its horns. Some idea of the strength of the animals may be obtained from the fact that one of them, when dashing through a line of carts, caught one with its horns and sent it rolling over for two or three turns. These carts, hauled by a horse, usually carry a load of more than a thousand pounds.

Another equally serious danger to be reckoned with is that occasioned by stray bullets. From every direction they whistle through the clouds of dust in a most disconcerting manner. Recently, a fellow had his stomach pierced by a stray shot in the midst of a chase. By good fortune the wound was not fatal. On another occasion a ball struck a hunter and traversed his coat, shirt and skin, halting only when it brought up against his breast bone. We were lucky in that no serious accidents saddened our expedition. It is not surprising, therefore, that a hunter cannot help some apprehension from reflecting itself in his expression at such times.

The speed at which the guns are discharged is truly astonishing. It is not at all rare to see three buffalo knocked over by a single hunter within the space of one arpent. Some of them manage to discharge their pieces as many as five times during the course of a chase. Here is how they load: The first shot, only, is wadded down. The other balls are carried in the mouth so that they can prime their guns, pour in a charge of powder, and then spit the shot into the barrel. Saliva causes it to adhere to the powder at the bottom. In the meantime, the steed is abandoned to its own devices, but so well is it trained that the rider has but to lean to one side of the saddle or the other to make it understand his wishes which are obeyed immediately.

When the first chase was all over, and it lasted about half an hour, I counted 169 cows killed. We camped close by. Next day, 177 more were killed. On the third day a number of our riders rested up, but those who did go out brought back 114 cows to camp. On the fourth day a further 168 were brought down, making a total of 628. It might be thought that, by this time, we must have obtained enough with which to load our 213 carts. However, we required all of them, for much meat is lost by the manner in which the carcasses are dressed.

At the close of a chase, the hunter props up the dead buffalo on its knees. Then he spreads out the hind legs so that the animal is supported on its belly. To begin with, the *petite bosse* is taken off. This is a small hump, weighing about three pounds, which is found above the neck where it is attached to the main hump. Next, the hide is slit down the back and removed completely. Butchering follows.

The details of the latter operation are as follows:

1. *Depouilles*, two layers of flesh along the ribs, extending from shoulder to rump. They are separated by a thin skin or cartilage from another layer of meat which lies below them.

2. *Filets*, sinewy muscles which connect the shoulder blades to the haunches.

3. *Bricoles*, two bands of fat which descend from over the shoulder to the under part of the neck.

4. *Petits filets du cou*, small sinewy muscles found near the extremities of the filets.

5. *Dessus de croupe*, parts immediately above the flanks.

6. *Epaules*, the shoulders.

7. *Dessous d'épaule*, the layers of flesh lying between ribs and shoulders.

8. *Pis*, fatty layer extending under the belly and up the flanks. The udder is included in it.

9. *Ventre*, muscular band of flesh which supports the intestines and extends under the belly from ribs on one side to ribs on opposite side.

10. *Panse*, the stomach, which is considered by the half-breeds to be something of a delicacy.

11. *Grosse bosse*, the hump, which is highest immediately between the shoulder blades. It is composed of a number of broad, thin bones, inclined to the rear and very similar in conformation to the spines on a fish bone. This morsel has a delicious taste.

12. *Gras* or *Suif*, the suet from the interior of the carcass.

13. *Plats-côtes*, or cutlets.

14. *Croupe*, the rump.

15. *Brochet*, meat which covers the stomach.

16. *Langue*, the tongue.

All else is left to the wolves.

To dress and butcher one of these animals is quite an arduous task, but our folk go to it with a will and skill truly astonishing. Some of them have been known to kill and dress ten buffalo, without any assistance, in less than ten hours. Since the heat tries them sorely, they are careful to bring a small keg of water along with the "meat carts," as we call those wagons which come out to the hunting grounds in order to transport the meat back to camp. Did they not take this precaution they would suffer horribly from thirst. In order to allay this torment, to some extent, they are accustomed to chew the raw cartilages found in the nostrils of the buffalo. When hungry they eat the kidneys, after first having pickled them in the animal's gall. I am told that some of them do not even take this trouble and swallow the kidneys raw.

The meat is cut up by the women, who work it between their palms into long strips about a quarter inch thick, which they hang upon a sort of frame as if they were so many pieces of laundry. The frames consist of a number of horizontal rows of wooden slats supported on tripods. After two or three days upon the frames, the meat is quite dried. It is then rolled up and the choicer pieces are packed into bundles weighing sixty or seventy pounds each. The rest, after first being dried to a crisp over a hot fire, is laid out upon a hide and pounded into a powder. Melted fat is poured on the meat and the whole worked up with shovels into a uniform mass. Afterwards this mixture is packed into raw-hide sacks, from which no one has even troubled to remove the hair. These sacks are known as *taureaux* (bulls) or pemmicans. When the fat used is taken from the udder, they are called *taureaux fins* (fine bulls). Sometimes dried fruits, such as pears and cherries, are included in the mixture, and sacks so treated are called *taureaux à grains* (berry bulls). According to the local gastronomes, the first kind is good, the second better, and the third the very best. In order to illustrate by how much this process reduces the weight of the meat, I would mention that a cow buffalo furnishes only sufficient pemmican for half a *taureau* and three-quarters of a bundle of jerked meat. The most experienced hunters reckon that eight or ten cows are required to make up a cart load.

Parchment is obtained from the hides by drying them on stretchers and scraping the inner sides with a sharpened bone. The hair is removed with a small sharp tool specially intended for this purpose. This, also, is the work of the women. The men crack and boil the bones so as to extract the marrow, which is in much demand for frying. It is stored in the animals' bladders, and the marrow from two cows is needed to fill a bladder, weighing about twelve pounds.

On the 25th we encamped at the Sheyenne River, the longest branch of the Red, and here we encountered an immense herd of cow buffalo. In the space of about a square arpent [seven and a half acres] I counted 220 animals, and the country all around, on both sides of the river, was similarly covered as far as the eye could see. One can judge from this, if indeed such a thing is at all possible, what is the wealth of these prairies. Is it not deplorable that He who furnishes their daily bread to so many tribes should not yet be recognized by them? The Christian Halfbreeds are few, as compared to the many other bands who depend on hunting for their subsistence.

As I accompanied the hunters, almost always, when they left camp to hunt, I witnessed a rather perilous situation in which some of them found themselves during the course of the first chase in this neighbourhood. Having dashed off in pursuit of a numerous herd of cows, they were in full career, in the very midst of the herd, when they arrived suddenly at the brink of a steep, rock-strewn cliff. Over they went, pell-mell—hunters, horses and buffalo—in such confusion that it is difficult to explain why some were not killed, crushed against the rocks or trampled beneath the hooves of the following horde. Only one man was knocked unconscious, and he soon recovered. A couple of horses were lamed and a few buffalo had their legs broken. The hunters who had been un-horsed jumped quickly back into their saddles, with reassuring cries, and took up the chase once more, cracking their whips with a will in an endeavour to make up for lost time. The buffalo, of course, had not waited for them. After making quite certain that no-one had been hurt badly, I continued after the hunt. I overtook the others on a level stretch of prairie where I managed to knock over a cow. Though I was tempted to continue, I contented myself with this, for I saw no point in exposing myself to further danger, or reproach.

We arrived at this camp on October 2nd and remained until the 16th. All this time the buffalo were in abundance around us. A heavy snowfall occurred on the 10th and the mercury fell to five degrees below



A magnificent specimen of a bull buffalo. National Parks Bureau.

zero [freezing] on the Réaumur scale. In consequence the lake froze solidly during the two days following. However the weather became more temperate after six days and the snow disappeared. This cold spell did not interrupt our work. On the contrary the men worked night and day, fearing they might be caught by an early winter. The laziest among them did not spare themselves lest their more diligent companions finish their loading and depart without them.

I did not leave these herds without obtaining some knowledge of the size and conformation of the animals. As in other species, the male buffalo is bigger than the female. Its horns can scarcely be seen, so hidden are they beneath the mass of hair which covers the head and part of the neck, giving the beast a most strange appearance. The cow, on the other hand, is not provided with this mane and her horns can be seen without difficulty from a distance. I measured a medium sized bull and found him to have a girth of eight feet nine inches, a length of nine feet two inches, twenty inches from muzzle to top of forehead, tail one foot three inches, and fourteen inches between the eyes. The longest bone in the hump measured twenty inches and was inclined to the rear, making an angle of twenty degrees with the back-bone.

Although calves can be captured and tamed more easily during the summer season, I wished to see what could be done during this excursion. One of the hunters ran down and captured a calf with a lassoe, but it died after five or six days. They told me that this was due to its having run too hard; but I really think that it fretted to death, for it refused to eat anything at all. In the spring the calves are tamed quite easily and are very useful when domesticated. A farmer who had broken one to the plough had no difficulty at all in doing all his ploughing with this one animal alone.

At length, on October 16th, we departed, our 55 hunters having killed, and loaded on to the carts, some 1776 cow buffalo. The whole, calculated at the most moderate market prices, was worth a little more than seventeen hundred pounds sterling. The expenses of the expedition and the wages of the hired men not exceeding two hundred pounds, there remained fifteen hundred pounds earned by 55 hunters in the space of less than two months, from day of departure to date of return.

* * * * * *

On the return journey we had to head north and a ten days' march lay ahead of us. During all this time we could not make any fire though the thermometer registered three or four degrees below zero Réaumur, for we were short of fire-wood. The size of our loads had prevented us from bringing along any fuel.

On the 22nd, accompanied by a Halfbreed who, like myself, had two good spare horses, I pushed ahead of the party. Being at lat. 48° N, long. 99° 3′ W, we had to head NNE. At two in the afternoon we encountered a party of English Halfbreeds who were going out to seek fresh meat in the Lac des Roches region. From time to time, throughout the day, we saw big herds of cows and bulls. That evening we encamped, without either fire or water, in a frigid temperature. We dared not eat anything lest, in so doing, we aggravate our thirst. In short, our situation was such that we were not tempted to linger under our blankets any longer than absolutely necessary. Next morning the sunrise discovered us at the Pembina River, five or six leagues from where we had slept. On the 23rd, we made camp at Rivière aux Ilets de Bois and at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 24th I arrived at St. Paul, which is situated at lat. 50° N, long. 96° 40′ W of Greenwich.

I am, etc.

G. A. Belcourt, Missionary priest.



The fire of twigs is laid under the kettle in the porch.

Story and Photographs

by D. B. Marsh

The inland Eskimos pay for their precious tea not only in fox skins, but also in backbreaking toil and numbing cold.

FORTY below outside, and a howling blizzard blowing. It is very cold in this beehive-shaped house of snow. No blubber lamps here with their soft yellow light and their gentle warmth. They belong to the coastal Eskimos, and have never been used by these people who live inland, miles from salt water.

Even in this great igloo twenty-eight feet in diameter there is no heat, save of course that which emanates from our bodies and the bodies of the puppies who keep wandering around the floor looking for something to eat; and that heat doesn't seem to raise the temperature of the igloo even a fraction of a degree.

Here we sit, three men, two women, two children and myself; squatting on our heels on the sleeping bench with our arms drawn into our inner coats, backs hunched up, hoods drawn over our heads, moving only now and then to retuck the empty sleeves of our caribou-skin parkis under our elbows, and so cut off the draught which is only too plainly to be felt when the ends flap free.

It is a long while since anyone spoke, and the glances which are thrown at the door every so often show that the thoughts of everyone are with the woman in the porch, hoping and hoping that her fuel will last out until the kettle boils and the tea is made.

I can just picture her as, huddled against the snow bench, she thrusts willow twigs into the fire's hungry maw, and every time the flame dies down, bends and blows till she is red in the face—the red embers glow, and the flickering flame catches the new fuel, throwing her face and figure into sharp relief. I can see the tears as they stream from her red-rimmed lids and course down her dirty, smoke-stained cheeks, leaving furrows of comparatively light brown skin behind them. I can smell the acrid smoke of the willow twigs which are being burnt as fuel, and can see it billowing into her face before it swirls round and eddies up the snow chimney, to be caught in the onward sweep of the Arctic blizzard and in a flash be lost to sight.

I can see that red glow in my mind's eye, yet I stay here for, cold as I am, yet am I warmer than in that porch; for that fire will boil the kettle but will give almost no heat around it.

What toil there is represented in that fast-dwindling bundle of twigs! Weary, backbreaking toil: the jumping on the hard snow, the beating apart the lumps which cling to the smaller twigs, the scratching with mitted hands to clear away the soft, sugar-like snow, and then the cutting of the six or eight-inch long twigs, one by one. Then the gathering together of the

Gathering fuel in summer from the barren lands.





This bundle of sticks being lowered through the igloo's entrance will soon go up in smoke.

The fire of twigs burns brightly on top of a snow block.



pitifully small bundles into one larger bundle, the tying of this and the lifting of it onto the back of the weary wood gatherer, and lastly the long tramp home in the dusk. Then the arrival home with the knowledge that most, if not all, of her labour will go up in smoke before she has even a cup of tea.

