



CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 56

CHE-MUN

SPRING 1989



Franklin takes a licking

Tyrrell, too! Page 4

The Classics

David Hanbury's
Sport and Travel

Page 6

Alaskan tragedy

Page 3

BLACK DEATH - Geoffrey Peake holds a handful of the Prudhoe Bay crude from the impaired tanker Exxon Valdez. The entire Prince William Sound on Alaska's south coast has been affected. The Sound was a prime sea kayaking area until the spill occurred. The spill reinforced the need for stringent protection of our waterways. See Page 3 for a taste of the spill.

Spring Packet



Proving once again that winter is a time for both planning and writing the Spring Packet is again bulging. Given that so many people had so much to say we will present it in an expanded form this issue.

Pete Neilson, Box 53, Carcross Yukon, YO8 1B0, is a Che-Mun subscriber who no doubt knows a lot about winter.

Pete writes, "Enjoyed your article on the return of the Woods pack glad to hear it. Another company making high quality canoe packs is Fort MacPherson Canvas Co. While I haven't seen the finished product of their latest design (previous packs were not ideal for canoeing) I live in one of their wall tents (yes, year round) and the quality is excellent. As well, I was consulted on the design of the pack along with a friend who has more years in the bush than he cares to add up; Dick Person. It will be interesting to see how these packs compare to the Woods. If past experience is a guide it will be favourable . . . and quite cheaper. They can be contacted at: Box 58, Fort MacPherson, NWT X0E 0J0 or 403/952-2179.

Bill Zeller, Stonybrook RFD 2, Dunbarton, N.H. 03301, is a long time subscriber.

"The news of Bill Mason's passing was a real shock. Meeting him at the Canoe Symposium in Maine in 1987 was a real highlight for me. I had been a fan of his for years through his movies and book. You handled the article extremely well and two other canoeing friends who visited this week and knew of him, have borrowed my copy to read. Hopefully they will subscribe.

"Bill's commitment to canoeing throughout his life is something to admire. I wish I could take off with my paddle and stay until freeze up. I often take up to six weeks but always have a "have to get back by" date.

In the past few years I have had some great trips in the Northwest Territories, the Kazan is my favourite at this point. We explored and found so many Inuit graves and tent rings etc. Sitting on a hillside and looking off forever across the treeless landscape I could almost put myself back in time and be there with them. Wish I could have been with Tyrrell when he came across some of their camps. We spent a week in the village of Baker Lake and found the Inuit to be wonderful people, they are part of the lure that keeps calling me from within to come back to their country.

"While the Coppermine was a great river it lacked the visible history of being a

homeland of the Inuit. We were also rushed out of the village of Coppermine by a trip member who "had to get back there" and only had about three hours there.

"Next summer it will be southeast Alaska by sea kayak and then the Elk/The- lon and back to our friends in Baker Lake in 1990. I understand the Hanbury is beautiful but we want a longer trip on a less travelled river.

"Another trip I really liked was the de Pas and George in northern Quebec. I did this with Gordon Lightfoot, Rob Caldwell and Bill Miller in 1981. The side hikes were spectacular and we stayed ahead of the blackfly hatch.

"I don't have any recent "stories" about my canoeing ventures, but did on my first Canadian trip on the Missinaibi. There was one canoe of the three that was always last. Slowest paddlers, least organized etc. I'm sure everyone has had one in a group. Anyway, my partner was getting in shape for the open canoe national races and each day would paddle our 18-foot leaded canoe as fast as it could possibly go. The second canoe kept us in sight and assumed the third was following them. We all know you don't assume anything and we sure learned that on a large river or lake you make plans where to meet if you are going to do some paddling out of sight of each other. When it comes to islands, you only stop at one tip or the other and not on the side.

You guessed it, while two canoes rested on one side of the island, the slow one went down the other oblivious to the fact they were now in front of us. When we waited some time and didn't see them we thought something wrong and paddled upstream a mile or so looking for floating packs etc. Finally we realized what must have happened and took off looking for them. We were just upstream of the RR crossing (at the village of Moose River) and didn't get much information from the Indians at the little settlement there. We headed downstream trying to see around all the islands and using the binoculars whenever we spotted a 'white canoe'.

"I never realized there are so many dead trees that look like canoes. Our laughing shouts of "Chuck, slow down", helped keep us in good spirits. Finally, after a little more than 40 miles of paddling that day, one of the logs turned out to be the white canoe. I'm still not sure who was happier, but I've never let that happen again.

