



CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

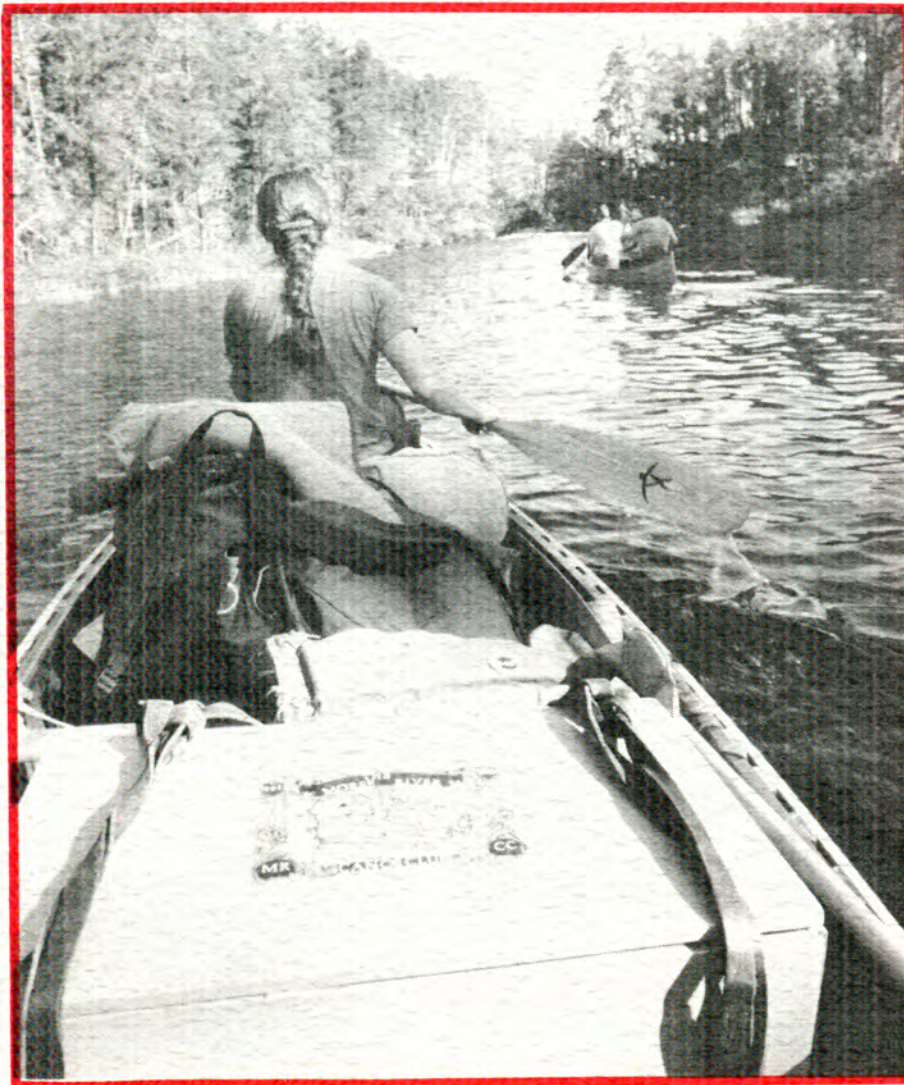
THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 51

CHE-MUN

WINTER 1987

Traditional tripping



A park's pleasures

Quetico

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Farewell

Grand

Canal *Page 6*

Hail

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Caesars!

Kate Schnaidt pulls on her pictograph-painted paddle while on a trip through Quetico Provincial Park. The Tremblay canoe is 25 years old, the packs are canvas and the box is an old style wanigan. Traditional, or low-tech, camping still has a great deal to offer the modern canoeist. Especially when paddling through a place as historic and beautiful as Quetico.



Winter Packet

David Pelly is a friend. So it was with some regret that Che-Mun discovered that David was not ecstatic about the Operation Raleigh story in Outfit 50. David's letter was a first - he wrote it after reading issue 50 aboard a KLM jet bound for Africa where he was doing research for a freelance writing piece.

We hope that David realizes that Che-Mun meant well and we were perhaps lax in properly conveying the true sense of Operation Raleigh.

"Operation Raleigh is not my expedition or anyone else's. I volunteered, upon being asked by the U.K. to do the job because I see immense value in it for youth, and for the science and cultural heritage of the Kazan, a river and an area very dear to me. Your title (Operation Pelly) suggests some element of self-aggrandisement, and that interpretation on your part disappoints me.