For a moment my thoughts jump to Toronto, fourteen hundred miles away, and I think of the gas, coal and electric stoves in the homes there. What a far cry from civilization back to primitive man. The cost in labour of between twenty or thirty pounds of twigs with which to boil a kettle, and the requisite amount of coal, gas or electricity for the same task.

Creak . . . Creak . . . Bang! I awake with a start from dreams of warm houses in Toronto, and see walls of snow—and feel cold. Ah, here comes the tea. That dirty, soot-encrusted kettle which was once shiny bright aluminum, I can look at it almost with affection—and the Eskimos do. To them it represents a commodity without which they would find it hard to live nowadays.

My host has stirred. A moment ago he seemed like some age-old Buddha, unmoving, as though carved from stone. Now he thrusts his arms into his sleeves and places before him a board (once the end of a condensed milk case) and on it his wife sets the teakettle. With a clatter she ranges a miscellaneous assortment of mugs close by and pours out the tea. An old caribou skin is laid on the bench in front of the tea, and on it is thrown a thigh of frozen caribou meat. On that, an axe.

"Pray eat," says my host, and I come to life. My hands find their way through the sleeves and I shift my body till I can with ease reach the axe or my mug. Frozen meat doesn't have much appeal, and thanking my host, I tell him, "Presently," and grasp my mug. It is scalding, but I hardly feel it, my hands are so cold, and as the heat begins to register I turn the mug round and round in my hands. If only there were some way of warming the backs of my fingers on the mug!

I detest boiled tea; particularly if it has been boiled ten minutes or so; but this mugful is really wonderful. As I gulp it down, a warm glow steals over me, and presently I set it down and chop myself a piece of frozen meat from the haunch in front. Before I have eaten it, I notice minute ice crystals are forming round the mug. My tea is cold! I drink it up at once, for I remember that three hours were spent in collecting those twigs, almost half an hour in carrying them home, and almost an hour in boiling the kettle. Four hours' work; and the result—one kettle of tea, which is gone in two or three minutes.

Reward of labour. A cup of scalding tea and a chunk of frozen meat, both products of the hunt.



Siren of the Seas



by Marius Barbeau

The lure of the lustrous sea otter attracted adventurers from the far corners of the earth, and led to a rapprochement between East and West.

THE fame of the sea otter has done wonders in its day. But it is now all but forgotten. Stalked by merciless enemies, this mild and human-like quadruped with webbed feet has changed from a trusting and social animal to a fugitive, ever elusive and watchful, whose fate had marked it for wanton destruction—almost to the point of extinction. Its capture is now unlawful, and it is slowly coming back in the kelp banks around wild islands in its former habitat, chiefly north of Vancouver Island, west of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and in the neighbourhood of the isolated Aleutian Islands.

The main cause of its misfortunes was the density and depth of its dark coat and silvery under-fur, which made it fit for the garments of royalty, and the pride of mandarins in the heart of the Celestial Empire.

Like the siren of antiquity, it has drawn seekers of marvels and adventures across the high seas from all parts of the world and, in the past two hundred years, it has lured them on to dire extremities—daring and courage, rapacity, plunder, murder and death.

To the Indians of Alaska and the northern Rockies, the land otter—a fresh-water cousin of the other—was gifted with uncanny powers. A siren of the lakes, it lured men on to perdition. Not a few songs tell of its irresistible appeal and its fatal cajoleries. For instance:

"The otter of the Rabbit tribe has taken possession of me. Because of you my heart is almost broken, my heart is nearly lost . . ."

"Like the water of Kanae (fire-water) the otter is a source of unexpected desire and pride, yet of ruin and desolation."

"What has become of those men whom the otter has spirited away? No longer can our eyes see them, no longer can they be found anywhere."

And of inconstant and frivolous women, the Indians of the northern Rockies are in the habit of saying: "They have taken me body and soul, those otter-like

Sea otters carved on the house posts of a hybrid Indian-white house at Quamichan, B.C.
National Museum of Canada.



women. Alas! Otter-like in perfidy they have sucked my soul away, and, with tongues of fire, they have graven on it burning stripes."

Although the sea otter may not, in native estimation, possess quite the same aura of seduction and perfidy as its fresh-water cousin, it is none the less the nearest approach, in a different sphere, to a siren with the alluring face and shoulders of a beautiful woman, that the world has ever known. The history of navigation, discovery, and trade in the northern Pacific for the past two hundred years—since the days of Captains Bering and Cook—proves it beyond refutation.

The appeal of the sea otter for the white man, however, unlike that of the land otter for the Indian, was shorn of all mysticism. It merely measured itself by his unfathomed greed and rapacity. The quality and sheer beauty of its pelt was not excelled anywhere. In terms of currency its value was unsurpassed; the quotation for single pelts in the London market has reached the staggering peak of $1600.

Of the two races of sea otters, of equal value in the fur markets, the northern otter chiefly belongs to the Aleutian Islands southwards as far as the state of Washington; and the southern, to the coastal waters of lower California northwards as far as Washington, where both meet at a shadowy frontier.

The Chinese were the first, from time immemorial, to admire its fur, and their mandarins secured it in small parcels from the northeastern sea hunters for their ceremonial capes trimmed with its sumptuous black plush.

The Russians were still unaware of a potential market in China for sea otter pelts when Czar Peter the Great, in 1732, dispatched a party of seamen and explorers, headed by Captain Vitus Bering, a Dane, and escorted by the German academician Steller, across Asia to the unknown Pacific, in the fabled regions of Cathay and Cipangu (China and Japan). Like the kings of Spain and France of an earlier generation, he was dreaming of towns glittering with "golden roofs" and of natives enjoying such wealth that their pots and pans were made of silver and gold. His order to them contained the significant clause:

"If precious minerals are found . . . the commander of Okhotsk . . . must be notified. He shall send ships, miners, workmen, instruments, mechanics, and provisions, and begin working the mines."

But of golden roofs and treasure-laden Orientals in the *Arabian Nights* style, not a trace! Bering's two ships, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, were lost at sea or on the shores of the Aleutian Islands in 1741. Bering himself died of scurvy, and those of his men who succeeded in reaching the Siberian coast had little to boast of except their discovery of parts of the Alaskan coast, which they were not really looking for. They did not attach much importance to the stacks of sea otter pelts they had gathered at Bering Island while slaughtering those animals for food. And their wild hunt for treasure at sea had ended in failure.

Steller's own pile of eighty sea beavers—as the sea otters were then called—brought him a great surprise: they were most valuable. It is on record that the best pelts of sea otter, at that time, produced 20 roubles in Kamchatka, 30 in Yakutsk, from 40 to 50 in Irkutsk, and at the Chinese frontier, in exchange for Chinese wares, from 80 to 100 roubles.

Because of the high prices paid by the Chinese for the sea otter pelts brought back from Bering Island and Kamchatka, the Russians at once became Siberia



The fur of the sea otter is noted for its density and depth, and the silveriness of the undercoat. Average length of the pelt is about six feet. As much as $1600 has been paid for a single skin.

conscious. They forgot about the legends of Cathay and Cipangu and every treasure hunter capable of betaking himself to the scene of the erstwhile "golden roofs" journeyed in haste across Asia and engaged in the ceaseless pursuit of the sea otter, the fur of which henceforth meant wealth galore.

The fateful year of 1741 had opened up the thrilling annals of the Aleutian Islands and the North Pacific, which eventually were to introduce a new outlook on world affairs. Some notion of the generous profits arising from the trade may be had from the sale of a net cargo of furs brought to Kamchatka on the 2nd of June 1772, in a vessel belonging to Ivan Popof. The tenth part of the skins was delivered to the Russian customs, and the remainder was distributed in fifty-five shares. Each share consisted of twenty sea otters, fifteen black and brown foxes, ten red foxes, twenty sea otter tails; and such a portion was sold on the spot, at Kiatka—the frontier town of Siberia and China appointed for the fur trade—for 800 to 1000 roubles; so that the whole landing was worth about 50,000 roubles. Several of these pelts, carried to Moscow as a tribute, were purchased there for 30 roubles per skin, sent back to the Chinese outpost, and disposed of at a very high interest.

When, nearly forty years later, in 1779, Captain Cook anchored his two ships, *Resolution* and *Discovery*, in the harbour of Nootka Sound on the western side of Vancouver Island, he knew of the sea otter only by hearsay. The Russians had kept their valuable secret to themselves. The Nootka Indians were not as yet informed of the needs of the fur trade. But when Captain Cook came into possession of a whole skin of good quality and "deep brown or sooty colour," he began to suspect the truth, and was moved to write:

"The fur of these animals, as mentioned in the Russian accounts, is certainly softer and finer than that of any others we know of: and, therefore, the discovery of this part of the continent of North America, where so valuable an article of commerce may be met with, cannot be a matter of indifference."

Without any ado, he and his sailors leisurely secured, from hand to hand, at Nootka Sound and elsewhere, many sea otter pelts of all grades, whole or in fragments, or even in sewn-up garments already in use.

La Pérouse, in his *Observations* on behalf of the French, a few years later, touched at Monterey (in southern California) to acquire information, and his journal mentions that the Spaniards there at the time "scarcely imagined the fur of the sea otter to be of more value than that of the rabbit." And their leading pilot in the Pacific, Maurelle, did not even mention the existence of the animal, which he probably confounded with the seal.

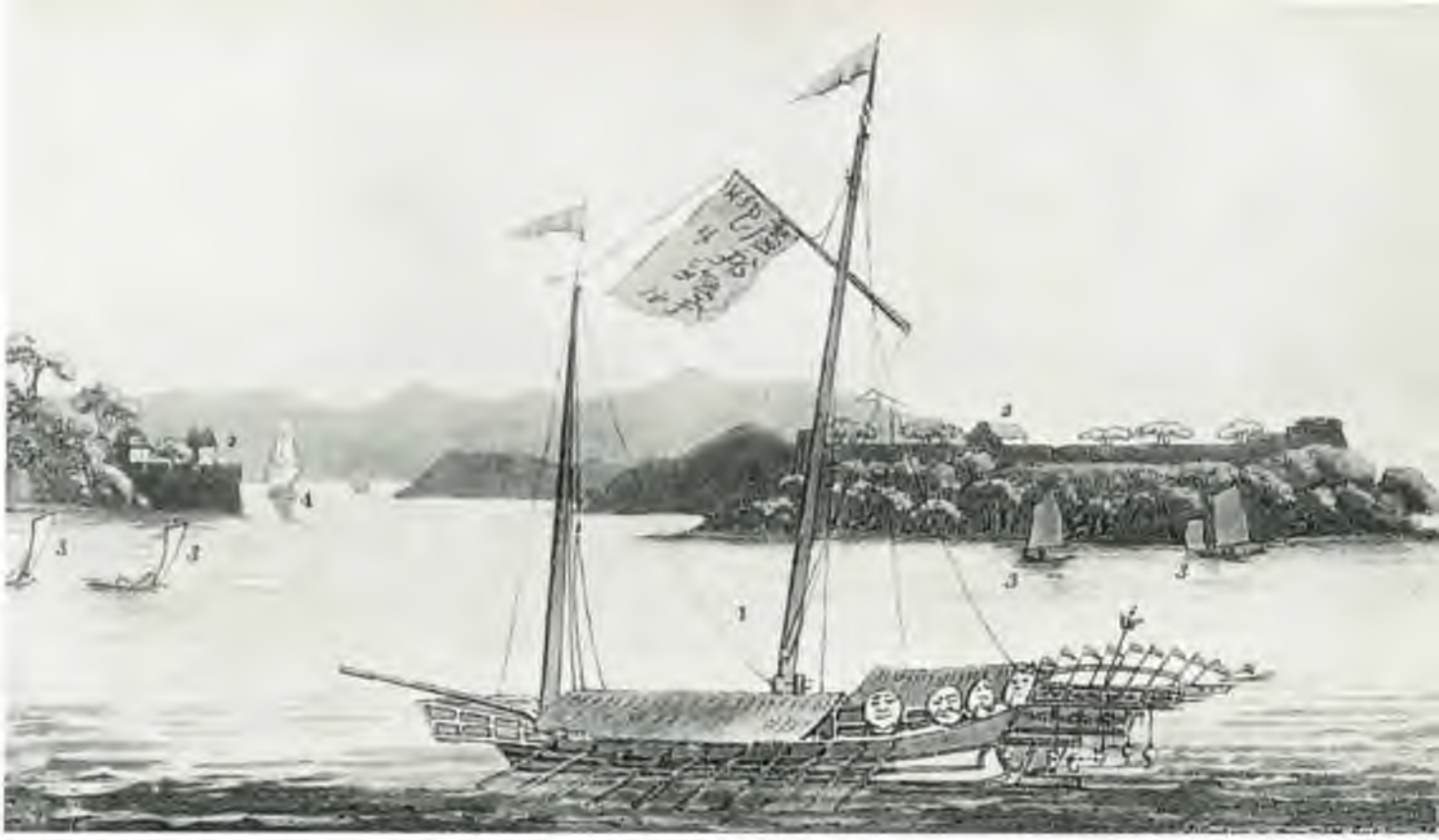
It was at Canton in China, in December 1779, that Cook and his sailors found out for themselves what treasure trove they had struck unawares on the North American coast. So he reports in his own journal:

"The whole amount of the value, in *specie* and goods, that was got for the furs, in both ships . . . did not fall short of two thousand pounds stirling. And it was generally supposed, that at least two-thirds of the quantity we had originally got from the Americans were spoilt and worn out, or had been given away, and otherwise disposed of, in Kamtchatka. . . . When it is remembered, that the furs were, at first, collected without our having any idea of their real value . . . and that probably we never received the full value for them in China . . . the advantages that might be derived from a voyage to that part of the America coast, undertaken with commercial views, appear to me of a degree of importance sufficient to call for the attention of the public."

