

One of our few enjoyable rapids was located on the Namakan River just beyond the Indian community. We were in the process of running this, rather gingerly due to the presence of Snake Falls just beyond, when one of the Indians brought a fishing party through in grand style using a big Starcraft with outboard motor - the advantages of local knowledge! Twin Falls on the Maligne and Snake Falls on the Namakan are particularly scenic.

We found the park map to be sometimes inaccurate in such details as the location and length of portages but we understand that there is a more recent edition. Our most enjoyable misadventure occurred on the last day when young Bill and I, as an orienteering exercise, attempted to locate a hard-to-spot portage by map and compass bearings. We were very proud of ourselves when we paddled directly to a portage trail. However, the trail seemed somewhat overgrown and didn't bring us out to the part of the lake which we had expected. It turned out to be an old disused trail of whose existence even the rangers were unaware! Going up the Quetico River gave us several opportunities to practice tracking our canoes, a skill little used by "downriver" types like ourselves.

The homeward leg of our trip was through the rock and lake country of the northern part of the park. For the most part this area seemed little used. Every so often signs of civilization would intrude such as the flag bravely flying at the shoreline of Beaverhouse Lake or the moment when, following an old disused logging chute on the Quetico River, we came upon an old rusted roadster, probably of 1920's vintage, minus all its removable parts.

Most of my trip notes for this section seem to relate to the weather. Looking at the positive side, we were at least fortunate in having good weather at opportune times like mealtimes or when breaking camp. We were also able, now that we were heading east, to take advantage of the strong westerly winds to do some canoe sailing on one or two lakes.

The intellectual low point of our trip came at the last portage on McAlpine Creek where we not only left behind Nelson's watch and my favourite rope but required



two separate trips back to get them. Moreover, we had an extra hot meal having been gyped one night when I gave up trying to light a fire in a downpour. The boys were determined to have it despite the generally sodden conditions, so one and one-half hours later - "voilà", macaroni and cheese. It's a good thing we had more time than brains.

Our last campsite was probably the loveliest of all. It was a rocky, multilevel island in Batchewaung Lake which featured natural rocky shelters, small coves and windy points projecting out into the lake. It had so many flat areas it could take an army (and probably had.) For some strange reason, considering that it was on the main access route to this section of the park, it's numerous blueberry bushes were still laden with fruit. As we sat on a rocky point that evening enjoying blueberry bannock and a beautiful sunset after an evening thunderstorm, we determined that, even if we were never able to return to Quetico ourselves, we would at least recommend it to other families seeking peace, beauty and a genuine feeling of experiencing the wilderness together.

