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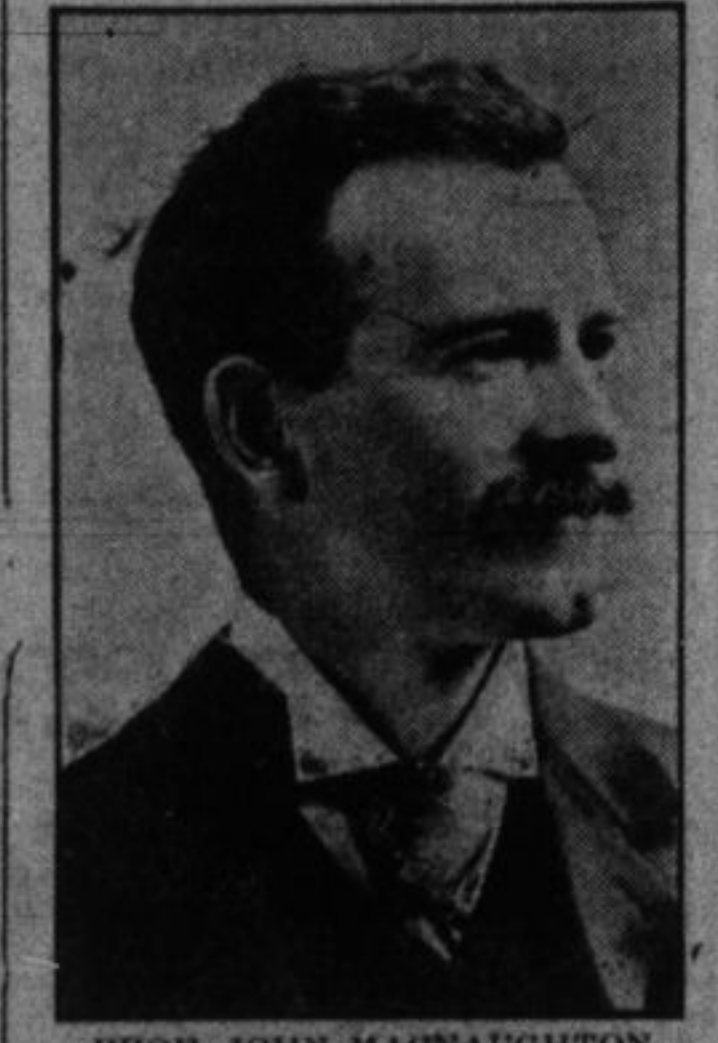
The Trip Of The Governor-General.

ON ANNUAL OUTING

PROF. MACNAUGHTON WRITES RACILY OF IT.

No Living Man Has Seen so Much of Canada as Has Earl Grey—Has a Long and Remarkable Journey—Norway House and Its Historical Interest.

(Continued from Saturday.) The representative of the king was received at Norway House with enthusiastic loyalty. Over the gate-way into the courtyard, was an inscription of welcome in the Cree language and character and a delectable fusticade from the Indians assembled in full force greeted his approach and disembarkation. Mr. Sinclair, one of the high officials of the company, stationed here and his wife had made every preparation for the comfort of their guests to whom they gave up their house. The rest of the party in the meantime handled the excellent tents provided by the N.W.M.P., entirely fly-proof and water-proof as we found throughout our active overland journey, which were awaiting us ready pitched by the river at a short distance from the factory buildings. We had reached Norway House on Saturday night the 6th of August. The fol-



PROF. JOHN MACNAUGHTON, The Writer of the Racy Narrative of the Trip.

lowing Sunday which was still wet at intervals and very windy was spent in great part by most of us in the meditative privacy of our tents. On Monday morning the eighth we awoke to find fair weather and a heavy gale blowing, too strong for crossing Little Playgreen Lake which separated us by a few miles from the narrower and calmer water of the river beyond it. An early start was thus out of the question. About noon Lady Grey who had completely won the hearts of the whole party, especially of some of the interests of whose enduring comfort throughout the whole expedition she found herself able to apply her extremely rare house-wifery dexterities, along with Lady Evelyn Grey, matron pulchra filia posterior, left us on their way back to Winnipeg attended by Captain Bingham one of his excellency's A. D. C.'s, reluctantly on their part as we hoped, and certainly to the very great regret of all of us. So far as any apprehension of hardship was concerned they might very well as it turned out have gone all the way.

In the afternoon the wind moderated and at three o'clock the flotilla started. It consisted of twelve Porterborough canoes, his excellency leading; and setting the pace in a light



INDIAN PADDLER OF EARL GREY'S CANOE.

one of cedar seventeen feet long with Thomas Given in command of the whole company of Indians at the oars, and "Isaac" as guide, the most dignified and courtly personage as well as the most expert steersman of all of the men, in the stern the others large, a canoe twenty feet long, made of bass-wood and provided with seals, as well as paddles. Every canoe had besides a sail of which it is the standing good with bestowed upon a departure crew that they may have occasion to make frequent use. There are twenty-four Indians in all. The North West Mounted Police were excellently represented by Sergeant Nicoll, two constables and a special constable acting as cook to universal satisfaction, besides Major Moseley to whose long experience careful planning and consideration for every body was largely due the unqualified success of the whole overland trip from start to finish, there never was a single hitch. Major Moseley knows his Indians. He took good care not to interfere with them much, leaving them to Thomas Given who is a just master in his craft

of command, knowing well the rare moments when sharp incitement will profitably diversify the usual tenor of his free and jovial intercourse and frequent exchange of pleasantries with his men.