"Secondly - and more important - we are not 'invading' the barrenlands. In fact, I would suggest that most contemporary travellers there are not so attuned to the land as our group will be. The very nature of our scientific projects will transport the Venturers into a communion with nature. They will be on their knees examining the soil. They will document the vegetation, the bird life and the breeding that occurs in hidden corners. They will record the larger wildlife, and then finally, with this basis of nature's development over 7,000 years (since the ice left!) on the barrens, they will record something of the history of those humans (the Chipewyans, Athapascan and Inuit) who drew their living from the system.

"Please remember this." We will, David. Aye, we will.

Janet Grand and Ron Reid are committed and experienced naturalists. They form Bobolink Enterprises, Box 330, Washago, Ontario, L0K 2B0, and they recently produced the book *Canoeing Ontario's Rivers*. Ron and Janet were on the Nahanni this summer and dropped a line to Che-Mun on local developments.

"Visitation is up considerably in Nahanni National Park this year - we saw several groups in a three week trip in July (Moose Ponds to Liard River). We are concerned about the severe degradation of the paths at the Virginia Falls campsite - it desperately needs help. But we are even more concerned about Parks Canada's proposals to 'develop' that campsite to a considerable degree.

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"I haven't seen the actual plans yet, but according to the wardens it would include changes that would remove the wilderness aspects of the site. We're hoping that lots of folks will drop a line to Parks Canada to ask details of the proposals and protest changes that intrude too much on the naturalness of the site. Otherwise, Parks Canada should be applauded for leaving things alone in the Park!"

For those wishing to contact Parks Canada you can do so by writing Nahanni National Park, Postal Bag 300, Fort Simpson, N.W.T. X0E 0N0 or phone 403/695-3151.

Stewart T. Coffin, 79 Old Sudbury Rd, Lincoln, MA 01773 is a cherished and regular contributor to Che-Mun for many years. He writes again of last summer's activities in - where else - Labrador.

"Our party of four took the QNS&LR to Oreway, crossed Ashuanipi Lake, and tried to retrace what I understood to be the old Indian route to Sept-Iles via the Caopacho and Moisie Rivers. I have seen many references to this trail over the years but no detailed descriptions. My friend Beekman Pool went up it in 1930 with Lincoln Ellsworth and two Indians, but he could not remember the details.

"The route is obvious enough from the maps except in two places. We crossed the height-of-land by a compass portage west into Fatfish Lake rather than the direct route south. The last few miles of Caopacho are impassable rapids in a spectacular canyon.

"We by passed these by a portage route that is fairly obvious, through Lac Simeon to the next lake and following its outlet into the Moisie. We saw frequent traces of old trail, but it constantly vanished in blowdowns. It took us four days to chop our way through the final three miles of blowdowns and alder thickets. If this trail were to be improved and maintained it would be a splendid route from headwaters to the North Shore, with many fine campsites, beautiful scenery and mostly easy paddling and running.

"We took 15 days steady going. Hugh Stewart and his group were just behind us for the first half of our trip, then they cut eastward. Garrett and Alexandra Conover were on the same train headed for the McPhayden (see next letter - Ed. Note).

Garrett and Alexandra Conover are Maine Guides and two of the nicest folks you'd ever want to meet. And we should know - 'cause we've

met them! They operate Northwoods Ways, Box 286, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine 04426.

Garrett and Alexandra are committed to retain the traditional guiding and campcraft technique carried on in the Maine Woods for generations. As part of their guided tripping they do a Labrador trip, both winter and summer.

Garrett writes, "We had a fantastic Labrador trip this August. We ascended an un-named river for about 60 miles and then portaged by compass into the headwaters of the McPhayden River which we descended and returned to Menihok Lake and the tracks. We had a great reunion in the freight yard and on the train. Stewart Coffin was on board as was Hugh Stewart. Their respective parties numbered four and six.

"Ours included Alexandra, Kimberly Kafka and Lisa MacDonald (aged 13). It seems that most of our winter and canoe trips have a high percentage of women on them which causes the trainmen much speculation and me much amusement as they sometimes speculate out loud.

"So I let them imagine what they will which is always more interesting than what actually happens."

Ron Hirsch, 39 Day Ave., East Longmeadow, MA U.S.A. 01028 writes, "Enclosed is a check for \$18 for another two years of reading about wind, rain, ice, blackflies and portaging 100 lb. loads. It was a tough choice between subscribing to Che-Mun or the Club Med Quarterly - but you guys won out.