This news travelled like wildfire round the world and proved irresistible. Caught at once in an upheaval on his own ships because of the Canton success in barter, Cook himself almost succumbed to an unforeseen excitement:

Two Indian graves at the Chatlips Reserve, Saanich Peninsula, B.C. The nearer one is carved with the figures of sea otter. National Museum of Canada.





"A view of the entrance of the Bocca Tigris leading to Canton" from Meares' "Voyages," 1788. 1 is a Chinese war galley, 2 forts guarding the river mouth, 4 an outward bound square-rigger.

"The rage with which our seamen were possessed to return to Cook's River (in Alaska), and buy another cargo of this, to make their fortunes, at one time, was not far off mutiny; and I must own, I could not help in indulging myself in a project . . . of buying two vessels at Canton . . ."

And his official diary sets forth some details of the project which, if executed, would have led him away, a truant from his duties to the king, and might have made him, like many others, a free-booter.

Until then most of the furs imported into China had come in through Siberia and, indirectly, from the newly discovered Aleutian Islands. But this supply was not enough for the demands of the market. Foreign furs were imported to St. Petersburg, and from there sent to Kiatka. England alone furnished to the Russians a large quantity of beaver and otter skins, which she procured from the Hudson's Bay Company and from Canada. A list of furs sent from England to St. Petersburg from 1775 to 1777 includes, for 1775 alone, 46,460 beaver skins and 7143 land otter skins.

The Chinese goods exchanged at Kiatka and Canton for these furs were raw and manufactured silk, cotton, porcelain of all sorts, furniture—particularly Japan cabinets and cases, lacquered and varnished tables and chairs, boxes inlaid with mother-of-pearl, fans, toys, artificial flowers, tiger and panther skins, rubies, white lead, vermilion, and other colours, canes, tobacco, rice, sugar-candy, rhubarb, musk—and tea.

For all but the Russians, Captain Cook had discovered the world's most important fur market. His discovery was, in a way, his greatest achievement, and its repercussions in many directions were unforeseen, momentous.

Captain Marchand, a French seaman of the following two decades, sums up the subject of Pacific explorations and discoveries in the following terms:

"The enormous profits which the two ships employed by Captain Cook's last voyage had made in China on the furs that they had brought from the North West Coast of America, excited the speculations of the merchants and shipowners; and expeditions were multiplied, in the interval from 1785 to 1789, under the direction of Captains Hanna, Peters, Lowrie, Guise, Meares, Tipping, Portlock, Dixon, Berkley, Colnett, Duncan, Douglas, Grey, and some Portugese and Spaniards whose names and expeditions are unknown."

Rivalries and ambitions among the European nations kept their leaders more than ever on the alert. The sea otter and the China trade in the Pacific came to them as a truly irresistible call.

To Captain Cook the British were indebted for the commerce of the northwest coast of America and its profitable application to the Chinese market—a commerce which, when better known and more cultivated, was to prove of immense advantage to the country.

The riches that the southern Pacific Ocean offered to the adventurous traders proved to be far greater than they had at first imagined. The empires of China and Japan not only provided new markets for Britain, in the exports of her manufactures, but proved the means of increasing her maritime might and strengthening the power of the British Empire.

The first adventurers employed iron, glass, beads, and gewgaws as mediums of barter. But their successors added British woollens to the trade, and whole villages of American natives soon were clad in blankets and decorated with every article of British dress. After some time, the Indians became so fond of woollen articles that no commercial agreement could be formed with them in which such goods were not the chief inducement.

The discovery of the sea otter, and the resultant China trade, even led to a fresh outlook on world affairs. Before that discovery, Europe and Asia had simply existed side by side, knowing little of each other. Captain Cook and the seafarers following him knocked at the door of Canton, and a *rapprochement* between the two worlds—Orient and Occident—was the direct outcome.

Nets Under Ice

by L. A. Learmonth

Two Eskimo women at Coppermine finish laying a net. Holes are cut about six feet apart, and the long net threaded under the ice from one hole to the next.





On a bitterly cold day, the net is withdrawn through one of the large end-holes, with its haul of wriggling Arctic trout.

The fast-freezing fish are disentangled from the net by two natives, bending over in the straight-legged manner of the Eskimos.

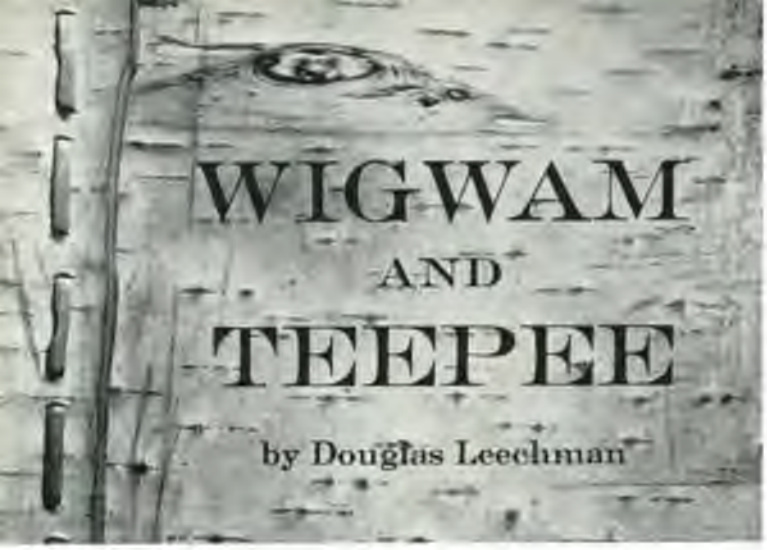


One of the women straightens out the meshes of the net preparatory to laying it under the ice again.



WIGWAM AND TEEPEE

by Douglas Leechman



Sheets of birch bark were sewn together with spruce root to cover the pole framework of a wigwam.



Wigwams covered with birch bark and rush mats, and a teepee near Fort Garry in 1866.

From the demountable wigwams of the East to the great wooden houses of the Pacific Coast, the native dwellings of the Canadian Indians varied greatly in form and materials.

THE Indians of Canada inhabited a very large area, in which they encountered a variety of climates from the sixty below of the northwest to the mild sensuous airs of the south end of Vancouver Island. It is to these differences in climate, and to variations in the building materials available, that we owe the diversity of styles of architecture practised by the natives.

We have good descriptions of some of the houses in use on the Atlantic coast when the invading whites first arrived. But from many parts of the country, especially the interior of the northwest, we have only meagre descriptions, usually quite inadequate as a basis for an accurate reconstruction.

In some areas, as, for example, the interior of British Columbia, different types of houses were used in different seasons, such as light structures of poles covered with mats in summer and warm semi-subterranean houses in winter. On the Pacific coast, on the other hand, the houses were large, permanent structures the framework of which was left standing the year round, though the planks forming the walls were taken off, moved to another site, and used to cover another permanent framework.

Some types of Indian dwellings, such as the wigwam and the teepee, are well known to us all and their names are now almost part of our language. Others are unfamiliar to any but those who have made a study of the subject. Let us examine some of the kinds of Indian houses a little more carefully, starting with one of the best known, the wigwam. Eskimo houses and tents form a separate subject by themselves and will not be considered now.

The word wigwam is an abbreviation of an Algonkian word or phrase *wekou-om-ut*, meaning "in his (or their) house." It has been applied rather loosely to almost any Indian lodge, but strictly speaking it is a conical, or dome-shaped, structure of light poles or saplings covered with rush mats, sheets of bark (birch, elm, hickory, ash), or with skins. They were permanent structures, not portable dwellings like tents, in the sense that when it was desirable to move, the mats or other covers were taken off and rolled up for transportation, but the framework was left standing.

In degree of elaboration, the wigwam varied from a hastily constructed shelter for one night only to a carefully built house with vertical walls and a curved or pitched roof, forming part of a palisaded village such as those shown in the works of Champlain and other early explorers.

The wigwam was a widely distributed type of dwelling, used throughout the forested areas of eastern Canada from the Atlantic to the eastern edge of the

Two types of Ojibwa birch-bark wigwams, Lake Winnipeg, 1881. National Museum of Canada.





Summer elm bark Ojibwa lodge, northern Ontario, 1934. National Museum.



Winter hunting wigwam, Ojibwa, English River, Ontario, 1920. National Museum.

prairies, and as far north as the southern shore of Hudson Bay and the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Directly to the west, we find the great plains on which the teepee was commonly used. At the border line between the two areas, the wigwam and the teepee are indistinguishable and one would be hard put to it to decide which was which. Normally the teepee was covered with buffalo skins and was, perhaps, more regularly conical in shape than the wigwam. In the teepee, too, it was usual to take the poles along when moving and not to leave them standing as in the case of the wigwam. On the treeless prairies, a good set of teepee poles was a valuable possession, more to be treasured, some said, than a young wife.

From sixteen to twenty buffalo hides were needed to make a teepee, depending on the size desired, and the work of scraping the hides thin to reduce weight and increase illumination, sewing them together, pitching and striking the tents, all fell to the women in whose care they were. The decorating of a teepee, on the other hand, was work for men.

While it is true that this type of dwelling reached its highest development on the prairies, the skin tent, of which it is a specialized form, had a wider distribution than any other dwelling in Canada, for it was used in summer as far north as the Arctic and at other seasons practically all over Canada except along the Pacific coast, in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, and in the Maritime Provinces. Even in those districts, it may have been in use in earlier times.

The interior arrangements of the teepee were such as to provide a comfortable and commodious dwelling, well ventilated though not cold or draughty, easily



Sarcee Indian and his wife at the back of their teepee near Calgary about 1888. Note the "point" blanket.
W. Hanson Boorne.

moved yet able to stand in any but the most severe storms. The fire generally was near the middle but a little closer to the entrance, beds of buffalo hides were arranged along the back wall, bags and other possessions along the front wall, and an inner curtain, brightly painted with geometrical designs, hung from the poles round the sides of the tent. The door, a loose flap of hide, was sometimes provided with jingles which sounded when it was moved.

The great expanse of lakes and forests lying to the north and northwest of the prairies was occupied in the old days, just as it still is, by a scanty population of Indians who lived by hunting and fishing. They made use of a form of dwelling which is seldom mentioned in the literature of the subject but which apparently had a wide distribution. It may best be described as a double lean-to. Two three-sided brush sheds, their open faces opposite each other, were built a few feet apart and shared the common fire, which was laid between them. This had the advantage that each shelter helped keep the other warm and the labour of fuel gathering was considerably reduced. Even in the coldest weather—and it can get pretty cold up there—these shelters were warm and comfortable in spite of the simplicity of their construction. Tents covered with caribou hide were used in summer and, in later years in any event, some log huts were built for the winter.



Interior Salish semi-subterranean house in the dry belt of B.C., 1899. Below is a diagram of its construction from Tait's "Thompson Indians of B.C."



In the long narrow Dry Belt, which runs the length of the interior of British Columbia, we meet with a type of structure which has a number of interesting features. It is a semi-subterranean house for use in winter. It was usually built on a dry gravel bench, some distance above the river valley, for it is warmer on the higher levels than on the bottom lands. A circle about forty feet in diameter was marked out with a rope and centre stake and an excavation, three or four feet deep, was made within this line. At four equidistant points, logs were placed against the wall, upright and leaning inwards, and from these heavy horizontal beams extended, making a framework to support a roof of poles. In the middle of this low, conical roof was a square opening from which protruded a notched log serving as a ladder by which one might enter and leave the house. The roof poles were covered with brush and coarse grass, and over this was spread a layer of soil about two feet thick, generally taken from the earth thrown out in digging the pit.

The fire stood in the middle, just below the entrance hole, which served also as a vent for the smoke. When one wished to enter the house, it was etiquette to call a warning to the people inside so that any food cooking at the fire might be covered to avoid knocking dirt into it.

These buildings were very warm, almost too warm in fact, and the people living in them habitually stripped to the waist. Many families used the same house, the inside being divided by means of the four logs which marked the boundaries of the four principal sections.

These underground dwellings extend in a modified form as far south as California and right across Bering Straits, Siberia, and into central Europe to the westward. Some students consider this distribution as evidence that the people who used these houses came from Asia not very long ago.

It is on the Pacific coast of British Columbia that we find the most unusual examples of Indian architecture. The presence of enormous cedar trees, comparatively easily worked and growing close to the sea, was a big advantage to the skilful carpenters of this area.

There are two principal types of house used on the west coast, the gable-roofed type in the north and the shed-roofed type in the south. The northern type was usually more or less square, with a central doorway in the side facing the sea. In the last generation or two a totem-pole often stood in front of this entrance and, on ceremonious occasions, one had to go through the pole to enter the house, otherwise a wall plank might be moved aside to create a temporary doorway. Inside, a row, or two or even three rows, of benches or platforms was constructed and, as the fireplaces were often at a lower level, the general effect was that of the inside of a theatre. It was on the platforms that the people slept, and here, too, they worked, if the weather were inclement, at tasks which could be performed indoors. These houses were comparatively small, perhaps some fifty feet square.

