



THE RED SQUIRREL ROAD STORY CONTINUED

The conservation searchlight is still beamed on the Temagami area in Ontario, and like a good TV "soap," the plot thickens.

There may be ROADS and HIGHROADS, but who would dream of SKYROADS enroaching on this wilderness? Some years ago the Canadian Federal Government gave approval for the U.S. Air Force to make use of certain "air corridors" for practice manoeuvres, but it wasn't until this spring that the Americans decided to re-activate their prerogative. Where did they decide to practice? You guessed it - from North Bay right over Temagami and the Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Park. These flights were scheduled to start on 8 March over a path 14.5 kilometres (nine miles) wide, with B-52 Bombers screaming along at 250 knots at the 132-metres (400-foot) level, and if hills loomed ahead, all the more fun, because then the planes could skim the trees. F-111Bs, CF-18s, and B-12s would all be getting into the act as well. The noise level would have been beyond belief, indeed beyond endurance. It took four weeks of advocacy, press conferences, and pressures brought to bear on Federal and Provincial politicians by the Temagami Wilderness Society to stop the whole exercise.

Now back to terra firma - roads, roads, and inroads. Let us shift our attention slightly southwest of the Red Squirrel Road to a new threat, equally devastating, i.e., the Obabika Lake Road. This is a recently constructed lumber road running up from the south (just west of Obabika Lake) and terminating at the Obabika River. The Ministry of Natural Resources has approved a seven-kilometre extension of this road, the first segment TO BE BUILT THIS SUMMER, and half of the cost (\$136,000) is being granted by the Government of Ontario. Once the whole seven-kilometre extension is completed, it will be a cinch to link this up with the Liskeard Lumber Road from the northwest and the Red Squirrel Road from the northeast, circumventing the very strip of proposed Red Squirrel Road extension now under assessment. The whole business is a fait accompli.

Added to these facts, two other discoveries have been made: (1) down to the south, a 400-m access road has been

discovered which opens up the hitherto secluded and very beautiful Cross Lake; (2) up north, a bush road (off the Liskeard Lumber Road) known as the Trethewey Lake Access Road, allows snowmobiles, ATVs, and motor boats into the Trethewey Lake area in the Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Park, where it is ILLEGAL to take motorized vehicles.

On 2 May 1987 in the Toronto Star, Margaret Atwood (one of Canada's foremost authors) spoke out against the invasion and destruction of this Temagami wilderness. She wrote, "If you total the area, it will do three things. First, the people who come to fish won't come any more because it won't be secluded. Second, the hunters won't come there any more, and third, the people who go there for the beautiful scenery won't go because it won't be beautiful any more...Somehow one kind of livelihood is being given priority over another kind, which doesn't seem fair." She also pointed out that building logging roads in Temagami (near where she was raised) will undermine the area's growing tourist industry which already draws visitors from as far away as Europe.

Margaret Atwood is writing a personal letter on this issue to David Peterson, Premier of Ontario. All of you readers can help too. Will you take 15 minutes and direct a very short letter to: Hon. James Bradley, Minister of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, Ontario, M4V 1P5, asking him for an ASSESSMENT of the Obabika Lake Road extension. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how much influence such direct requests have upon ministerial policy. PLEASE. PLEASE.

Temagami is the last large wilderness south of the 50th parallel. The two highest peaks in Ontario are here. It boasts the world's only source of nearly extinct Aurora Trout. It has Canada's largest system of interconnecting lakes. It embraces magnificent stands of red and white pine. It encompasses archeological sites, pictographs, over 1,300 traditional aboriginal trails (many of which we use today with our canoes), and much, much more.

The triangle of proposed roads around Wakimika Lake will determine the whole fate of Temagami. Help us fight these dangerous developments; become a member of the Temagami Wilderness Society (see back page of Nastawgan), and please write to Jim Bradley TODAY.

Claire Muller