"We (Al McMullen, Margaret Taylor "St. Margaret of Baker" and Donna Barnett) had to cancel our Kazan River trip this past summer due to a death in the family.

"We are hoping for a trip on the Kazan in '88 or '89 or some other river if the Kazan is too crowded. The Dubawnt, Seal or Taltson are possibilities. As always we are looking for people to join us or people who might want us to join them. If you know of any leads please let me know.

"I have recently come across and read several books that Che-Mun readers might be interested in.

"ARCTIC by Fern Schultz-Lorentzen is a novel (often thrilling) about an Inuit community on Hudson Bay (Eskimo Point?) and the cultural clashes between the white and natives. (McClelland and Stewart, 1976.)

ARCTIC DREAMS (Barry Lopez) and FRESHWATER SAGA (Eric Morse) have also been my companions this year. I just can't get enough of it."

CANOE TOONS

PAUL MASON



News & Notes

PRO PELLE NOMINE . . . The selling off by the Hudson's Bay Company of its Northern Stores division caused a stir in many circles. Besides all the historical, ethical and financial considerations a very real dilemma remained for the people who actually use the store-what do you call one? The new company, with all the original employees and assets, have the right to use the HBC Northern Stores name for three years. The word was out that they were looking for a new one. While it still isn't official, a surprise slip in a Toronto newspaper revealed it. Describing a social function that former Bay Archivist George Whitman was attending the writer gave his title as vice-president of the New Northwest Company! They had originally wanted to call themselves the Northwest Company but the name was already registered. The historical ironies present are considerable. It was the HBC that originally bought the NW Co., their principal and profitable competitors, in 1821. They then destroyed all traces of them. And the social function that Mr. Whitman was attending? The launch of Peter Newman's new book -Caesars of the Wilderness-all about the fur trade and volume two of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company whose motto Pro Pelle Cutem meant 'A skin for a skin'. And 'a name for a name'?

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BOUS ARE BACK . . . In the wake of the drowning of 10,000 caribou on the Hydro-Quebec flooded Caniapiscaw River there has been increased public awareness of the state of caribou. The latest news is good. There appear to be large increases in many northern herds. The Kaminuriak herd of the Keewatin have increased dramatically in the last few years. One theory for the increase is cows have migrated to that herd from others. The seven largest herds are all on the increase; the George River, Bathurst, Beverly, Kaminuriak, Western Arctic, Porcupine and Wager, herds which comprise 80 per cent of the continent's 102 herds. There is a potential problem in Alaska where the U.S. is considering opening up large areas of protected land for oil and gas exploration. Worldwide population of caribou is estimated at four million.

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NEW YORK TO NOME . . . Many canoeists have no doubt heard of a trans-continental canoe trip in the 1930's. Many canoe books have made reference to this trip, taken by two young Americans. Only now is there a book due to appear on the epic trip. Shell Taylor, who along with Jeff Pope paddled those 9,000 miles, is the author of *New York to Nome: The Longest Canoe Trip in the World*. The book, co-authored by Rick Steber is due to be published in a few months by North River Press of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. Perhaps the recent spate of mega-mileage canoe trips spurred Taylor, now in his seventies, to do the book now. The two left New York on April 25, 1936 following a whirlwind promotional campaign. They went up the Hudson eventually to the St. Lawrence where they followed the voyageur route west. They stopped at Fort Smith for the winter and resumed next May continuing down the Mackenzie and up over the divide via the Porcupine, then down the Yukon to Nome where they arrived on August 11. Taylor writes of the experience. "How awesomely spectacular the world was! The scabby ears, cracked lips, headwinds, and any other persistent tribulations were a small price to pay for such a glorious way of life."

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WHAT'S LEFT . . . The Canadian Press wire service reported in mid-October that a man in an open canoe went through the famed Whirlpool Rapids on the Niagara River below the Falls. That is territory usually reserved for barrels . . . full of nuts. Nolan Whitesell, a 35-year-old boat builder from Atlanta successfully paddled the two kilometre stretch despite flipping once. They said he righted his craft (an open 13-foot canoe in Grade VI rapids??) and continued on. The river was a 50 per cent flow due to Hydro companies diversions. "The waves are definitely the biggest stuff I've ever seen, it's really amazing the power in there," Mr. Whitesell remarked. He did not indicate when he would be kayaking over the Falls.