The southern type of house was very different. The size some of them attained was astonishing, for they





Two examples of the gable-roofed houses of the North Pacific Coast. Left: Coast Salish at Bella Coola. Right: Vancouver Island, with entrance through the totem pole. National Museum and W. H. Boorne.

were sometimes sixty or more feet broad and several hundred feet long. One house, mentioned in their tales, was so long that the young men of the village used to run races in it. The roof, instead of being gabled, sloped in one direction only, and the entrances, of which there would be several, were cut in the long side of the building facing the sea. The inside was divided into a series of separate stalls, each holding a family and divided from the next by a flimsy partition of planks and mats. These stalls were ranged along both sides, and down the middle of the building ran a line of cooking fires, each shared by the two families living opposite it. The roof planks were so arranged that they could be moved from inside by a pole, to keep out the rain or to make an exit for the smoke.

There are many other types of house used in Canada which might have been mentioned, some of them known only in restricted areas, others so seldom seen that they have been omitted. Others, no doubt, were used in the past and are now almost forgotten, like the octagonal dwelling of the extinct Newfoundland natives, the Beothuks.

Native dwellings are rapidly going out of use, for now that everybody has an axe and a cross-cut saw, the log cabin is taking the place of the skin tent and the teepee all over the country. Still, in some districts, the old houses are to be seen, and those who have an opportunity to do so may render a valuable service to science by getting photographs and measurements of them, learning their names in the local Indian language, as well as the names of the various parts of them, and sending them to the author at the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa. He will add them to the national collections, with credit to the collector.

Cedar log framework of a shed-roofed house on the Pacific Coast, 216 feet by 42 feet. National Museum.





Stockton's city hall, facing McLeod's Lake, stands where A. R. McLeod camped in 1829.

CALIFORNIA RENDEZVOUS

by Alice Bay Maloney

CAMPO de los Franceses, the Spanish speaking people of California called the rendezvous of the trappers and hunters of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the remote region of the great valley formed by the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. One hundred years ago French Camp was the terminus of the trail from Oregon to California, and each summer, from 1832 to 1844, men of the southern brigade from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River pitched their lodges and constructed rude cabins of tules—a local reed—and willow brush on the little plain that was to retain to the present day one of the few place names to survive from the fur trade era in California.

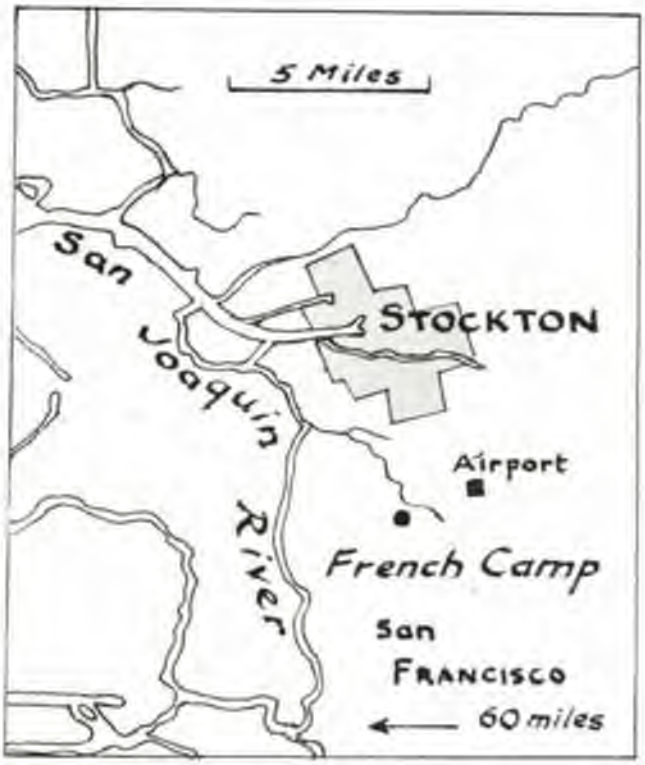
A clear and sparkling stream flowed by the camp, which was on high ground above a vast field of tules or bulrushes that stretched miles to the westward before sinking into San Francisco Bay. To the south were the great plains of the San Joaquin, where droves of wild horses roamed. Oak trees dotted the French Camp prairie and grass grew knee high—a welcome feast to the jaded horses of the pack train weary from a journey of six hundred miles over mountains, rivers and plains. Foothills to the east and tules to the west of the camp site teemed with game and wild fowl. Deer, bear, elk and antelope were at hand in abundance. A trail to the Franciscan Mission of San Jose, a two-days journey distant, crossed the plain to the southwest; but this trail was seldom used by the trappers. They spent their days in pursuit of beaver and otter so numerous at that time in the tributary streams of San Francisco Bay.

Indian wives and half-breed children of the trappers loved French Camp, and happy was the family of any voyageur assigned to winter in the south. These were the forerunners of a later horde of California tourists. Rose Osant remembered long years after, when she was eighty years old, the pleasures of the journey by pack train and the months of winter sunshine. She loved to tell of the fun the children had as they played in the dry and rustling leaves of the giant oak trees at the California headquarters. Travellers who reached the scene never failed to mention the beautiful oaks.

The first party of trappers from Fort Vancouver to come there was under the leadership of Alexander Roderick McLeod in 1829. They made their camp on the shores of a small lake four miles north of French Camp. The lake still bears McLeod's name. It lies within the boundaries of the port of Stockton, and the fine city hall of that municipality now occupies the site of the lodge of the hunter. In 1830 another party of Hudson's Bay Company men, returning homeward from an exploring expedition far south to the Gulf of California, passed that way. This was the Snake Brigade under Peter Skene Ogden, who travelled the north-bound trail in early June.

The first party, so far as is known, to occupy the traditional California rendezvous was that of 1832 led by Michel La Framboise, who had been a member of the 1829 brigade of McLeod. La Framboise was the "Frenchman" of French Camp, a figure once met not easily forgotten. There are countless traditions and tales of his courage and prowess in both Oregon and California history. He was "The Captain of the California trail" to Indian and white man alike. His name often appears in old documents as just "Michel." The Americans called him "Big Mike," and the name suited him. He had a forceful personality. Russians at Bodega and Fort Ross on the California coast, Americans trading at the seaports, and native Californians all knew of him. The Indians awaited his yearly progress and parties of travellers joined his brigade for the protection his presence afforded. The savages spoke his name with awe, for he was ruthless in his dealings with them. La Framboise knew more Indian languages than any other interpreter. Captain Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition met him at Champoeg in the summer of 1841 and wrote in his journal:

"In the morning we found horses waiting under charge of M. La Framboise who is in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company and was very happy to see us. He originally came out in the ship *Tonquin* and was one of the party that landed at Astoria where he has resided ever since either in the employ of the North West Company or the Hudson's Bay Company. Michel is of low stature and rather corpulent, but he has great energy and activity of both mind and body and indomitable courage and all the vivacity of a Frenchman. He has travelled in all parts of the country and says he has a wife of high rank in every tribe, by which means he has insured his safety. From him I derived much information and to him all parties refer as posessing the most accurate knowledge of the country. He generally has charge of a party, and was formerly engaged in trapping; but of late years passing through the country to California and back."



Occasionally in California museums may be seen the familiar blue beads and scraps of red cloth from the barter stock of the Company. They light up the

This diorama in the H B C museum depicts Michel La Framboise and his party leaving Fort Vancouver for California.



displays of aboriginal material and record for history that Michel La Framboise once passed that way.

The provincial authorities of California issued orders to La Framboise from time to time, restricting his trapping grounds and activities; particularly did they forbid trade with Indians; but the Mexican government which succeeded Spain in California never exerted great power in the region, nor was it equipped to enforce its decrees. Michel continued to flout all edicts and trapped and traded where he would.

Michel La Framboise, with a party of sixty-five, "men, women, children and Indians," left Fort Vancouver in April of 1832 and followed the coast trail until he reached the blazed route to the Sacramento Valley made by the American, Jedediah Smith, who crossed California to reach Oregon and the Columbia River in 1828. By early summer the brigade was encamped on the spot of his choice. James Weeks, a young English sailor who deserted the whaler *Fanny* at San Francisco Bay in 1831, met Michel in June of '32. Many years later Weeks wrote down the tale of his encounter:

"The Oregon party of trappers were at French Camp, that place is named after them. The commander was a Canadian Mitchell Lafrumbois. I met him once at the Mission of San Jose, I went to the priest to interpret for him. The father provided him a room during his stay at the Mission. There was no furniture in it more than a hide bottom bedstead. The room was about twelve feet high and I suppose about that much square. After consigning him to the care of his reverence I left for San Jose (pueblo). I met him afterwards; he told me that he soon came away from San Jose. He was somewhat frightened and wanted to know what he had done, and could find no one to talk for him. He thought it was a prison they placed him into. The room had one big window with iron gratings, glass was not used in those days so Mr. Lafrumbois skeedaddled, chuckling to himself at his happy deliverance from bondage, thrice glad to join his company, and hear the beaver tails slapping the water again. His wild life appeared to him more secure than to be in sight of a church and well established mission."

In December La Framboise and his men were still at French Camp; but in January, 1833, he moved them to the confluence of the Sacramento and Feather rivers, two days' journey to the north, where Chief Trader John Work was encamped at "The Buttes." His brigade numbered one hundred people. The appellation "butte," when used in California, tells that a Frenchman called it so; the Spanish word for hill is *cerro*, and for little hill *cerrito*. The buttes are a cluster of hills or mountains rising from the centre of the Sacramento Valley. In a little vale within their limits is a fine spring of clear water and an excellent camp ground frequented for many years by trappers from the Columbia. Remains of an old stone corral erected by them may still be seen. The joint brigades of La Framboise and Work remained on the high ground of the buttes until spring brought relief from a winter of rains and floods, and the trappers could once more go about their business. In June La Framboise returned to headquarters, but Work, after a hunting trip through the coast range, went south, and by July was established at French Camp.

"Encamped on an extensive plain among a few oak trees," wrote Work in his journal. The Indians of the valley were troublesome that summer of 1833. They were notorious horse thieves, and particularly did they covet the mounts of the men from the Columbia. The Californians, from time to time, sent out punitive expeditions against them when the depredations of the savages could no longer be ignored. From these sorties Indians were brought back to the missions. Here they were indoctrinated with religious principles by the padres, who sought to civilize the captives. However many of the neophytes departed from the teachings of the missionaries and escaped to their old haunts, where they incited their tribesmen against any white men who penetrated the fastnesses of valley and sierra.

John Work scented trouble ahead on July 9 when he wrote: "Raised camp and proceeded 18 miles S.S.E. along the bay at a short distance from it and encamped on a small creek near Mr. McLeod's encampment. Six Indians on horseback met us on the way and accompanied us to the encampment. One of them speaks Spanish and made us understand he was a Christian and that he had been sent by the chief of his camp to see us. He denied that any of his people had had any hand in the stealing of our horses and



John Work's pistol in the Company museum—a beautifully made "under and over" piece, eight inches long. The maker, Wilson, was doing business in London in 1770. Work brought it from Ireland in 1814, when he joined the H B C.



"Hunters' Bivouac under a California Live-Oak" is the title of this old painting in the Bancroft Library, University of California. It possibly represents a scene at French Camp.

said it was bad Indians under another chief at the river [Calaveras] behind us. It is most likely that they are all of one piece."

The chief trader knew his Indians. The next day saw the start of hostilities:

"The animals here as at our last station keep among the bulrushes along the edge of the bay where it is very difficult to get to them. Six Indians came to the camp and were well received. While they were here some others continued to approach the one end of the band of horses unperceived by the keeper and took off five through the bulrushes and water where we had no idea that horses could pass. Some of the young men pursued them but they had gained a point of woods and could not be come up with; but they fell in with some other Indians. They were very daring and one of our Indians shot one through the head. They fled into the thicket and threw away their blankets and other things. Notwithstanding our wish to pass through the country peaceably we will be obliged to go to war with these daring scoundrels."

On July 13 the Indians returned:

"A little before noon eight Indians on horseback and 9 or 10 others on foot arrived headed by the Spanish talking Christian who visited us on Tuesday last. They received food and some tobacco to smoke and were engaged in trading different little articles among the people for meat and other things when their men were detected among the horses attempting to steal. They were brought to the camp but attempted to escape. The others at first told them to submit but afterwards bent their bows and seemed determined to aid them in their object. The thieves were instantly fired upon when they all fled. Two of them got off on horseback, the others left their horses and rushed into the bulrushes. Two were killed and others wounded but they concealed themselves among the rushes and could not be found. One of them had bent his bow to fire an arrow at me behind my back but one of the women attacked him with an axe and he fled with the others."

Could the heroine of the battle of French Camp have been John Work's half-breed wife, the beautiful Josette Legasse? She and their three little daughters accompanied him on the 1832-33 expedition, and she was ever watchful of her husband's welfare. The three little girls, who were present at the attack, lived to reach womanhood. Sarah became the wife of Roderick Finlayson. Jane married Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, and Letitia became Mrs. Edward Huggins. Their husbands were officers of the Company.