"I think the words of Gordon Lightfoot's song Whispers of the North explain why we keep going back. Why not get his permission to print them? The line, 'a wild and restless drive that pulls me from within'

speaks for a strong feeling I have as to why I continue to go back." (Ed. Note: Gordon Lightfoot is a Che-Mun subscriber and we'll ask him for permission to print the entire song in Outfit 57. And if we're really lucky, maybe Gord will explain to Che readers what made him write those words. With regard to the Bill Mason article, we are thankful for Bill Zeller's and others kind words. Perhaps the most wonderful note came from Joyce Mason. She thanked us and mentioned that she'd forward on a copy to Bill's mother.)

One of our newest subscribers is noted paddler and author Cliff Jacobson, 928 West 7th St., Hastings, MN 55033. We sent Cliff a copy of Che-Mun to peruse and he returned this letter, with a subscription order, to Che-Mun.

"For your readers information, Canoeing Wild Rivers will be out in second edition (over 200 changes and all new illustrations) in April. And yes, it does contain a glowing recommendation that everyone get Che-Mun. So, I figured I'd best hurry and take my own medicine.

"On another note, all of us on this side of the border were saddened to hear about the death of Bill Mason. Though I did write his eulogy for CANOE Magazine it wasn't easy. Though I'd never met Bill, I always felt we were kinship brothers. We shall miss him dearly.

"I'm really excited about coming to the L.L. Bean Canoe Symposium (ed. Note: see News and Notes item). I've been a customer of Bean's for 35 years. I dearly love my Bean boots. Hope our paddles cross.

Another new Che reader is Bill McDonald, 32 Elizabeth St, Milford, CT. 06460.

"Two things things hooked me about your magazine. One was the fact about the upcoming five year celebration in Canada of Alexander Mackenzie's explorations 200 years ago. I live in Milford, Conn. birth and final resting place of Peter Pond, who is considered Mackenzie's mentor. Not many people in Milford know or care about this, but I know they do in Canada.

I wrote about Pond in a March 1984 CANOE article and my research for an historical novel on him led me to the Clearwater River last July for a ten day run down its length from Lloyd Lake, Sask. to Fort McMurray Alberta. Fort MacMurray has a hotel, shopping centre and school

Continued on Page 11

CANOE TOONS

PAUL MASON



Editor's Notebook

A Late Spring

Outfit 56 of Che-Mun is late. Quite late, as most of you faithful readers are aware, and we apologize.

As we were nearing final deadline for this issue my real-life job intervened. I am in the process of trying to become the Toronto Sun's environmental reporter/photographer. The Alaskan oil spill is the biggest environmental story in many a year and we had to be there. At the Sun they think I went up there to get the two centrespreads which they ran. Of course, the real reason for the trip was to get a front page for Che-Mun.

The accompanying story on this page will tell something about what went on. I grabbed my brother and canoe partner, Geoffrey, from his home in Victoria, British Columbia and up we went. So it sort of had the feel of a canoe trip - without the beautiful water.

Prince William Sound, is now fouled by the oil of the Exxon Valdez, is not really for canoeists. But it's a paradise for sea kayakers. Or rather was. It is an area of incredible beauty, rugged mountains and bountiful sea life.

So, my apologies for the tardiness of this issue and we trust you'll understand. I hope I won't have any such problems with the summer number. But the Autumn issue has to be out on time. I am getting married on September 16. And no... she's not a canoeist(!)

Elsewhere in this issue you will find another installment of The Classics. This time we feature David Hanbury's Sport and Travel in Northland of Canada. It's one of those books that all Barrenland canoeists want to have on their shelves - but usually have trouble finding.

Canada Post have entered the canoeing field, albeit briefly, with the issuing of several canoe and northern stamps. Also, we take a look at Hydro-Quebec who always seem to be in the news.

Finally, our wonderful readers sent a lot of letters in. As usual, they were mostly very interesting and informative which is why we're printing so many of them in this issue.

The rivers are flowing, and the boats being cleaned out. So have yourselves a great spring and don't get too wet.

Michael Peake
Che-Mun Editor

Fury in the Sound

By Michael Peake
Che-Mun Editor

The Alaskan oil spill story has made all the papers and Che-Mun will be no exception.

My employer, the Toronto Sun, sent me to cover the spill two weeks after it happened. I thought that was too late but soon realized this story will have a long life and a long lasting effects.