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SLIDE FEST III . . . The George Luste living room affair grows ever bigger. Last year the Canoeist's Slide Fest and Wilderness Symposium moved from the small gathering at canoe veteran Luste's house to a local community college with a full house (175 people) attending the day and a half of non-stop slide shows and talks sponsored by the Wilderness Canoe Association. The venue size has more than doubled next year to 375. The Far Northwest is the area under examination in 1988's symposium which will be held Friday evening January 29 and all day Saturday the 30th 1988 at the North York Civic Centre in Toronto. The terrain covered will include Alaska, the Yukon, northern British Columbia and the N.W.T. rivers flowing into the Mackenzie River from the west. This will mean first-hand talks and discussions on such rivers as the Bonnet Plume, the Mountain, Natla-Keele, Rat, Porcupine, Stikine, and Kobuk among others. There is a wide variety of speakers including Kay Henry of Mad River Canoe fame, Carl Shepardson (of the cross-country Shepardsons), Cliff "Canoeing Wild Rivers" Jacobson, Che-Mun subscriber Bill Hoyt with a film of his trip down the Bonnet Plume, Jack Goering who went with Eric and Pamela Morse up the Rat and down the Porcupine, and many others. The appeal of a meeting like this is not a great deal of slick slide demos but the amount of informations available from a great many experienced paddlers who usually only show their photos to friends and fellow trip members. It's an exhausting and fascinating show. For further info contact George Luste, 139 Albany Ave. Toronto, Ontario M5R 3C5, phone 416/534-9313 (h) or Bill King 416/223-4646.

Ontario jewel still sparkles for canoeists



Early evening on the Maligne River in the heart of Quetico. Peter Scott takes his Chestnut for an evening paddle - at

the photographer's request. Perhaps someday we'll be able to publish in colour, to do justice to this photo.

By Michael Peake
Che-Mun Editor

A recent 10-day trip through Quetico Provincial Park brought back many wonderful reminders of wilderness canoeing - things that were missing from the trips we've been doing recently.

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Our canoe group, the Hide-Away Canoe Club, is an informal collection of family and friends. In recent years we have been doing a lot of tripping in northern Canada. And don't get me wrong - it has been great. But a trip in Quetico this past September reminded me of another aspect of tripping, one equally as rewarding, in its own way, and considerably more comfortable.

Located on the Ontario-Minnesota border, Quetico is the jewel of Ontario's provincial park system. Founded in 1909 this million acres of wilderness shield country is a popular and well preserved park. This recent trip was my sixth Quetico experience, all done without retracing much of the same ground.

There were four of us; my regular partner on northern expeditions, Peter Scott, who this time was paddling with Elizabeth Nuttall and I was sharing a canoe with Kate Schnaidt who accompanied us on our Leaf River trip last year (see Che-Mun Outfit 46).

We decided to make this a traditional trip right from the start. The canoes we used were both cedar/canvas classics. Peter and Elizabeth used a Muskoka Fine Watercraft Chestnut Prospector while Kate and I paddled my old Tremblay 17-foot monster. All our packs were the traditional Wood's canvas sacks, the ones we always use.

A truly traditional addition was a wooden wanigan made my brother David Peake. We even equipped it with a freshly made 12-foot long leather strap that took us a while to figure out how to apply. It had been 25 years since I'd used a wanigan . . . and I soon discovered why.

Quetico is blessed with a myriad of possible canoe routes. An indispensable book prior to going to Quetico is Keith Denis' 30-year-old classic *Canoe Trails Through Quetico*. Denis' easy going style and Selwyn Dewdney's amusing drawings put this book on the must list.

The unique feature of Quetico is its history. Both major voyageur routes went through the park along with almost everyone else who went to western Canada before the railroad was completed in the 1870's. Knowing all these historical facts and features helps to plan your trip.

We chose to do a loop that would take us into the middle of the park to get a look at the best pictographs (Indian rock paintings) on Darcy Lake. There are many examples of these unique drawings throughout the park but the cow moose and calf on Darcy are the best.

Leaving French Lake you are on the post-1803 voyageur route that avoided Grand Portage. This routing was started after Americans threatened to impose duties on all furs passing through their country. So the ever-thrifty Northwest Company managers initiated a route up the Kaministikwia River and through the top end of Quetico Park. Much harder but much cheaper.

Quetico

The easy going is in Quetico; through Pickerel and Sturgeon Lakes and down the Maligne River to Lac La Croix where the two routes join up.