The next day after the battle the Indians attacked the camp again, this time at early dawn. They were repulsed, because his years in the Indian country had taught John Work that daybreak was their favourite zero hour. He was ready and waiting for them. After this last sortie the savages departed and troubled the trappers no more that summer.

Difficulties beset the camp. Work, discouraged by the scarcity of furs, and alarmed at a strange illness in epidemic form which struck the brigade, decided to return to Fort Vancouver. Clouds of mosquitoes emerging from the tules brought in their wake a plague which still baffles medical science, so terrible was its effect. Populous Indian tribes were decimated, and it was due to this fact alone that the party was able to pass through hostile Indian country. Several men and women of Work's brigade succumbed to the scourge and were buried by the trail side as the party pressed on to reach the clear, cool air of the mountains. La Framboise met the brigade with succour as they neared the Willamette Valley in Oregon. No other party set out for California that tragic year of the great epidemic.

Just when Michel La Framboise next reached French Camp we do not know. Local tradition claims that there were as many as four hundred people residing at the rendezvous at the height of the fur trade era. This seems a high figure, but in the papers of Commandant Mariano Vallejo, afterwards governor of the province, there is a document stating that in May, 1838, ninety French hunters were in the Tulares.

If to this figure is added the wives and children of the trappers, the total of four hundred may be correct. French Canadians, then as now, had very large families. One trapper, Louis Pichette, many times a California voyageur, had twenty-one children.

Brigades set out for California year after year. They encountered many difficulties, especially with the hostile tribe at Rogue River in Oregon. *Rivière des Coquins*, they called the stream, and a point of rocks along its banks where the trail passed through a narrow defile was long known as Massacre Camp. The Company, in 1841, established a depot at Yerba Buena, the little village on the site of present San Francisco. William Glen Rae, son-in-law of Chief Factor McLoughlin, was in charge of the business. But the great days of the fur trade in the south were drawing to a close. California was in the throes of a revolution. Rae backed the losing side, so he thought, as hostilities between the two factions developed. In despair, on January 19, 1845, he took his own life. Dugald McTavish came from Honolulu and closed out the business, and the Company withdrew from California.

Of the abandonment of French Camp there are several traditions. The accepted story is difficult to reconcile with some bits of tangible evidence salvaged from the years. The story relates that there was a hasty decision to depart. Colonel P. W. Noble, an old California resident who later kept a general store at French Camp, claimed to have seen the trappers, in 1845, at work burying their surplus arms and goods in a wood-lined hole or cache on a knoll where the tents and lodges of the trappers had been erected. Newcomers laughed at his tale; but three young sons of the Reynolds family, Eldridge, Edward and James, took the story seriously enough to dig for the hidden treasure. About 1856-7 they uncovered forty sabres and muskets among other things. Many years later three of the sabres, long treasured in the Reynolds family, were presented to the Haggin Museum in Victory Park, Stockton, where they may be seen today. Discrepancies are many in the tale. It is highly doubtful if sabres ever were, at any time, equipment of Hudson's Bay Company trappers. An examination of the sabres will convince the most sceptical of their impracticability as a weapon to compete against a bow and arrow. But there they are!

Many years after the sabres came to light an ex-sailor contributed a bit of revealing testimony in a land grant case before the United States District Court. He said that in the summer of 1846, that year of change and confusion in California, he was a member of a punitive expedition which started from French Camp against the horse thief Indians of the San Joaquin Valley. This party, he testified, was composed of settlers and a few sailors from a United States warship then in the harbour of San Francisco. Certainly sabres are the traditional weapon of the sea, where men fought at close quarters; and the unsuitable arms may well have been discarded when the company reached Indian country. The weapons do not appear to be of English manufacture. This may be the solution to the mystery of the buried treasure. The romantic story, with the tenacity of such tales, lives on in San Joaquin County history.

What little we know of the southern brigades indicates that La Framboise refused to make another journey after his return in the fall of 1843. "I am," said he, "through the Mercy of God, come back safe because I gave way to my men; if I had assumed the tone of a master I would have been murdered by them. I will not venture again."

Francis Ermatinger led a brigade south in 1844; but he did not return to French Camp. His camp was on the north side of San Francisco Bay at Suisun. This we know from another bit of land grant testimony. The witness said he remembered "Frank Hermatinger" very well.

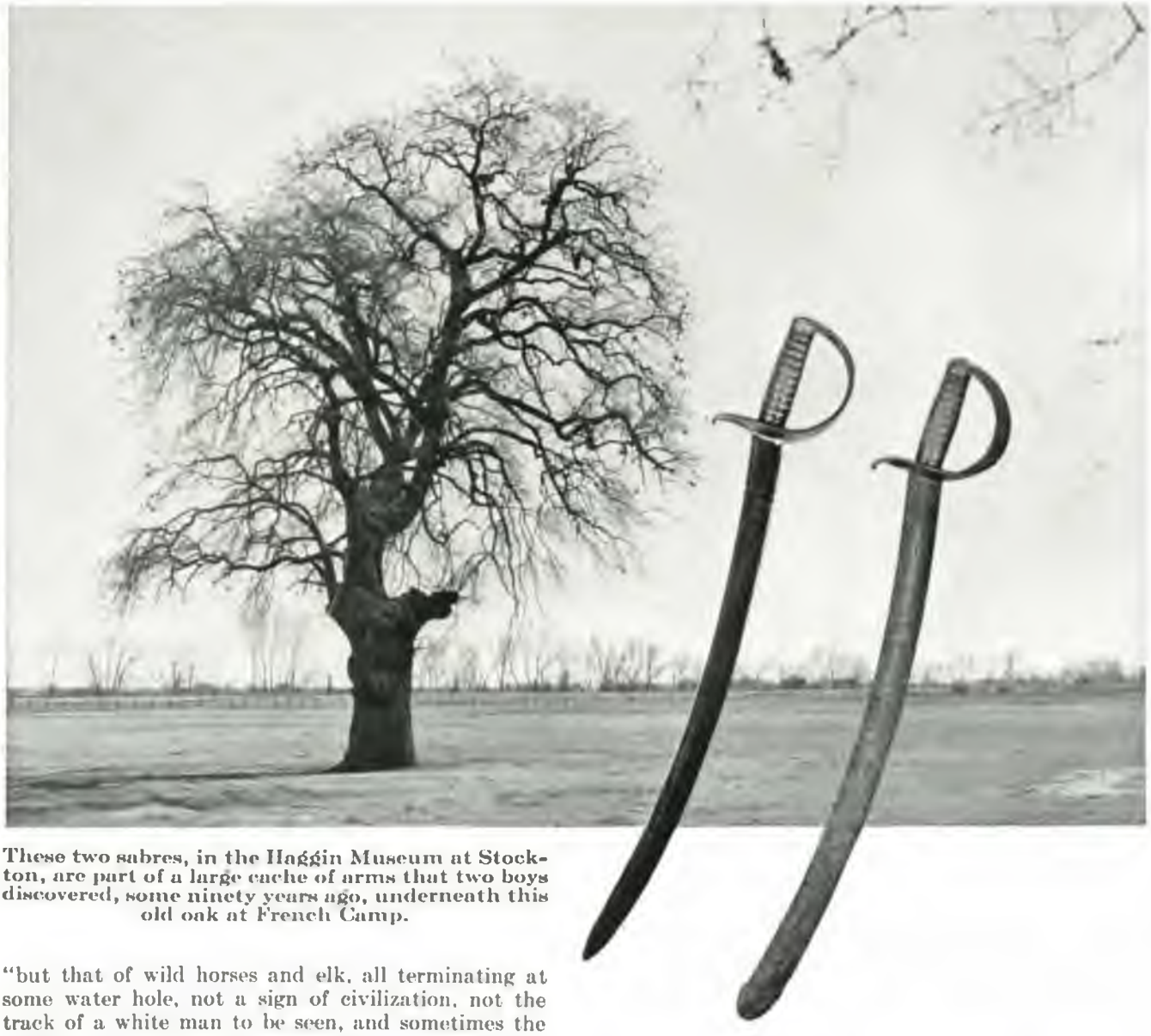
Long after the trappers had withdrawn to the north other travellers knew and used French Camp. Colonel John Charles Fremont was there in the spring of 1844.

"Today, March 27, we travelled steadily and rapidly up the valley," he wrote. "During the early part of the day our ride has been over a level part of the prairie separated by lines and groves of oak timber growing along deep gullies which are filled in seasons of rain and melting snow. At one o'clock we came again amid innumerable flowers and a few miles further passed over a field of beautiful blue flowering lupin. We continued our road for about half a mile through an open grove of live oak trees which in form were the most symmetrical and beautiful we had yet seen in the country. The ends of their branches rested on the ground forming something more than half a sphere of very full and regular figure. There were many flowers, among which the California poppy of a rich orange colour was conspicuous. Today elk and several bands of antelope made their appearance."

That same year of 1844, William Gulnack, a native of New York State, made application to Governor Manuel Micheltorean for a grant of land in the great valley. On the advice of Michel La Framboise, he chose the campsite of the trappers and took there cattle and horses to feed on the luxuriant grasses. Indians again became troublesome. They murdered Lindsay, one of Gulnack's *vaqueros*, and threw his body into McLeod's Lake. This discouraged Gulnack and he sold his rights to Charles Weber for a grocery bill of $60 owed that storekeeper of San Jose. After the American occupation of California in 1846, Captain Weber put forth his claims to *Rancho Del Campo de los Franceses* to the board of land commissioners set up by the United States Government. Eventually he was awarded a clear title to the grant. Tradition says that when President Abraham Lincoln came to sign the patent confirming Weber in the ownership of 48,747.03 acres he exclaimed in astonishment, "By jinks, that's a big farm!"

A *diseno* or map of *Rancho Del Campo de los Franceses* is deposited in the archives of the United States District Court at San Francisco. In 1848, Captain Weber thought to lay out a townsite on the old camp ground and had a plat made for the city he wished to call "Castoria," the Spanish word for beaver. The old plat in possession of the Honourable Charles Weber III of Stockton shows a plaza in the centre designated as "Trapper's Rendezvous." At the creek side was a reservation called "The Trapper's Landing." Weber apparently hoped for a return of the fur trade. Oak trees decorate this quaint old map. "Castoria" as a name did not adhere. The old name was too firmly fixed in the minds of Californians. French Camp it was, and French Camp it remains today. Weber's companion townsite of "Tuleburg" became the city of Stockton.

When gold was discovered in 1848 a great influx of miners and adventurers flooded the valley and mountains. French Camp was a depot for travellers on their way to the southern mines. All were free to pitch their tents. John Audubon, youngest son of the great ornithologist, and himself a naturalist, reached the rendezvous in 1849. "There is no trail here," he wrote,



These two sabres, in the Haggin Museum at Stockton, are part of a large cache of arms that two boys discovered, some ninety years ago, underneath this old oak at French Camp.

"but that of wild horses and elk, all terminating at some water hole, not a sign of civilization, not the track of a white man to be seen, and sometimes the loneliness and solitude seem unending. The road from the Stanislaus over broad prairies of poor sandy soil extended for miles until nearing the line of beautiful old oaks that fringe French Creek and its swamps, the earth becomes richer and sends up a growth of clover and beautiful grass knee high."

The American poet, Bayard Taylor, was even more lavish in his praise of *Campo de los Franceses:*

"As we came off the scorching plain into the shadow of the trees, on a gentle knoll we discovered a camp—that of Captain Graham, who had established himself near Stockton with a large herd of horses and cattle. With a prompt hospitality that would take no denial he ordered our mules driven out to his caballada, had our packs piled up in the shade of one of his oaks and gave directions for dinner. For four days thereafter we saw the stars through the tree tops, between our dreams, and shared the abundant fare of his table, varying the delightful repose of such life by a gallop into Stockton. Callahan, an old settler, who had pitched his tent near Graham, went out every morning to hunt elk among the tule and we were daily supplied with steaks and cutlets from his spoils. In the early morning the elk might be seen in bands of forty or fifty grazing on the edge of the marshes, where they were sometimes lassoed by the native *vaqueros* and taken into Stockton. There in the heart of California where last winter (1848) stood a solitary *ranche* in the midst of tule marshes, I found a canvas town of 1000 inhabitants and a port with twenty-five vessels at anchor. The mingled noises of labor around—the click of hammers and the grating of saws, the shouts of mule-drivers, the jangling of spurs, the jar and jostle of wares in the tents—almost cheated me into a belief that it was some old commercial mart. I can liken my days in Graham's camp to no previous phase of my existence. They were the realization of a desire sometimes felt, sometimes expressed in poetry, but rarely enjoyed in complete fulfillment. In the repose of nature unbroken day or night, the subtle haze pervading the air softening all sights and subduing all sounds, the still breathless heat of the day and the starry hush of the night, the oak tree was for me a perfect Castle of Indolence. Lying at full length on the ground in listless ease, whichever way I looked my eye met the same enchanting groupage of oaks, the same glorious outlines of foliage and massed shadows, while frequent openings through the farthest clumps gave boundless glimpses of the prairie."