This, in part, is what I wrote:

Our floatplane glided in to an oil-soaked beach on Green Island, one of many similar islands in Prince William Sound. I walked the shoreline, a mass of slick, black rocks spotted with glops of oil.

A couple of seals bobbed well off shore. It was a lovely day, calm and sunny, mountains glistened along the horizon.

But something was wrong. It was too quiet. No bird could be seen or heard.

I heard a rustle in the dried grass about 80 feet from the water. An oil covered sea otter waddled away from me. His lower half was black. He weakly limped along trying to escape yet another threat - man.

I wasn't sure what to do. We were not equipped to move an otter. In any case, it had just been declared illegal for unauthorized persons to rescue one.

Unlike seals, otters have no layer of fat to keep them warm. They rely on constant cleaning of their fur to keep warm, even a small amount of oil will break down their system and they die of hypothermia.

I took a few photos as he retreated from me. I followed slowly up over a small knoll where the otter ended up under a small evergreen.

I walked closer. Slowly. His oil-streaked body was shivering on this mild spring day. His eyes kept slowly closing and opening. Every once in a while he would furiously rub his face and eyes trying to rid himself of his unseen cloak of death.

I sat there a few feet away just watching this sad and pathetic creature. My eyes filled with tears. He looked pathetic, paws curled under his whiskered face.

I took a picture. He closed his eyes.

Just behind me, about eight feet from the dying otter sat a rusting oil barrel, tossed up by some long ago storm.

It's the otter that belongs on this rugged, beautiful coast.

It's the oil barrel that remains.

Stamps of approval

Canoes and the explorers of the north are the focus of two new stamp issues from Canada Post.

Given that the cost of postal rates is spiralling, the least the post office can do is bring us something interesting to lick. And they've done that with these latest releases.



First out were the canoes. The February unveiling of four, 38 cent canoeing stamps marks the beginning of a three year series of stamps highlighting the small craft of Canada.

The first set includes; the Haida canoe, the Micmac canoe, the Inuit kayak and the Chipewyan canoe.

The Haida Indians lived on Canada's west coast and were a very highly advanced and proud people. They carved their canoes from the huge red cedars of the Pacific rainforest. These beautifully decorated, high prowed boats had intricate hereditary crest designs. The Haida canoes could manage even the rough, open Pacific Ocean. In fact a few years ago they were towing a newly carved Haida war canoe for the Vancouver Expo 86 display from the Queen Charlotte Islands to the mainland, about 60 miles away.

When the seas became too rough for the towboat they cut the canoe adrift with several Haida inside. The canoe beat the towboat into port.



The Micmac canoes of eastern Canada closely resemble many of today's modern recreational canoes. The Micmacs were forest dwellers who moved to the seashore each spring. Their canoes were high amidships and curved in at the gunwales. They were versatile, able to paddle rivers, lakes and the ocean, and of course, light enough to be portaged.

The Inuit kayak was a very light sealskin boat. A fully decked kayak that was very

narrow, it was uniquely adapted to hunting and travel in the north. For a good example of just how effective these boats were see separate story, Tobacco Run of '43.

The Chipewyan Indians ranged throughout northern central Canada west of Hudson Bay. They built flat, narrow bottomed canoes with low, flaring sides for hunting caribou and travelling. Both stern and bow were partly decked and were built using both birch and spruce bark.

The four canoe stamps were designed by graphic designer Louis-Andre Rivard and illustrator Bernard Leduc, of Montreal. They are pictured as they would have first been seen by Europeans. Fifteen million of these four colour stamps have been printed.



Canada Post kept to their northern theme with a March release of the last part of a four year series on exploration. The focus this year is on Canada's north and featured on glue are Sir John Franklin, J.B. Tyrrell, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Matonabbee.

Matonabbee (c.1737-1782) was a Chipewyan Indian and hunter, and an important cog in the fur trade between the Hudson Bay Company and the native people. It was Matonabbee's group whom Samuel Hearne followed between 1770 and 1772 between Churchill and the mouth of the Coppermine River, allowing Hearne to be (allegedly) the first European to see the Arctic coast and name the Coppermine River. It was Matonabbee's group that brutally attacked the Eskimos on the Coppermine thus giving the name to Bloody Falls.

John Franklin (1786-1847) was a veteran Arctic explorer when he undertook his third and final fatal mission in 1845. The ships Erebus and Terror set forth to search for the northwest passage armed with three years of supplies and 129 men. All perished



and the search for the Franklin expedition spawned the greatest concentration of northern exploration in Canada's history.