Autumn is my favorite time for visiting Quetico. Ninety per cent of the park's visitors are American, drawn from Minnesota and Wisconsin primarily and most people visit in the summer. The only usual problem with fall trips is that the water is low which can cause tough sledding on some small creeks and rivers.

Not so this year. The water was perfectly high. There is a creek called Deux Rivieres which is the short way to get into Sturgeon Lake from Pickerel. On two of our three previous times through this two mile stretch of creek we passed by in low water. The deep mud, busy beavers and tree-choked banks made that short distance a three or four hour dragging nightmare. This fall we easily glided over the third beaver dam that usually spelled disaster.

Of course the low water has its good points. At Pine Portage which leaves Pickerel Lake there is a fine white beach . . . or rather there was. When last there in 1981 on a trip to Grand Portage there was a walk of 30 feet from the beach to where the trees began. This year it was five feet. Too bad, because when the beach is exposed so is an important part of Quetico's history.

The Dawson Trail was the route west before the railroad. A series of barges and ox-carts carried passengers through what is now Quetico. In low water the boiler from one of those barges is still there along with a lot of artifacts - perhaps someone's lost or broken baggage? In '81 we found bits of pottery and glass and even a small medicine bottle. We left everything displayed on a rock for other paddlers searching for the past to see. It is an unthinkable act to steal a place's history - not to mention illegal.

September sun

Our first couple of days were not classic's. It rained a lot and the weather was generally cloudy. The major difference was that 10 years ago we weren't prepared for it. After a few trips in Ungava any non-freezing rain is a blessing. But like so many other times in the third week of September we were smiled upon.

With a soft September sun, no bugs, the trees changing colour, and temperatures in the high 60's - we were in canoeing heaven. Quetico's portages are well worn from the

Recently the Deux Rivieres Portage was changed slightly to avoid a marshy area. boots of many generations. They are marked only by their years of use - no signs.

The new route was a good one and probably made sense. You could certainly see where one stopped and the other began. The exposed roots of towering pines had been worn smooth since the moccasined feet of the voyageurs while the new section look factory fresh. Peter Scott and I walked the old trail just because it was the old trail and original voyageur route. But it is amazing how fast nature takes it all back.

It was a wonderful feeling to trip again at a non-expedition pace. To enjoy a leisurely breakfast over a crackling wood fire, a second pot of coffee, sizzling bacon and eggs while munching on last night's fresh-baked bread.

Perfection

Enjoying a lingering 'cup of joe' on a granite studded point beneath craggy pines on a fresh, sunny, bugless morning is an impossible dream in the territories. Our trip had the feel of a Sig Olson book or those great photos from the 1950's - why do they have more "feel" of a trip than many of today's technically perfect slides?

We headed east from Darky Lake through a series of lake expansions of the ever-climbing Darky Creek. We had seen several canoeists the first couple of days and a few in Darky Lake which is part of a connecting route from the south. But as we headed through a portage-filled route back to a main artery we knew we would see no one. And we didn't.

One lake remains in my memory. Like so many memorable lakes it has no name. It was between two 1000 yard portages that would bring us to the Kashapiwi River. We knew the terrain was steep and the portages would be fairly tough. But it was such a perfect day the task was a delight. It was the second of five perfect days in a row. And I mean PERFECT!

This small lake was exquisite with several deep bays that offered great harbours of intimacy. There were many small cliffs and steep granite outcrops. A narrow channel led to a final bay out of which we would portage. The passage, about ten feet wide was totally dammed up by beaver and the level of the bay was two feet higher. It was tempting to play dambuster but they build them so well the effort isn't worth it, so we dragged over.

One of the truly great things about Quetico are the campsites. There are some Grade A super deluxe offerings. We stopped at one for lunch near the end of the trip. Even though we had planned a 120-mile trip in 10 days we didn't feel rushed except this once. Here was a perfect island campsite in the middle of a lovely rapids. Great tent sights, good views, excellent fireplace, a carpet of pine needles and - a stack of split firewood! I felt like Goldilocks . . . was someone expecting us?

The rapids were a treat, we could have played in them all afternoon - something we'd have to do with great care in these cedar/canvas boats. But this was lunch and we couldn't take the time.

There were about 35 portages in all but only eight of more than 800 yards. I drew the 95 lb., freshly re-canvassed Tremblay for the first trip and the wanigan for the second. I quickly delegated the wanigan to Peter Scott who has a high suffering index. The wanigan was OK if you had the strap at your perfect length. I liked it quite low on my back otherwise it was a killer.

