

Modern day explorers follow the path of Alexander Mackenzie

Lone canoeist shares experiences with the explorer Mackenzie

By Rob Cotton
The News

Frying on top and freezing on the bottom.

That's how canoeist John Donaldson, his face burnt and peeling, described life in a canoe on Lake Superior as he follows the route fur trader and explorer Alexander Mackenzie took to the Pacific Ocean.

Donaldson, 59, a retired university professor now living in Sharbot Lake near Perth, Ont. arrived on the Pump-house Beach at Terrace Bay on Sunday, June 23, two and a half weeks after leaving Sault. Ste. Marie.

"This beach is a luxury," he said.

He has not always had the luxury of a sand beach or calm water when he is landing his cedar strip canvas covered canoe.

More often he has to land on rocky beaches and that means getting his feet wet.

"I have suffered from hypothermia twice because of this," he said.

In order to warm himself up in these situations Donaldson runs around on the beach.

"Sometimes I light my small Primus stove and lean over it holding my towel over my head," he said.

As evidence he held up an old towel that was more than a little charred at the

edges.

"You have to take Lake Superior one day at a time," he said.

"You can start out with a flat calm, a beautiful day, but soon a little frown will come on the water and then it becomes a ripple and then you're right into it."

Lake Superior fog is one thing that Donaldson has never experienced



John Donaldson on the Pump-house Beach in Terrace Bay.

before.

Although he uses a compass to maintain his course, he said he still had difficulty.

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Fur trading voyageurs, appearing out of the mists of history if not out of the mists of Lake Superior, will arrive in Terrace Bay on July 13, to remind us reflect on things that make us Canadian.

These voyageurs are actually students from Lakehead University fol-

lowing the route explorer Alexander Mackenzie took across Canada.

This is the second stage of The Sir Alexander Mackenzie Canada Sea-to-Sea Bicentennial Expeditions, a project to commemorate the 200th anniversary

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Student voyageurs bring Canadian history to life along Mackenzie's routes

of Mackenzie's achievement, the first recorded crossing of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

The first stage of the *Canada Sea-to-Sea* expedition was completed in the summer of 1989 when a group of voyageurs/students paddled from Ft. McMurray, Alberta, to the the mouth of the Mackenzie River on the Arctic Ocean - a distance of more than 3,400 km.

This year 36 voyageurs/university students will follow the voyageur routes of commerce, paddling from Lachine, Quebec to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Canada Sea-to-Sea stopping at communities along the route, informs Canadians about a significant part of Canadian history. When the modern-day voyageurs arrive in Terrace Bay they will present a historical pageant, including skits, dances and songs, to commemorate Mackenzie's search for the Northwest Passage.

This event will take place Saturday July 13, at 7:30 in the park area in front of Simcoe Plaza.

Between 1789 and 1793 Alexander Mackenzie made two remarkable journeys in search of the Northwest Passage. The first voyage was unsuccessful

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Five steps to self government

Last week, I began explaining how the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), along with the Ontario and federal governments, are negotiating aboriginal self-government in northern Ontario. I explained how the parties had already agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding in February of 1986, and an Interim Measures Agreement in November of 1990. The Memorandum of Understanding spells out what all parties will negotiate - and it's a very comprehensive list. The Interim Measures Agreement promises NAN and the local band councils that their interests in lands and natural resources will be protected, while the negotiations are taking place.

But what is self-government? What will it look like, five or six years from now, after all the talking is over? Jim Morris, the Deputy Grand Chief of NAN, painted a fairly complete picture of what self-government really means to a recent televised board meeting of the Wawatay Communications Society. Beyond the Memorandum of Understanding and the Interim Measures Agreement, Morris said the NAN chiefs are working on a "federation proposal", which spells out five steps to self-government. Morris stressed that the proposal is still being discussed by the Chiefs of NAN, but will likely contain the following steps:

Step One: The Creation of Indian Institutions

Morris explained how these institutions "will be set up in each area of our

people's lives - including social services and health. For example we are in the process of establishing an Aboriginal Health Authority in the Sioux Lookout district. The same thing will happen in education, policing and so on."

This first step has been under way since 1973 - long before the term "self-government" was on anyone's negotiating table. The predecessor of NAN, Grand Council Treaty Nine, signed an agreement in 1973 to create the Wawatay Communications Society - an independent, non-political

communications organization to serve all the communities in the NAN territory with radio, television, and print. Since then, self-governing associations have been formed for child and family services, economic development, education, and legal services. Plans are well advanced for organizations to look after policing and health care.

Step Two: Legislation Review

As Morris explained, the second step will be "to review all the relevant federal and provincial legislation" to "look at those sections that do not apply to native people or we try and put our own guidelines in there." He gave the example of "Ontario's Child and Family Services Act, where there is something known as customary care in that legislation. Now customary care does not really apply to white people. That is

something that only applies to native people, because under customary care is the process by which native people used to look after their kids, before the white man came. The native people themselves had their own way of looking after kids. Under customary care which is contained in that law, Ontario's law, the child welfare agencies are allowed to negotiate customary care arrangements within their mandate." The same review process will happen with legal

services, policing, health care, and so on.

Step Three:

Amend Legislation To Make It Indian-Specific

Once the review is done, Morris says "the third step is to amend legislation to include indian-specific legislation." This would include such minor changes as the recognition of "customary care" in the Child and Family Service legislative changes, affecting all laws. "The Legal Services Corporation has only been established under the laws that exist today, both federal and provincial laws. Once the organization has been fully established, the next step is to look at the law, and the third step is to use only those laws that apply to us, the Nishnawbe-Aski people and thereby we will overcome bias or the irrelevance that exists in today's laws as they are applied to native people."

Step Four: Create Parallel Federal

And Provincial Legislation To Enable Self-Government

Once all the institutions of self-government are in place, Morris described the fourth step as "the creation of parallel federal and provincial legislation to enable Nishnawbe-Aski self-government." He said this would be similar to the legislation passed in northern Quebec, which enshrined in law the land claim settlement with the Cree and Inuit. "All the laws, all the institutions, all the guidelines that we will help create - in the lands and resources, social services, policing, education, housing, and so on and so on, will be contained in that legislation."

Step Five: Constitutional Entrenchment of Self-Government

After all this, Morris says "the long term goal, the fifth step, which is certainly going to take more than 3 to 5 years, is the constitutional entrenchment of self-government within the Canadian constitution."

In other words, NAN's agenda goes far beyond the current round of constitutional talks. They want to establish each step firmly, before moving on to the next. Constitutional entrenchment will happen at the end of the process, as defined by NAN, rather than the beginning. The timetable for this agenda will obviously have to be altered if constitutional entrenchment happens at the national level prior to Quebec's deadline of October 1992.

So, that's NAN's agenda. What

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**NORTHERN
INSIGHTS**

by Larry Sanders

