



two days just below the falls.

At Kazan Falls, I had paddled and lined my canoe into the last eddy just before the drop. As for the two-kilometre portage around the falls, I managed to avoid that. I noticed a crack in the canyon walls just below the falls and it took two hours to portage just 300 metres into an eddy down below past the monument commemorating the Kazan as a Heritage River in recognition of the Inuit who used to call this area home. With everything tied securely in the canoe, my floater and life jacket strapped to my body, I left the eddy and paddled into the hissing and surging 20-kilometre-an-hour current of the so-called "unrunnable" canyon, only to be through it in 10 minutes.

Below the falls I met up with the two men who were on their way back to Baker Lake to get supplies

for the Parks Canada crew that I'd met earlier. They had been caught by the weather which kept all of us wind-bound for two days. During our time together, I supplied and cooked all the meals which were fortified with some fish they had caught. While the wind and rain tore at the tent, we were nice and cosy around the Coleman stove, drinking tea, joking, laughing, and listening to some Inuit stories.

As the wind subsided somewhat on the third morning, I left the tent of my two friends and paddled into an ever-strengthening northerly head-wind, but nothing could slow me down on my last 50 km. There were strong currents as I arrived at the cabin of an Inuit couple just past the mouth of the Kazan. Their planned one-hour motorboat trip to the village of Baker Lake the next morning, 8 August, coincided with my decision not to paddle the remaining huge expanse of windswept lake, and I gratefully accepted a ride.

All in all, my map wheel indicated 906 paddling kilometres from Kasba Lake Lodge to the mouth of the Kazan, not counting all the little detours and wrong turns. This was accomplished in 24 days, at an average of 38 km per day, including two six-kilometre and two zero-kilometre days. I did not cross any lakes outright but straightened out a lot of shorelines by paddling from point to point across some large bays. I made five portages for a total of 1500 metres. The rapids on the Kazan were wide open and easy to see. I strongly recommend using a sail, but a 16-foot canoe to go solo is too big. One could say I was lucky with the weather but then my Back River solo in 1985 was very similar in time and distance, using a ground sheet for a sail.

Two days in Baker Lake were very enjoyable, as I made many friends with the easy-going Inuit and renewed a friendship with an old acquaintance. The milk run over Hudson Bay with Sky Ways airline brought me to Churchill and on 12 August I embarked on a 36-hour Polar Bear Express train ride to Winnipeg.