No doubt about it though - the boat was a pig. It was as much of a pain on the portage trail as it was a delight in the water. There is definitely a great pleasure out of paddling a canvas covered boat. They feel like they belong in the woods, and I guess they do.

Lolk's lovelies

We, of course, used Aage Lolk's paddles as we have for 11 years. Aage (pronounced Awgie) now produces exclusively for Muskoka Fine Watercraft. I'm always amazed by how much Americans like these paddles. They can't seem to find a good quality, finely shaped wooden paddle. We also use Lolk paddles on our northern expeditions for everything but heavy and rock-studded rapids.

One thing about good weather that probably only bothers a northern wilderness tripper - it can be incredibly stressful. You keep wondering when it's going to end! Well, it didn't end and it was the first trip I've been on where we didn't run into some kind of wind problem.

It was wonderful to renew acquaintances with Quetico and the basics of traditional tripping. It's nice to know it is always there just as it has been for generations. And like those basics of tripping let's hope it is always with us and always respected.

Water policy announced

Turning off the tap

The long-awaited Federal Government policy on Canada's water resources was finally released last month in Ottawa. And it appears the wait was worth it.

In what must be cited as a landmark document - especially for a government - the report finally explodes the myth that Canada has unlimited water resources - just like we had unlimited passenger pigeons and buffalo.

In his introduction to the report, federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan states, "The truth is that Canada, which occupies 7 per cent of the world's land mass, has 9 per cent of its renewable water . . . just about our fair share. About 60 per cent of Canada's water drains north, while 90 per cent of our population lives within 200 miles of our southern border. . . Put simply Canada is not a water rich country." Refreshingly true words indeed.

The report's major recommendation of interest to environmentally minded canoeists is buried in the middle under the section titled Interbasin Transfers. The federal environment ministry has officially given a thumbs down to such projects which include the infamous Grand Canal scheme that would have seen James Bay dammed off and used as a freshwater reservoir to feed the U.S. mid-west.

The report notes, "approximately 60 interbasin water transfers have been identified across Canada resulting in a total transferred flow of 4450 cubic meters per second. (*Editors note - that's about half the flow of the Mackenzie River*). The total is greater than that transferred in the next leading countries, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., combined."

Change of attitude

This report is a good example of just how far we have come, as a society, in appreciating the environmental and social impact of such megaprojects. It is virtually impossible to believe that such recommendations would have been endorsed by a Conservative government 30 years ago. In fact, there was not even environmental awareness then - not to mention a ministry. The report, which is a basic outline of the policies that will be pursued by the federal government over the next few years also deals with many other areas.

There is a section on 25 specific policy statements. These include; Wetlands Preservation, Hydroelectric Energy Development, Native Water Rights, Management of Northern Water Resources, Safe Drinking Water, Heritage River Preservation and many others.

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Federal Water Policy

Che-Mun readers maybe familiar with the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). This organization is primarily funded by Environment Canada. With regard to Heritage Rivers the report says, "Canada's rivers are a priceless and irreplaceable part of our natural and cultural heritage."

Unfortunately, with seemingly endless supplies of freshwater, Canadians have not always treated their rivers with the respect that they deserve." The report goes on to say that the federal government will support the CHRS in its efforts to preserve important historic, natural and recreational rivers.

In essence this Federal Water Policy states that water is a valuable resource that is not overly abundant and currently much misused. It should be treated as a resource - an important one. It is apparent to many that the quest for water will be as desperate and important in the 21st century as oil has been in the 20th. So, we'd better start treating it with respect.

CHRS UPDATE

The latest annual report of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System landed with a glossy thud on Che-Mun's desk this fall.

It appears that the CHRS is growing rapidly (sic) and the list of rivers is filling out. As of the fall of 1987 the Yukon, N.W.T. and seven provinces are members of the group. The newest member is Quebec - originally a holdout but now in the fold.

The objectives of the CHRS are to "give national recognition to the important rivers of Canada and to ensure long-term management which will conserve their values for the benefit of Canadians now, and in the future."

At the present time there are 13 rivers, or parts of rivers, in the system totaling a distance of 1500 miles. Five have been designated, the final step, and nine nominated.

Those designated are; the French (Ontario), Alsek (Yukon), Clearwater (Sask.), South Nahanni (N.W.T.), and the Bloodvein (Manitoba).