It is probable that no such sight as the departure of this flotilla with its beautiful freshly varnished and painted canoes, oars and paddles glancing in the bright sunshine, amid cheers and hurrahs, had ever seen the eastern branch of the Nelson River since the wharf of Norway House since the time of the magnificent Sir George Simpson the hey-day of the power and prosperity of the Hudson's Bay Company, during the third and fourth decades of last century. The flotilla lives long in the memory of the spectators and, it may well be, in the annals of Canada.

The wind was still fairly strong and the paddling across Little Playgreen Lake, about five miles, proved pretty hard work. But this once passed we entered smooth water, the eastern branch of the Nelson River about five more miles of which we traversed before we encamped after no more than two and three-quarters hours' work for that day. We found for our purpose a beautiful rocky promontory opposite an unusually well-wooded shore lying in the evening light and soon in the soft glow of a fine sunset, the wind having by this time entirely dropped. The Indians quickly made our camp after bringing in plenty of firewood, but on this single occasion they did not set up the usual camp stoves being so good and the weather so fine. Every other night the tents rose as if by magic under their deft hands. It did not take them more on the average than a quarter of an hour. While they were so engaged the party bathed in the river, took a smoke and looked at the sunset until the evening meal was ready. At a little distance from us the Indians had a camp fire of their own, and after dinner we heard the hymn of their evening prayers arising from the circle around the smoke of their camp stoves. They were all good Methodists and never missed either vesper or matins, one or other of their number always leading their devotions in a fashion which to judge by the sound was both earnest and eloquent. Their music reminded me strikingly of a Scottish Highland congregation singing Gaelic psalms. The tunes were the same, and were rendered in a very similar manner of quavering and plaintive solemnity. Like Robert Louis Stevenson's old-fashioned precursor, they "barked the tune into the air with strange contortions." Curiously enough their dance-music, which we had an opportunity later on of hearing, at Oxford House, is also derived originally from the Highlands of Scotland, being a kind of truncated version of the old reel and country dances, which used to be familiar there. The Scotch influence predominating in the personnel of the old Hudson's Bay days still lives on and echo in the sounds of worship and of mirth which break the silence of the wilderness by those northern streams.

The ninth of August was a very typical day the description of which may stand in most respects for many more like it. It was the first time we felt that we were seriously upon our journey. Breakfast was ready at 5 a.m. By six o'clock we were already packed and we started. The working day was in this instance about the average length, namely ten hours, broken by two periods of rest for the purpose of "boiling the kettle," as it is called, the Indians invariably making very strong tea of which, too, they generally take a supply with them on board to drink cold from time to time, and eating bacon and bannock—a large round very thick Scotch scone—while the rest of the party engaged with their pipes and enjoying a considerably more varied diet. Besides these pauses there were some five-minute breaks in the continuous paddling at intervals fixed by Commander Gesen according to his own fancy, the Indians filling their pipes and enjoying with much abandon or in outbreaks of Cree facetiousness which seemed, by the laughter they provoked, to be highly appreciated. The stoic austerity of the old heaves and their asperity of demeanor has left but little trace behind in their descendants who are almost as fond of chattering and laughing as the typical negro. During the first spell of work we crossed Seaforth Portage, eighteen miles from Norway House, where many of us were relieved to find that it was not necessary to take a share in the serious toil of "packing." All we had to do, unless we felt especially envious, was to get promptly out of the canoes—the one thing about which the Indians ever manifested the slightest impatience—and out of their way while they did this part of the work. Smiling and perspiring with the broad hand of the tumpkin across their forehead and leaning slightly forward they swung gaily along under their heavy loads of baggage, bacon and four-sacks, sometimes up to the ankles in boggy ground, at a smart dog-trot wherever the footing was at all reasonably good. Meantime we had an opportunity of exploring the innumerable varieties of berries in which these forests abound as well as their many flowers and mosses. But, whether we took part in the packing or not, all of us, including his excellency, engaged vigorously in the paddling and rowing, and so earned by honest sweat a good stomach for our food and sleep. After breakfast we left the Nelson River and threading our way through a live-channel entered Hairy Lake. Here we enjoyed our first sight of sailing. It was always a welcome respite from the labor of oar and paddle, an exquisite sensation of unimpeded movement and a beautiful sight. A string of water-lilies, as it were, with white wings moving swan-like along the blue water, often just endless stretches of yellow water-lilies, with a fringe of reed behind them and rising tall behind these again the dark or light-green foliage of spruce or poplar or tamarack on well-wooded shores or islands, the delicate cedar-canoes which carried his excellency smoothly gliding and slipping through the water with her polished sides—always well ahead when it came to sailing—like the graceful queen-bird of the whole troop.