Thus do the explorer, the naturalist and the poet preserve the memory of French Camp in the golden age. The trappers have long since departed from the tules of the San Joaquin. The miners no longer pitch their tents on French Camp prairie. Stranger birds than ever early inhabitants beheld now sweep over the blue skies from a nearby airfield. A schoolhouse occupies the spot where La Framboise had his deerskin lodge. The old oak tree under which the Reynolds boys found their buried treasure has succumbed to the ravages of time; but not before the photographer caught its noble lines to preserve the shadow of its one-time glory. The creek still flows by, its waters diminished in the aid of irrigation. The grass still grows, the birds still sing, and sometimes a faint undertone is carried on the fragrant breeze. It sings of the time when French Camp was unspoiled wilderness—a time when trappers chose the oak strewn plain to make their yearly camp.

AMONG THE CARIBOU-EATERS

by Sgt. J. Robinson, R.C.M.P.



Hunting caribou in the vicinity of Great Slave Lake. From a water colour by Lieut. Robert Hood, made in 1820. Original in the W. H. Coverdale collection, Canada Steamship Lines.

THE eastern end of Great Slave Lake—third longest in the Americas—is the gateway to the Barren Lands. Great cliffs often rise sheer from the cold, clear water, and the country is very rugged and very beautiful.

The Indians who live around this eastern end of the lake depend almost solely for their food and clothing on the caribou. To make it easier for them to survive in that great lone land, the government has set aside the huge Yellowknife Preserve, stretching along the north shore of the lake, as far up as the eastern shore of Great Bear Lake. In such preserves, the Indians have no title to the land, but they have the sole right of hunting there. These areas thus fulfil the double purpose of protecting the wildlife and providing a living for the natives.

The Caribou-eaters, as the Indians are called, make their livelihood almost entirely from fishing and hunting. A few are employed as guides during the winter months; some act as pilots on river boats during the summer; and a few cut cordwood for the steamers. But it is from fishing and hunting their livelihood must be made—both now, and for many years to come.

Although some have permanent cabins in the district, the majority live in tents or teepees which, for different reasons, are more convenient than permanent dwellings. For instance, if the tent floor becomes too dirty, it is easier to move to a new and cleaner location than to clean the present site, and—just as important—a tent can be dismantled in a hurry and moved to a new place of abode when some hunter arrives excitedly with the cry: "*Et-then! Et-then!* (Caribou, caribou) Two Sleeps."

All distances in that country are computed by "days" or "sleeps." One might ask the question, "Where does 'Rabbitsoup' live?" and the answer would probably be, so many "sleeps."

The mode of travel is naturally governed by the seasons and the nature of the country. Canoes are used in summer, and toboggans, hauled by from four to six dogs, during the winter months. In earlier days, canoes were made locally from birch bark, but it is more the exception than the rule at the present time to see a birch-bark canoe. Almost every family has a canoe of factory construction and, in the majority of cases, an outboard motor is used to propel it. One deduces the name of the manufacturer when one hears the Indian refer to his motor as "Mrs. Johnson." The toboggans also used to be made from the birch tree, but they are now purchased from the trading posts.

When a white man meets an Indian on the trail, when an Indian meets an Indian, when a policeman meets either Indian or white man, the first question usually is: "Did you see any caribou?" "Where or how far away are the caribou?" The caribou are actually the life-blood of the country on the east end of Great Slave Lake and are depended on for food by the whole community. Their skins also provide the ideal clothing during the winter months for purposes of travel on the Barren Lands.

Considerable controversy exists as to the number of caribou in the Northwest Territories; but it is generally agreed, based on observations made by Indians, trappers and others, that there must be approximately between three and four million animals. There is an old Indian saying, quite applicable, "They are like ghosts, they come from nowhere, fill up all the land, then disappear."

The question arises as to whether the caribou are increasing or decreasing, and the answer generally is that they remain the same. Mathematically they should increase. Why? The Indian population apparently varies very little, so we have only to account for the white trapper's arrival and the amount he will consume during his period of residence in the country. It is conceded that one wolf will kill approximately fifty caribou per year, but each trapper will shoot or trap an average of ten wolves per season, which would mean that he should save five hundred caribou from wolf destruction. Making due allowance for the number of caribou consumed by the trapper, this should result in a considerable saving of animals each year. It has been taken into consideration that disease would account for the same number at the present time as it would one hundred years ago.

It has been mentioned that one wolf will kill approximately fifty caribou per season; but these are not all consumed by the wolves themselves. It is often noted that after a caribou has been brought down by a wolf, only the tongue will be torn out, and some strips torn from the brisket and flanks. Young wolves are known to kill just for the fun of killing, and are taught to do so by the parents, who remain with the litter for only one winter. White foxes will follow in the wake of the wolf and, along with the ravens, feed on a carcass which the wolf leaves behind.

The migration of caribou is something we know happens, but the reason for it still remains a mystery. Even the Indians who have depended upon these animals for hundreds of years fail to understand the laws which govern their migrations. The question of fodder must be given consideration in this regard. It takes several years for reindeer moss to grow, and it must take an enormous amount of feed to supply so many animals. Instinct, in addition to the fact that it is easier for the caribou to paw through the softer snow in the timbered ranges to the south than in the ice-bound areas of the Arctic coast, may be responsible for the regular treks made.

The breeding or rutting season takes place on the edge of, or sometimes in, the timbered area during the last three weeks of October, and during that period the meat is unfit for human consumption, due to its unpleasant odour. Calves are dropped in the northern part of the Barren Lands and in the Arctic islands where the wolves are not so plentiful and the flies less troublesome.

The migrations take place annually and in the same general direction, but sometimes they may vary their route from one hundred to two hundred miles; or the caribou may be one month in advance of, or one month behind, their customary schedule—sometimes

"The Caribou Hunter," by Arthur Heming. Courtesy Scythes & Co. Limited.





Fort Reliance, the R.C.M.P. post at the east end of Great Slave Lake, where the author was stationed.

with disastrous results for Indian or white man. The case of Jack Hornby, the Oxford graduate, and the two English public school boys, Edgar Christian and Harold Adlard, whom he took with him into the Barren Lands in 1926 to prospect and trap, might be mentioned here. They were to depend on the caribou for most of their food. A prospector passed down the Thelon River in the summer of 1927, and noting a small cabin at the junction of the Thelon and Hanbury Rivers, landed to investigate. He was horrified at what he saw and reported the matter immediately to the police at Fort Reliance.

In the summer of 1928 a party of police made a patrol by canoe to make further investigations. They found the bones of Hornby and Adlard, sewn up in separate pieces of canvas, lying outside the cabin, while the bleached bones of Christian lay inside. The caribou had not passed that way, with the result that the three of them had starved to death. Subsequent to burial of the bodies, the police patrol returned to Fort Reliance after an absence of forty-five days.

The enforcing of laws and game regulations in connection with a nomad tribe of Indians such as the Caribou-eaters can readily be understood to be quite difficult, and it only emphasizes the need of applying the watchword of the Mounted Police—prevention. It is readily seen that these Indians never forget a kindness and will respond to good treatment to such an extent that they will refrain from doing a certain act because they think the policeman, as a man, would be disappointed in them; rather than refrain from committing an offence due to fear of the law. If a promise is made to them, it must at all costs be fulfilled, or prestige is lost. When an investigation has to be carried out involving several witnesses or suspects, it frequently takes much time and patience on the part of the policeman. He may arrive at some encampment to interview a Pierre Drygeese, only to be told that he has just left on a hunting trip and will not be back for two weeks. It may so happen that this will be the last time the particular member concerned can be in that district for six months.

When the doctor and Indian agent (often the one official fills both roles) is located two hundred miles from a tribe of this kind, it falls to the lot of the policeman to take over, as far as possible, these duties in addition to his regular work as a peace officer. Complaints of sickness and destitution must be investigated and medicine or rations prescribed or issued as the case may be, these latter being supplied by the Indian Affairs Branch. The aeroplane has ceased to be a novelty and is proving of the greatest value as a means of conveying medical assistance to these remote people. Such "mercy flights" are increasing annually, and the decision as to which case necessitates emergency treatment is one which is often left to the judgment and discretion of the member in charge of the police detachment.

Some cases of a reasonably serious nature are treated personally. On one occasion when the police were on patrol about two hundred and fifty miles from the medical officer, a young Indian matron complained to the members of the patrol of acute pains in the lower part of her abdomen, and enquiries revealed that she had given birth to an infant about five or six days previously. It was impossible to get medical assistance within a reasonable time, so it was recommended that she take every precaution against cold and apply hot fomentations to the affected regions as a cure for possible inflammation following childbirth. Approximately ten days later the young husband travelled purposely to the police detachment to say that his

wife was getting better and that the pain had disappeared.

All primitive peoples have their traditional superstitions, and the Caribou-eaters are no exception. In their case, as might be expected, most of the tribal taboos have to do with the animal from which their living is made—generally in regard to contamination by women. Here are some of their beliefs:

(a) A woman's skirt having passed over a hunting knife that she has been using to cut up a caribou carcass will cause fear and a belief that the caribou will not migrate again in a certain district during that year.

(b) A woman cutting up a caribou carcass will always pierce the eyeballs first and let the jelly-like substance escape. This is done so that the caribou is unable to watch her cutting up the rest of the carcass, and so be able to inform the remainder of the herd of their fate.

(c) A woman paddling a canoe over a net set in a lake or stream will bring sufficient bad luck to ensure that no fish will be caught in that net, and consequently the net will be removed and re-set in another place.

(d) Everyone is forbidden to kill a caribou with a piece of stick or even an axe handle. This is explained by the fear that the caribou coming from the Barren Lands, where there is no timber, will not return to the timbered districts after seeing one of their kind being killed by a piece of the timber itself.

(e) Although practically all the caribou carcass is eaten, the lungs are never eaten. The Indians go so far as to hang the lungs in a tree to prevent the dogs eating them, as they fear, in the latter case, that the dogs would become short-winded as a result.

(f) A rather important superstition is that in connection with the transmigration of souls. The Indians have the idea that the souls of their departed relatives and friends have gone into the body of either a wolf or dog and will not shoot either on that account.



A "Caribou Eater" family, who live at the east end of Great Slave Lake.

Indians now, as well as white men, use high powered rifles to kill what they need. In the olden days before the muzzle-loading gun could be secured, they used bows and arrows and often speared the caribou as they swam across a river or narrow bay. Another method was to observe where they swam some river on their migration and where they consistently landed at a certain point. The Indians would then build a chute of poles leading up to a corral in the timber, and from the trees would hang rawhide nooses which would catch on the horns of the animals as they milled about looking for a place to escape from the corral.

As in the past, the caribou have formed the main means of subsistence of the Indians, so in the future the Indian must necessarily be dependent to a very great extent on the animal with which he has been so closely associated since the advent of man to the Northwest Territories.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police dog team on patrol in the Barren Lands.



BOOK REVIEWS

ARCTIC ELDORADO, by Raymond Arthur Davies. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1944. 97 pages.

MANY professional writers have visited the Northwest Territories during the past few years and the accounts of their experiences have enlarged greatly the general knowledge of the country and of its possibilities. Some of these writers have done no more than record life as it has been lived during the American occupation of the Mackenzie River valley, and others have told of the extraordinary activities which the construction of the Alaska Highway and the Canol Project have engendered. Raymond Arthur Davies, however, has told us in a series of articles contributed to *Saturday Night*, and now in *Arctic Eldorado*, of the potentialities of the country tributary to the Mackenzie River.

Born in Montreal in 1908 and educated in Montreal, Toronto and New York, Mr. Davies is a trained observer who has travelled widely and has written authoritatively on South America and Russia. But in *Arctic Eldorado* he is at his best, a Canadian talking enthusiastically to Canadians. He has a gift of lucid expression and the rare facility of making statistics, dates and technical memoranda interesting to the layman, and he has, in addition, the ability to compress and condense to an unusual degree.

Many of his readers, and especially those with a knowledge of the Northwest Territories, may hold that he is a visionary and too optimistic when he talks of the damming of the Mackenzie River at the Ramparts so that a tremendous water head, generating more than two million horsepower for electricity, might be created, the resulting water reservoir controlling the level of the river during the summer months and extending the shipping season by four to eight weeks.

Mr. Davies reaches lyric heights when he recounts the mineral treasures of the Northwest and its underlying coal measures and oil reservoirs. He visualizes the time when foodstuffs of all kinds will be raised in the North. He was fortunate in meeting some enthusiastic gardeners and he mentions particularly Mrs. J. G. Craig, of Fort Norman, and D. A. Wilderspin, of Fort Simpson.

Having travelled widely in Russia and Siberia, and having seen the remarkable work done by Russian engineers and scientists in the northern part of Siberia, Mr. Davies is sometimes inclined to understate the case for Canadian endeavour in the Northwest Territories. Similarly, having seen the remarkable emergency work done in wartime by American engineers on the Alaska Highway and the Canol Project, he has set a very high standard for Canadians to aim at in the development of the North in peacetime.

Mr. Davies envisions the Northwest Territories playing an important part in Canada's economic future. For its furtherance he offers what he calls a "Four Year Plan of Northwestern Development." He believes that territorially the Northwest should encompass the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, northern British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and perhaps Manitoba. He thinks that in this way inter-provincial and provincial-dominion difficulties would be overcome.