The nominated rivers are; the Athabasca (Alberta), St. Croix (New Brunswick), North Saskatchewan (Alta.), Missinaibi (Ont.), Kicking Horse (B.C.), Bloodvein (Ont.) Boundary Waters (Ont.), Seal (Manitoba), Jacques Cartier (Quebec).



Phil Chester (aka Grey Owl) delivered a one-of-a-kind talk at the Canexus Canoe Conference in Kingston, Ontario last month.

Wake up, Mister Canoehead!

Consequently many of the talks were read directly from the manuscripts as prepared for publication which could be a little dry. The only drawback from an all-academic group of presenters is that very few try to liven things up. Sometimes that-combined with the shut-off air circulation system-lead to some nodding off. Perhaps it is why organizer Jim Raffan designed half of the time to be given over to questions. That's where most of the lively, and wide awake, exchanges occurred.

Other speakers and their topics included; Bruce Hodgins (Canoe Irony: Symbol Yet Harbinger of Destruction), George Luste (Wilderness Canoeing Therapy: Fact or Fantasy), George Dyson (Baidarkas) and Jim Raffan (Will the Real Canoeist Please Stand Up).

In addition to the talks there were several socializing periods between and after sessions. Displayed in the halls were a number of scale models of traditional craft from the Kanawa Canoe Museum and well as assorted canoeing memorabilia and a few live canoes courtesy Muskoka Fine Watercraft.

The Saturday highlight was the evening presentation by Bill Mason. Bill is certainly known to almost every canoeist in North America. He's been traveling so much lately - that he's probably met most of you!

The title of Bill's offering was Canoes: The Ultimate Vehicle for Creative Expression and that's something Bill Mason's proven better than anyone else around. He gave a sampling from most of his films about canoeing over the past 35 years. Starting right back with a dark-haired, young Mr. Mason on the Winnipeg River.

Paddle to the Sea has a great sequence of the little canoe going over Niagara Falls, Bill explained just how it was done. So too, with Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes, a film ostensibly about geography and geology, but presented in a most entertaining way. It has brightened up more classrooms than the morning sun.

There were many classic moments from that film alone that we had the privilege to hear, firsthand, from the filmmaker just how things were done. Bill's excellent talk made you realize just how nuts about canoes this guy is. He makes a voyageur look like a slacker!

Following the talk, Jim Raffan led the entire group in one of his patented 'mass involvement' thank-you's which had everyone paddling and swishing to an incredible crescendo.

There are no plans to repeat Canexus which understandably was a lot of work for the volunteer organizers involved. It provided thoughtful insights into just how permeated the canoe is in Canadian culture. Although the very fact that a conference like this was a sell-out proved that fact.

It took an American sea kayaker to sum up the tone and attitude of the Canexus canoe conference.

As famed paddler and baidarka builder George Dyson put it, "I find it incredible that all of us here have spent two days discussing a wide variety of canoeing topics . . . and no one talked about equipment. That just wouldn't happen where I'm from."

Mr. Dyson hit it right on the head.

Canexus was, as billed, A Conference Celebrating The Canoe in Canadian Culture. Perhaps, 'The Canoe as Intellectual Icon' might have been as equally an appropriate title for the weekend gab fest held at Queen's University in Kingston from November 20-22.

A wide variety of speakers, primarily from educational backgrounds, presented papers and lead discussions on canoe related matters. Right from the opening night you could tell this weekend would be different. Kirk Wipper, founder of the renowned Kanawa Canoe Museum, dressed in full voyageur regalia, delivered a moving invocation.

Following Kirk, 'Grey Owl' spoke to the amazed crowd. Teacher Philip Chester has a great interest in the late persona of

writer Archie Belaney better known as Grey Owl. Consequently he was dressed in full Indian garb to deliver his presentation. In what was surely one of the brightest and most innovative talks ever seen, Chester rambled in a stream-of-consciousness style - a witty, moving, a continuum of thoughts, wishes and hopes for the future. He was a very unique, entertaining and thought provoking speaker.

Chester is a man deeply committed to the preservation of many Canadian traditions and values - such as the concern for the land and animals that Grey Owl had. They are traditions he thinks we are losing and had better be aware that we are. Or put as only Phil Chester could put it, "Wake up and smell the bannock, Mr. Canoehead!"

