

hear my canoe trip stories. Erika with her three-year-old speech, loves to talk about the beaver that swam under the canoe and the heron that perched in a spruce tree. Michael never tires of Mac and Joe canoe trip stories. Mac and Joe are two boys of indeterminate age, whose baseball exploits kept Michael entertained during the long paddles of course, they also like canoeing and many of their trips are on our former routes.

Travelling is quite different with Michael and Erika. Last summer, at three, Erika crawled throughout the canoe.

Sometimes she sat in the bow in front of, or on, Kit's feet — how the dear woman paddled I will never know. Sometimes she shared Kit's bow seat — how the dear woman paddled I will never know. Sometimes she sat behind Kit in the space we had allocated for her (her canoe seat). Sometimes she crawled back to Michael's compartment and shared his space and his toys. Every once in a while she would climb back and sit at my feet. It came as no surprise that in some of the rapids she actually walked toward me as we whooshed through the surge. Michael did it when he was her age.

Michael usually spent his days in the canoe with his toy men. He played endless baseball games with them. Kit had filled his sack with small compact games and drawing materials. When he tired of these he played with his Game Boy. When he tired of that, I told him one baseball story after another. Early in the trip, I ran out of "real" games that I had played or saw. So I invented Mac and Joe two friends who played on a baseball team like his

team. I gave them personalities, other friends, and teammates. Then I invented a 24-game schedule with twelve different teams, each with their own lineups. I narrated each of the games and commented on the strategy and exploits of Mac and Joe.

Michael has been with us for seven trips. At 14 months he could toddle over the easiest trails. At 2-1/2 he still had to be carried over the rough sections. At six he is a real portage walker. With a few exceptions, he carries his backpack and helps Erika on the trails. At three, Erika proves to

be a prodigy of a walker. Help is necessary for deadfall patches and muskeg holes, but she moves right along. Of course, Kit has to carry a heavy pack and shepherd the pair, and that is a tough, slow pace for someone who wants to step out with a load. On occasion we leave them in the canoe dragged up on shore or sitting on a floating bog while we shuttle loads to higher ground. Once we gave them a sleigh ride through the marsh as we pushed and pulled the canoe at top speed over the floating bog and spongy ground. Our legs hurt after that effort!

As time goes on Michael and Erika enter-

tain themselves more and more. Yet our major concern is still keeping them occupied. Michael, ever the baseball player, turned every campsite into "a field of dreams." We carried a tennis ball for each child plus we accumulated a selection of beaver sticks for bats. And you thought campsites were chosen for view, tent sites, kitchen, and swimming? After a day on the water, one of us cooked while the



The Surge