His plan is magnificent in inception and in scope. It contains features to which consideration must be given at an early date if Canada is to maintain the place in world affairs to which her great war effort has carried her. *Arctic Eldorado* is provocative and thought compelling, and not only to those who have the welfare of the great Northwest at heart. Canada has rich resources as yet untapped, and they are by no means all in the Northwest. If Canadians do not make the fullest use of them in the coming years there are those in other countries who will question their right to possess them.—*G. Pendleton.*

IGLOO FOR THE NIGHT, by Mrs. Tom Manning. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1943. 232 pages.

MRS. Manning has done what no other white woman has done. She has lived and travelled in the Canadian Arctic for over two years with no other shelter than a tent in summer and a snowhouse in winter. A short account of some of her experiences appeared in *The Beaver* for September 1942. This book is a much fuller account of her travels, beginning with her departure from Montreal on the *Nascopie* in July 1938, and ending with her return to civilization at Churchill in January 1941.

The book shows how, in the North, a woman's intuition and a man's ingenuity make a combination hard to beat. Written in simple language, partly a history, and in part a woman's soliloquy on her northern romance, *Igloo for the Night* tells us of the no mean achievements of a man and wife exploring the wastes of southern Baffin Land, and their search for scientific knowledge. It imparts to the reader the innermost feelings of a woman alone with nature in its hardest and most capricious form; it explains the struggle of a woman trained to observe the conventions of today, who finds herself in a world of a different age. As the reader progresses, the transition of the city girl to the woman of a primitive country unfolds.

Many readers will like the style of Mrs. Tom Manning's first book. It is written in conversational tone, which certainly attracts the reader to the author. There are many exciting passages. The Mannings' two years of travel on foot, by sled and on their motorboat *Polecat*, through a country uncharted and largely unexplored, was marked by many disillusionments, disappointments, and danger and a fair share of humorous incidents that bear repeating.

The reading public's knowledge of the Arctic is quite limited. *Igloo for the Night* touches here and there on points of academic interest, but the reader could have more. The author doubtless relies on the accompanying map to explain the geographical history of Baffin Land and the routes she travelled with her explorer-husband, but it by no means helps the stranger to know this vast region and its scattered population. The reader will be left with the wish to know more about the author's husband—who he is, what takes him to the land of winter twilight. Let us hope this may be the subject of another book, written in Mrs. Manning's own inimitable style.—*C. H. J. Winter.*



GOVERNOR'S VISIT, 1944

Top: Men of the Hudson's Bay. L. to R.: R. H. Chesshire, manager Fur Trade Department; Governor Sir Patrick Ashley Cooper; C. S. Riley, chairman Canadian Committee; P. A. Chester, general manager; D. Hutchison, manager Mackenzie River Transport. They are sitting on the Canol pipeline in Dodo Canyon.

Left: At Aklavik, the Governor makes friends with Charles Thomas Rieach, aged 3½, son of the post manager (standing by).

Right: Sir Patrick and Ikey Bolt, Eskimo trapper, who visited Winnipeg in October.

Below: The Governor presents long service awards to six members of the Land Department. L. to R.: C. E. Joslyn, manager; B. Everitt, Miss B. Vialoux, F. Nicholson, M. Headlam, J. Larkin.







CANADIAN RESTORATION, by E. Newton-White. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1944. 227 pages.

WHEN the author's foreword describes the subjects of his volume as "the restoration and conservation of natural resources and, incidentally, the creation of an infinite employment pool thereby" he does scant justice to the treasure of shrewd observation and convincing analysis that he has packed into the thirty-two chapters of this most readable book. Mr. Newton-White draws from a lifetime of experience in forest regions and in rural and woods communities, and is fortunate not only in his practical viewpoint but in the maturity of his general knowledge. This helps to stamp his writings with conviction, and to impress the reader with his vigorous idealism, with not a trace of the hobby-rider or the doctrinaire.

Canadian Restoration is a startling book for folk who think that Canada's economic future is going to be solved by television factories and plastic motor cars, or by security plans. "Canada is essentially a wild-land country," says the author, "for wild land is everywhere to the extent of eighty-five percent of the total, and farming areas are in belts or pockets. The true base of Canadian economy is wild-land production: forest products, minerals, grazing, animal wild life, fish, sport and scenery—not agriculture, the true place of which is supplying the food requirements of the population which those other industries should support. Here would be a system of full land use, and it would ease many a strain on the national framework. Most certainly it would mean the salvation of Canadian agriculture, and just as certainly solve the Canadian conservation problem."

This surely is plain talking, and who will deny its tonic effect on a people who, as a rule, have left their perishable natural resources to perish and have treated "land use" as a phrase quite meaningless to the lad bent on "making a killing."

Mr. Newton-White strikes hard at the confusion of thought that blends social security planning with reconstruction. He places a plentiful supply of all the necessities and ordinary luxuries of life as the first objective; otherwise social security measures work out as a sharing up of scarcity. "What we need now is much less a share-the-wealth than an increase-the-wealth policy." This, indeed, is one of the chief keynotes of the book.

The book offers an interesting criticism of many current post-war programmes predicated upon vast public works schemes. "The farmer and the small private enterprise man," the writer points out, "if they need assistance, need it where their homesteads and homes and properties lie. Every home owner in need needs help where he is. This stipulation of home-based opportunity at once disposes of the possibility that an ordinary public works programme could fill more than a fraction of the bill."

The author necessarily has had to bite his axe into many a "dead head" of orthodox public belief, and most readers will wish him Godspeed in such a mission. He does that job with muscular thoroughness and leaves the stumps level with the earth. But the most gratifying of all impressions is that the restoration scheme he invokes must be very close to the pattern that Canada some day will adopt. Few people will read Mr. Newton-White's book without revising their concepts of the Dominion and the traditions of management by which it has groped its way.—*Robson Black.*

ALASKA AND THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST, by Harold Griffin. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York, 1944. 216 pages.

THIS will prove a most interesting book for anyone who wants to know about the Northwest. Mr. Griffin has confined himself fairly well to facts and correct statements and has avoided romantic embellishments and fiction. These admittedly might have made the book more popular with the general public, but they would have made it valueless to the reader who really wants to know what is up there, and who contemplates or dreams of making a holiday trip to the great Northwest, or even settling down there.

The book deals with the recent developments in the Northwest. In territory, it covers a vast area including Northern Alberta, Northern British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska. The author must have spent considerable time, interviewed many people, and travelled thousands of miles in the Northwest before he was able to compile such a fund of accurate information, and it would appear that he enjoyed the work, as he has gone to great lengths, and been very painstaking.

Mr. Griffin has caught the old spirit of the Yukon as well as the new spirit of the Northwest. It might be well, however, to give a word of warning to those readers who might contemplate moving north. They should bear in mind that, apart from the few villages up there, and the small towns on the Pacific coast, there is practically no settlement in thousands of square miles of typical bush country. This country, in parts, is fertile and in other parts full of muskegs and mountains, frozen in the wintertime and infested with flies in the summer. Settlers will have to be strong and sane, willing to face real trials and hardships and gruelling work. Such is the life of a pioneer.

A few minor inaccuracies and other points will bear mentioning here. On page 69, it is stated that Bill Hill made the famous aeroplane propeller for the machine damaged at Simpson in 1921. Actually Walter Johnson, at present an employee of the Company's Mackenzie River Transport, made it, with Hill's assistance.

On page 94, an official states that there might be twenty million acres of potential crop land in the Liard River basin, while a fur trader dismisses the plateau as being useless for agricultural purposes. The fur trader is definitely wrong, and it is quite possible that the official may have been about right.

On page 126, it is stated that supplies were brought up the Dease River. This should read "down the Dease River." This page also mentions the Company's buildings as being of whitewashed logs, etc. The Company now have a complete set of new modern buildings at Lower Post right on the Alaska Highway.

The author is wrong when he mentions ermine pelts priced at from $50.00 to $65.00. The pelts he saw were white foxes and silver foxes. Ermine pelts were never on sale at the Company store at Lower Post.

On page 127, Mr. Griffin says about the Lower Post Indians, "Soon the life they know will no longer be possible and they will be ill adapted for any other." We can hardly agree with this. If the British Columbia game laws remain as they are at present, the Indian still will have his trapping, and make as good a living as other Indians who live elsewhere in the bush.

It is also a little far-fetched to say that "a network of highways has been built from Edmonton to Nome," as is stated at the end of page 191.—*J. Milne.*



R.M.S. "Nascopie" at anchor in beautiful Pangnirtung fiord.

Story and Photos
by J. W. Anderson



Hoisting the H B C flag again at Fort Ross. L. to R.: J. K. Hunt, clerk; J. W. Anderson, Ungava District manager; J. M. Stanners, post manager.

THE highlight of the 1944 voyage of the *Nascopie* was the visit to Fort Ross, where she had not called since 1941. Heavy ice was again encountered in Prince Regent Inlet, but the sturdy vessel was equal to the task and finally steamed in and dropped anchor off Fort Ross post on the first day of September. There was considerable ice in the harbour, so that part of the cargo had to be landed on the beach about a mile below the post in Depot Bay. On the second day, however, the ice opened up sufficiently to allow the remainder of the cargo to be landed at the post.

As was to be expected, the Eskimos were on hand to give us a great welcome, for the supply ship means much to them—boats, rifles, ammunition, tea and the beloved tobacco, not to mention the thousand and one items of "white man's goods" to which they have become accustomed and which help make life easier for these primitive people of the far Arctic. Everything about the post was spick and span, and so orderly and tidy was the dwelling that one would hardly think Mrs. Heslop had left hurriedly for that epic airplane flight in November 1943.

Post Manager J. M. Stanners, with assistant Ken Hunt, set about re-opening the post. The very first thing, of course, was to start a coal fire in the stove so that all could see smoke from the chimney of the post house at Fort Ross. Next the H B C flag was raised on the flagstaff, the lower mast of which used to be one of the yard-arms of another veteran H B C ship, the *Pelican*.

The next step was to put Fort Ross "on the air." This was done when the transmitter was assembled,



After the wedding at Pond Inlet. Canon and Mrs. J. H. Turner, Major McKeand, and Rev. T. Daulby (with camera).

and within twenty-four hours of the arrival of the supply ship Fort Ross radio station CY7L was in communication with the outside world. While all this was going on, the cargo was being unloaded; Majors McKeand and Baird were investigating native conditions on behalf of the Government; Inspector C. N. K. Kirk, R.C.M.P., carried out his duties; Dr. Jordan, ship's surgeon, attended to the health of the Eskimos; Dr. L. B. Amyot, dental officer, cared for their oral health; F. R. E. Sparks re-opened the Fort Ross post office, with J. M. Stanners as assistant postmaster. All had their duties to do, but, as each one knew his task, the work was soon accomplished and we sailed away from Fort Ross on the morning of the third of September 1944, leaving Post Manager Stanners and Ken Hunt well equipped to care for the Eskimos in the coming winter.

Here also Sarah, the daughter of Kavavou, was married to Ernie Lyall by Major McKeand, officiating in his capacity as commissioner for marriages. This is, we believe, the first time a civil wedding has been performed for an Eskimo. There was no missionary present at Fort Ross at the time, and as the couple wished to be married Major McKeand complied with their request.

Two other weddings took place during this voyage. In the saloon of the *Nascopie* at Southampton Island, with Major McKeand officiating, Miss L. M. M. Johnstone, of Winnipeg, became the bride of Post Manager Wm. C. Brownie. The saloon was decorated for the occasion by Chief Steward Reed. There were many uniforms, including Captain Smellie and his officers, the R.C.M.P. and American army officers. This colourful ceremony has been excellently recorded in technicolor movies by Dr. Dennis Jordan, of Toronto. Farther north, in the Anglican chapel at Pond Inlet, Miss J. M. Hobart became the bride of Canon J. H. Turner, Rev. Tom. Daulby officiating. A number of Eskimo parishioners and most of the ship's company were present to witness the ceremony, and the big and brightly coloured wedding cake prepared by the ship's cook, George Fivatros, fairly made the Eskimos stare in wonder.

Pond Inlet certainly put on a good show for the wedding. The day was calm, warm and sunny, and the high snow-crowned hills of Bylot Island, twenty miles away across the water, stood up clearly against the deep blue sky, providing a magnificent back-drop for the scene.

Next day the fine weather continued as the *Nascopie*, for the first time in all her thirty-two years of Arctic voyaging, steamed northward through the fiord-like scenery of Navy Board Inlet along the west coast of Bylot Island. She has made the north-south voyage on Navy Board Inlet several times, but this was the first northward voyage, and the weather, the snow-capped hills, the glaciers, and the bold Arctic scenery, all combined to make a truly magnificent spectacle.

Attending to the health and welfare of the Eskimos, as well as acting as ship's surgeons, we had Dr. George Hooper, of Ottawa, with us from Montreal to Churchill, and for the remainder of the voyage we had Dr. Dennis Jordan, of Toronto. Dr. L. B. Amyot, of Schenectady, N.Y., was dental officer for the entire voyage. In addition to attending to the dental needs of both whites and Eskimos, Dr. Amyot carried out a number of scientific investigations and studies for the dental profession, and, like Dr. Jordan, he takes back with him a considerable "footage" of technicolour movies, both technical and scenic. Dr. George Hooper made very good use of the new dispensary on board the *Nascopie* when he performed a successful appendectomy on one of the members of the crew.