The all-day Saturday and half-day Sunday talks were broken into three or four speakers at a time. So it was only possible to see a small portion of the talks available. Part of the cost of the weekend went towards a full set of the papers delivered at Canexus. They will be published by Betelgeuse next fall as a follow-up to their successful book *Nastawgan*, which was also a series of essays, incidentally by many of the same people.

Bay History, Vol. II Et tu, voyageur?

Caesars of the Wilderness: Volume II of the Company of Adventurers trilogy by Peter C. Newman, Penguin Books Canada and Viking Penguin Inc. (New York) \$25.

As Peter C. Newman works at becoming Canada's next Pierre Berton, he is unravelling one of this country's most complex institutions - the Hudson's Bay Company. After his first book, *The Company of Adventurers*, he has settled down to tell the story.

Company seemed more like a recital of the books Newman has read. Every other line contained at least one literary reference. Perhaps, the best part of that book was the extensive bibliography. Now Newman is into the meat of the Hudson's Bay story. *Caesars* spans the years from the 1780's to the 1870's. Years that saw the Bay rise from its almost fatal struggle with the North West Company to an institution that would dominate a continent then begin to wane as a power.

This time it wasn't pressure from other traders, but rather a slow and irresistible force - the settler. It is also the most memorable period of our history. Tales of 'Big Mac' - Alexander MacKenzie - George Simpson, the voyageur, as well as the merger between the N.W.Co. and the Bay, are just some of the stories that passed through Newman's typewriter.

All Canadians can relate to the voyageur, the tough, coarse, hard drinking and sometimes treacherous engine of the fur trade. While most of us remember the exploits of famous explorers like David Thompson, we tend to forget that it was the voyageur who got these 'famous explorers' to their destinations. They were the men

who opened up the continent. Newman tries to define the Canadian character in terms of the voyageur and the fur trade. The spirit of the voyageur still lives in all of us who canoe and, although for most of us our social graces have improved, rum still plays an important role in some canoe trips.

While America was opened up on horseback, the Precambrian Shield, impenetrable bush and muskeg prevented the use of animals. Explorers had to adopt the bark canoe and the ways of the Indian. This gave the voyageur a sense of freedom and a strong bond to the land. They soon found that one could travel from the Atlantic ocean to the Arctic by following the ribbons of water that flow along scratches in the bedrock. Newman asserts that the Bay shaped the Canadian culture more than any other single influence. To prove this, he compares the different social and cultural values between the U.S. and Canada.

Canada believes in the rights of the community, the Americans the right of the individual. Our ancestors worked for 'The Company' and lived under the law and order of the post. South of the border, the fur trade was based on the 'coureurs de bois' style of the lone trader, in Canada it was a partnership.

The difference between trading methods is most evident when you look at how the traders treated the Indians. The Canadians looked at the Indian as a vital part of the process, the Americans saw them as the enemy - just compare the different styles of popular literature.

Caesars is a much better read than Volume I, and Newman does what Canadians do best, tell history. The North repre-

sents our past, and all Canadians maintain a strong link to it, whether they have been there or not. It's also clear that water flows through our veins, not blood. The geography of Canada has made us this way.

Many Canadians have expressed concern that we have written only a handful of novels that mention the canoe - our true national symbol. This, perhaps, is a result of our link with the old ways of fort life. Isolation made us desperate for news from the outside or the packet from home. After 300 years, we're among the best in the world at presenting news and narrating events. Our history is filled with the stories of explorers, solitary trappers and wanderers, adventure and adversity - we don't need to make up stories.

Peter C. Newman continues the tradition of the Canadian story-teller and has written a marvellous account of the Bay's golden years. Some reviewers have said they look forward to the final volume of this trilogy but to me, as to most canoeists, this is my favorite time in Canada's history. The period from the 1870's to the present day may seem like an epilogue.

Unfortunately the company has already sold out, and has shown a total distaste for its past. There will be nothing stirring about volume three except for examples of greed, financial ineptitude and bad management.

Finally, it seems ironic that, while the company has severed its links with the past and only serves the tastes of the urban dweller, its old rival has risen from the grave and taken over its Northern stores, reborn as - the New North West Company.

Sean Peake

Subscribers note:

U.S. subscribers please note: Because of bank charges and higher postal rates all payments to Che-Mun are to be made in U.S. dollars. Perhaps Free Trade will change this.

On a more pertinent note in *Outfit 52* we'll tell you about the plans for the Hide-Away Canoe Club's ambitious Ungava expedition in 1988. Happy planning!

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