About two o'clock we stopped again to "boil the kettle," at the far end of the lake. Then leaving it and with it the waters of the Nelson whose stream we had hitherto been descending, we

began to push up the Echamamish, a little tributary of the Nelson no less sinister to the eye than in the sound of its name to the ear, black and sluggish like the stagnant pools of a Highland peat-bog, trickling through what looked like an unmeasurable swamp and fringed by oozy willows and alders which leaned dejectedly over its sombre water—the very image of a stagnant stream. We had hoped to push ahead out of this dreary region to higher and more cheerful ground at the height of land which divides the Echamamish from the Hayes river, but we had no such luck. Night came on with a drizzling rain and we had to encamp on a wide level flat formed by one of the lay bends of the stream amid luxuriant and strong-smelling vegetation, full of the only mosquitoes that showed the slightest energy—rank stuff which had the appearance of a very disagreeable variety of grass and all the suggestions of a sort of damp carpet of Hades. It was for my own part with rather a sinking heart that I made my bed that night. But the excellent arrangements for protection against damp and flies with which the tents were furnished secured perfect comfort and, like all the rest of the party, I had a rather unusually sound sleep. His excellency seemed that night to my surprise to be even rather more cheerful than usual. This day, the ninth of August, was as I have said, typical, in the sense that it nearly exhausted all the variety of our journey. We had portaged, sailed, paddled down stream (the Nelson) and



HUDSON BAY INDIANS WHO GREETED EARL GREY AT NORWAY HOUSE.

paddled up stream (the Echamamish) in sunshine and shower, exhilaration and depression. But in the fact that there was any rain it was almost, and in respect that it had its moments of depression the day, so far from being typical was altogether unique. On the next day we ascended what remained of the Echamamish, which narrowed ever as we went on, passing three primitive little dams built for the party's boats. Curiously enough Sir John Franklin, writing about 1819, mentions dams at the same place constructed, however, in those days by beavers! His party broke through one, but the industrious creatures, he was assured, would repair it in a single night. During the second march after the morning boiling of the kettle we made the "height of land," the watershed between the Echamamish and the Hayes rivers, where, after swinging up one water you carry your canoe over a rock some fifty yards wide to re-embark and move along under sail, it is very hard work. "First the laboring oar," as Homer says, "and then the boom beyond the oar." In the evening we reached Robinson's Portage, where we struck a magnificent camp within the roar of thundering falls. It is by far the longest portage in the whole journey, the river rushing like a mill-race for a mile and a half through a series of rapids and cascades quite impassable to canoes. Accordingly the Hudson Bay company have set up here a wooden tramway with four iron-wheeled trucks, by which our canoes and baggage were transported to the camp

or waters, below the falls. From this, for five days of almost monotonous sunshine and general prosperity, from the 11th to the 15th, we went through a whole endless series of rocky islands, lakes and lovely rivers, their low shores covered with the characteristic and rather valueless timber of this region, mostly spruce, poplar and tamarack. The longest lakes were Hayes Lake, fifty miles long, and Oxford Lake, which is thirty-five. Late in the evening of the 12th, after an unusually splendid sunset on the water, as we paddled along, we reached Oxford House, at the head of its lake, another station of the great company and the only settlement throughout the whole sketch of 400 miles from Norway House to York-Factory. Sir John Franklin mentions it as an already decaying station in 1819. The Indians made the most of their stay here—we did not leave till the afternoon of the 13th—brightening up the links of old acquaintanceship and indulging in a good deal of dancing and general jollification. During these days we had a great deal of the delightful rest and exhilaration of sailing. Once on the fifteenth, as we crossed an arm of Kne Lake, the wind freshened and gave us a little thrill of excitement. The canoe shipped some water, one man snatched to the great amusement of the Indians not involved, and we realized for a moment that our journey was not altogether lacking in the spice of danger. During these nights we had many displays of the northern lights. But they were not specially brilliant. Strange to say,

they are not to be seen at their best so far north. On the evening of the 15th after a pretty sharp gust of wind and under a somewhat menacing sky we encamped near the end of Swaney Lake. On the following day there were repeated showers of rain, driving clouds and a good deal of heavy wind. It was not so bad as to make it impossible to force ahead. But as the next stage was to be the great day of portages, through bush and swamp, it was decided that it would be too uncomfortable to proceed and we wisely sat tight in the perfect comfort of our tents listening luxuriously to the wind and the ineffectual patter of the rain drops on the water-proof canvas and indulging in reading or conversation. With the exception of two hours of violent head-wind on Oxford Lake this was the one stop in the whole course of our travels by land or sea imposed upon us by unfavorable conditions of weather.

On the 17th after crossing the mile of Swampy Lake that still remained we entered upon the last lap of our overland journey. Here we began the real and rapid descent to the salt water of the Hudson's Bay. The whole of the 17th and the morning of the 18th was one dizzy succession of falls and rapids about fifteen in all. It was a brilliant and exhilarating spectacle at those rapids, full of sparkling life both in the river and in the crew—the flashing and tumbling water—the bold jutting rocks often crowned or overhung by glossy foliage, the bustling Indians in the full glory of their

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