



Padlei from the north

only about 10 minutes to penetrate the swampy woods along the riverbed to a spot on the river - or heavy water trickle - where a canoe can be launched. From here we paddled or waded about 1 km. A final portage of 500 m length on the left brought us to Kinga Lake and the end of the Henik-Padlei portage route.

If we counted correctly we did 18 portages on this route, but one may do a few more and abuse the canoe less but the body more, or one may do fewer and reverse the abused items. There may be a best way to do such taxing portage routes, but there is no good way.

Excellent camping is found at Kinga Lake, while camping is dismal at the beginning of the 3-km-long portage route, and even more so at intermediate points.

The stretch between Ameto Lake and Kinga Lake is almost totally devoid of any signs of animal life, if one excepts black flies and mosquitoes. There were a few small birds but no geese, ducks, or gulls. Leftovers of the Inuit once trading at Padlei could be found. It is a mystery what they lived on or what they traded. We ran into plenty of caribou below Heninga Lake, but no caribou could be seen here. Perhaps something in the soil makes the vegetation unpalatable to animals.

The Padlei Trading Post is located where the Maguse River enters Kinga Lake (14VPD2366). The map shows there three buildings. About 4 km east the map shows a settlement Padlei, but this is only an artifact of map making, meaning that not a trace of such a settlement can be seen. The trading post was established by the Hudson Bay Company around 1925 and abandoned around 1958. During its early days it was supplied from Hudson Bay via the Maguse River. About 60 families traded here. Two of the buildings are still maintained. We found a note saying that they had been repainted the year before and that it took a long time to find the place by helicopter; perhaps the pilot trusted the map too much.

Several rapids are shown on the map between Kinga Lake and Heninga Lake. They could all be run. This was perhaps the most enjoyable section of the whole trip. Below Heninga Lake come four class 6 rapids and one or two with rather high waves for an open canoe. The first "must" portage is 500 m long on the left (14VPD4967). A 300-m-long portage

on the left or two lift-overs on the right are required for the second rapid (14VPD5167). The third portage is around a spectacular fall, 500 m on the right (14VPD5366). At the fourth portage the river seems to disappear into a hole; a 300-m-long portage over rocks is on the left (14VPD5764). We made one more portage to avoid high waves, and we wished we had made a sixth one since we shipped a lot of water in the haystacks at the end of a rapid.

Ever since leaving Padlei we saw large numbers of caribou on their way south. Occasionally we had to dodge caribou as well as rocks in the rapids. Flocks of geese assembled in many places in preparation for the migration to warmer lands. In the morning of 13 August we had the first heavy hoar frost on the ground and on the tent. Summer was coming to an end.

When crossing the 96° meridian one enters Turquetil Lake as well as the military grid zone 15V. Careful navigation is required to find the point of land sticking out to the north (15VUU5168) around which one must paddle, since it looks quite different from the map. Once around this point navigation is easy and one gets occasionally help from the current. A problem is encountered further south on Maguse Lake (14VUU8345). The shortest route keeps to the left of the long island, but the passage shown on the map does not exist. A lift-over is required.

We found several closed-down prospector camps as well as storage sites of fuel and construction materials along Maguse Lake.

In the afternoon of 14 August a south wind began to blow that soon became too strong to proceed. For four days we were windbound. On the fifth day the wind changed to north. We were getting close to the end of our food and we decided to move on even though the wind and high waves made this a tour de force. In the evening we reached the outlet of the lake (15VUU0510), which is marked by two cabins on the south bank.

Grateful to be out of the clutches of the wind we started downriver the following morning, but the weather had another trick in store. It started to rain, and it rained all day. This section of the Maguse River features class 3 and 4 rapids. They are not as difficult as the rapid section on the Kognak River but the rain, fogged-up



High lead at the south side of the mouth of the Maguse River at low tide