While at Churchill, Manitoba's seaport, the *Nascopie* was inspected by the Honorable Malcolm Mc-

Pond Inlet post. The mountains are those of Bylot Island, twenty miles away.





At Clyde River, the "Nascopie" lies some distance off shore. W. G. Calder and Post Manager J. G. Cormack walk along the beach and (above) Eskimo families come out to be transferred to Frobisher Bay, five hundred miles to the south.

Below: There was plenty of ice during the first half of the voyage.

Donald, British High Commissioner for Canada, who also visited historic Fort Prince of Wales.

Of icebergs and pack ice there were more than enough for one voyage. Hardly had the *Nascopie* left the Straits of Belle Isle before bergs were encountered, and at the entrance to Hudson Strait we had the unusual experience of steaming alongside probably the largest iceberg ever to be seen in those waters. It was not particularly high, but it was nearly five miles long. As usual, we saw a great many icebergs while steaming north on Davis Strait, but the most spectacular display was on leaving Clyde south bound, when we encountered a veritable forest of icebergs stretching almost to the horizon.

Field ice was encountered practically all the way from Hebron to Churchill. At Wolstenholme a number of passengers had the unusual experience of being marooned on shore for the greater part of a day, due to pack ice coming in and filling the harbour. And a fine sight it was to see the *Nascopie* bucking the heavy ice on leaving that port, with a polar bear, perched on a hummock, calmly surveying the scene and no doubt wondering what it was all about. A solid week was lost in the ice between Wolstenholme and Port Harrison. It was so heavy, in fact, that the ship was unable to approach Cape Smith—where the Heslops from Fort Ross were to be put ashore—though the buildings could be seen in the distance. So the Cape Smith call had to be postponed until after the departure from Churchill.

However, on the second half of the voyage we made very good time, and, with no call at Greenland, we were able to return to southern waters in September while the weather was still warm and salubrious. By October 1st we were back in the port of Montreal—just a month after our arrival at Fort Ross.



"ST. ROCH" MAKES HISTORY











First in history to make the Northwest Passage in one season, the 80-ton R.C.M.P. patrol vessel "St. Roch" is shown below as she lay at Vancouver, B.C., 83 days out of Sydney, N.S. Above, L. to R.: Spl. Cst. Ole Andreasen, mate; A/Cpl. P. G. Hunt, clerk; "St. Roch" as she appeared before her superstructure was added for the 1941 voyage.





The veteran skipper, Staff Sgt. Henry Larsen, photographed after his historic voyage. Above him, A/Cpl. G. W. Peters, first engineer. These two, with A/Cpl. Hunt, were the only members of the crew to make the 1942 west-east voyage. Photos by W. Gibson, L. A. Learmonth and Claud Detloff.



St. Roch

Since the 15th century, when John Cabot set out in his small wooden ship to find a northern route to Cathay, the Northwest Passage has lured adventurous seamen to the Arctic islands. Over four hundred years elapsed after Cabot's attempt before Amundsen finally made the passage in his little *Gjoa*. In 1942, the R.C.M.P. motor schooner *St. Roch* made it in thirteen months from west to east. This summer, she made it from east to west in a couple of weeks.

Much has been made of the fact that she took only eighty-six days to sail from Halifax to Vancouver. Still more remarkable is the fact that she went through the real Northwest Passage, from Baffin Bay to Amundsen Gulf, in sixteen days.

Unlike Amundsen, who turned south from Barrow Strait to King William Island, and then west along the mainland, Staff-Sergeant Larsen set his course straight on through Melville Sound for Prince of Wales Strait. Once through that narrow channel, he had actually made the Northwest Passage.

Since her former voyage through the Passage, the *St. Roch* had been refitted to a considerable extent. A new and more powerful diesel engine had been installed, and a superstructure containing several cabins had been erected (as will be seen from the two photos on page 48). With the veteran skipper Larsen in command, and a crew of ten, she left Sydney, Nova Scotia, on July 25, and touched at Pond Inlet on August 13. There she took aboard an Eskimo family, who camped on the upper deck as far as Herschel Island.

On August 18 the vessel entered Lancaster Sound, the eastern opening of the Northwest Passage. Five days later she was off Cornwallis Island, where Amundsen had turned south. On August 30 she reached Winter Harbour on the south coast of Melville Island, and from there turned southwest to Prince of Wales Strait. This strait is about 170 miles long and narrows to about ten miles in two or three places. By September 3, she was through the strait and approaching Walker Bay, where she had wintered in 1940-1. She arrived at Victoria Island on the same day as the H B C schooner *Fort Ross*, which had left Halifax in April and come round by way of the Panama Canal and Bering Strait.

Having made the passage in so short a time, Sergeant Larsen received radioed instructions from Ottawa to proceed to Herschel Island, and if possible continue on to Vancouver. The *St. Roch* called at Tuktuk on September 17, having weathered a terrific storm on the way, and arrived at Herschel Island on the 18th. Ice conditions ahead were not promising, and it looked as if the police vessel might have to winter there, not far west of where Amundsen wintered in 1905-6. However, on September 21 the skipper decided to try for it, and headed for Point Barrow, graveyard of Western Arctic vessels. Three days later, the commissioner in Ottawa received a radiogram stating that the *St. Roch* had passed the danger point and was bound for Bering Strait.

On October 2, she was through the Aleutian chain, and had set her course for the north end of Vancouver Island. Finally, on the evening of October 16, the little ice-scarred vessel sailed triumphantly into Vancouver while the sirens of the ships in harbour boomed a welcome.

Governor's Tour

This autumn, for the first time since the outbreak of war, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company was able to leave his work in London and visit some of the Company's properties on this side. Five years ago, when he sailed for England after the Royal Tour, Canada was still at peace. He returned this year to find Canada still a land of peace in many respects. After five years in a London blacked out and blitzed and bombed, and after twice having his residence demolished in the night, one can imagine how far away the war seemed to him over here, especially in the peace and silence of the northland.

No one who heard him speak at any of the gatherings of Company men and women from Winnipeg to Victoria, or over the radio, can have failed to be impressed by the way the London man-in-the-street has carried on his share of the war under terrifying difficulties. One reads with keen interest these days the minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company for 1671-4. But the students of our period 270 years hence will perhaps read with even greater interest the minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company for 1941-4, referring to the damage done by the blitz, or mentioning that the meeting of the Board was interrupted by the advent of a flying bomb. It was with grim humour that Sir Patrick related how, on more than one occasion, he and the Deputy-Governor had finished a discussion of the Company's affairs, seated underneath the boardroom table, or crouched beneath the window. And the

laughter that followed his anecdotes was not untinged with thankfulness that we on this side of the Atlantic should have been spared such perils in our daily lives.

As the pictures on page 43 show, the Governor on this year's tour went as far north as the delta of the Mackenzie. In nine days he made a round trip from Edmonton of 5,500 miles, visiting a dozen posts on the way, and going as far west as Fairbanks, Alaska. Back in the East he visited Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and New York, and on November 18 emplaned at a United States port for England.



Canadian Committee

Two appointments to the Canadian Committee have been made in the last three months. On September 13, J. Elmer Woods, Winnipeg financier, was appointed to fill the place of the late Lt.-Col. H. F. Osler; and on October 27, F. F. Martin, general manager of the Retail Stores Department, was made a member of the committee.



Contributors

J. W. Anderson, manager of the Ungava District of the fur trade, is to all intents and purposes the associate editor of *The Beaver*. When the editor wants some information on the North of the past thirty-five years, Mr. Anderson's office is generally his first port of call. . . . Marius Barbeau and J. A. Burgesse are already well known to *Beaver* readers. . . . Robson Black is president of the Canadian Forestry Association. . . . L. A. Learmonth is inspector of the Western Arctic district, who has done an enormous amount of travelling in those faraway regions. . . . Douglas Leechman is an anthropologist at the National Museum in Ottawa. His next article will deal with the dwellings of the Eskimo. . . . Miss Corday MacKay is librarian at the Baron Byng High School, Vancouver. . . . Mrs. Alice Bay Maloney is a historian living in Berkeley, Cal., who recently edited John Work's journal of his California expedition of 1832-3 for the *California Historical Society Quarterly*. . . . Ven. Donald B. Marsh, Archdeacon of Aklavik, a frequent contributor, is becoming well known as a photographer of the Eskimos. . . . J. Milne is manager of the British Columbia District, through which the Alaska Highway runs. . . . George Pendleton is accountant of the Fur Trade Depot in Edmonton. He has had many years' experience in the Mackenzie and Athabaska districts. . . . Franklin Remington, now retired, was head of the world's largest engineering contracting company, and as such travelled extensively in many lands. A book on his experiences—including those of 1888—will be published next year. . . . Sgt. J. Robinson has been for thirteen years with the R.C.M.P. in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the N.W.T. For the last five he has been in the Crime Detection laboratory at Regina barracks. . . . C. H. J. Winter, who was stationed at various posts in the Eastern Arctic, travelled north on the *Nascopie* at the same time as Mrs. Manning, whose book he reviews.

Arctic Visitor

We once heard a Fibber McGee gag about an Eskimo who went on a visit to Winnipeg and came home with a southern accent. Whether Ikey Bolt's Arctic friends noticed the same thing about him, it's too early to say. But we doubt very much if his southern experiences have noticeably changed that imperturbable little man from the North.

Ikey is an Eskimo who was born fifty years ago at Point Hope, Alaska, and looks about thirty. Whether chatting with the Governor, occupying a platform chair at a mass meeting, or watching the operations of an abattoir, he takes it all in his stride with the greatest *savoir faire*, frequently flashing his cheery Eskimo smile. Showing him the sights of a city, one recalls the tale of the Eskimo who refused to be impressed by a new rifle of which the white owner was pardonably proud, on the grounds that an Eskimo could make just as fine a weapon if he had the tools.

When Stefansson's Arctic Expedition went north in 1913, Ikey joined the southern party under Dr. Jenness, which stayed up there until 1918. He has since traded and trapped in Canada's western and central Arctic, mostly on Victoria Island. The visit to Winnipeg was his second to the bright lights. In 1929 he came south to Vancouver on the *Baychimo*, and stayed there from July to September. This time he left King William Island on August 4 by schooner *Aklavik*. At Cambridge Bay he boarded the *Fort Ross* for Tuktuk, which he reached on August 17, and thence he flew via Aklavik to Edmonton.

There he spent two weeks undergoing an eye operation at the University Hospital, after which he came by train to Winnipeg, 1320 miles due south of his original starting point. Before going home, he visited friends in Vancouver.



Arctic Institute

Another decisive step was taken towards the development of the North when the Arctic Institute was formed in September. Its objects are the collection and diffusion of information relating to the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of North America—including Greenland—and to that end both scientists and administrators have been named to the board of governors, which at present consists of six Canadians and six Americans. Governors from Newfoundland and Greenland have yet to be chosen.

As its work will be exclusively scientific, it is expected that after the war the institute will send expeditions into the Arctic to study such matters as animal and timber resources, agricultural possibilities, navigation, transport, and communication, public health, native life, and living conditions for white people. Among the more scientific studies will be those devoted to geology, geophysics, oceanography, and meteorology.

Most of these expeditions will be financed privately by organizations interested in scientific research. For the present, the headquarters of the institute will be in Montreal. Dr. H. L. Keenleyside, Assistant Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, was acting as interim chairman of the board before his recent appointment as ambassador to Mexico.

Governor's Christmas Message

IT is with the deepest thankfulness this Christmas that we realize that the Nazi brute is being steadily and surely driven into its own lair. The soil of France is cleansed and the tricolour floats in the free French air. Belgium and Luxembourg are rid of the oppressor. Our hearts go out to those countries still enslaved but who, faced as they are with increasing agony, know that the day of liberation approaches. The mind of man recoils with horror before new barbarities committed by a Germany faced with defeat, but we are strengthened in our resolution that a like ordeal shall never have to be faced again if we can so reconstruct the world.

It is of some comfort to realize that even in the blackness of these days we can perceive the spark which shows the unconquerable spirit of man straining to something above and beyond, for the attainment of which he counts the sacrifice of himself as nothing.

The history of the liberating allied armies all over the world discloses deeds of heroism and selflessness to inspire future generations. France and her fellow sufferers under the heel of Germany will ever remember proudly the sustained devotion and incredible bravery of the men and women of the resistance movements who have had but one will and aim—final victory. But we must face the fact that these qualities are not enough for the days to come, that more, not less, will be demanded of the nations if society is to be recast in a fairer mould.

Courage, selfless devotion, and determination there must be indeed; but also trust, fair dealing, generosity of spirit, and tolerance. As are the people, so is the nation. Let each man examine his private and public dealings and ask himself if these would bear the scrutiny of a Christ who is the greatest reconstructor the world has ever known. Without those truths and teaching we shall never achieve a lasting peace.

This is not a task for statesmen alone. Behind them must be the steadfast resolution of a people that they will deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.





JOSEPH GRANT

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