It is believed that lead poisoning from their low-bid contract, tinned food contributed greatly to their demise. Traces of Franklin's relics are scattered across the Arctic though his journal or remains were



never found. The final members of the crew ended up just north of the mouth of the Back River.

Joseph Burr Tyrrell (1858-1957) was a geologist with the Geological Survey of Canada. Tyrrell made several key canoe trips through the Barrenlands down the Dubawnt and Kazan Rivers and many other connecting waterways. Their first trip nearly ended in disaster when they were found almost frozen just north of Churchill, Manitoba in 1893. Tyrrell has a long life and was considered Canada's grise eminence of the north.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962) was a prolific writer and explorer of the north. Between 1906 and 1918 he made three major Arctic trips during which he learned to live off the land in the native manner. His most famous book, of many, was The Friendly Arctic which debunked the myth that the north was a frozen wasteland but rather a habitable region that could be developed. Stefansson is credited with the



discovery of the last uncharted territories of the North; previously unknown islands in the Arctic Archipelago.

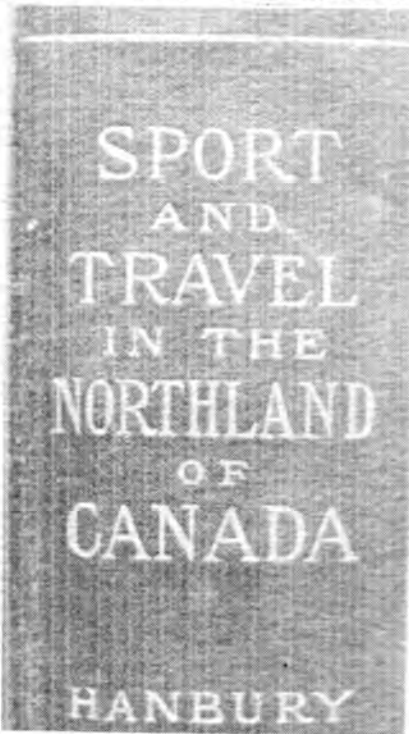
The four stamp set was drawn by Frederick Hagan of Newmarket, Ontario. The stamps are a five colour collage of each man's experiences. Fifteen million of these tributes to men of the north have been printed.

Bold adventurer



This photo from *Sport and Travel in the Northland of Canada* is marked 'Falls on the Arkilink River'. It is one of several photos Hanbury used to supplement his own and was taken

few years previously by J. B. Tyrrell. This stream, which Hanbury ascended from Baker Lake, now bears the name Hanbury River and is a popular northern canoe route.



By Sean Peake

By 1860, after the ill-fated Franklin expedition and the forty-odd searching missions, the British Admiralty lost interest in Canada's north.

It wasn't until 30 years later that a new breed of explorer moved onto the Barrenlands.

Gentlemen from the upper classes of England and Canada began to invade the northern reaches of the continent—some came with commercial intentions, some for adventure, most came for sport and to hunt muskox and 'deer'. Practically all, however, personified the Victorian ideal of masculinity—to endure extreme hardship and privation in dangerous and inhospitable terrain with a (frozen) stiff upper lip.

While scores of white men travelled the north between 1880 to 1910, only a handful left a written record. Fewer still wrote eloquent and classic narratives. Warberton Pike, David Hanbury and George Douglas are the most well-known and outstanding authors from that period, but the most travelled was David Hanbury.

English by birth, David Hanbury embarked on his first northern trip in 1898. Arriving in Churchill too late in the season to start, he stayed around the fort for several weeks observing and planning for the next year. On May 12, 1899, Hanbury

left Churchill for Baker Lake. He then ascended the Arkilink, or as it's now known, Thelon River, and its western branch—named the Hanbury River the following year by J.B. Tyrrell—to the height of land, then on to Great Slave Lake and Edmonton.

He was the first white man to follow these rivers, and was, perhaps, the first to enter the heart of today's Thelon Sanctuary. According to Hanbury, the Chipewyans never went that far west and the Inuit never went that far east. To do so would court starvation, as John Hornby would discover 28 years later.

In 1901 Hanbury descended these rivers to Baker Lake and Marble Island. His plan was to link up with a supply ship that carried his equipment and food needed for his trip across the Barrens to the Arctic Ocean the following spring. Among his possessions on board the Francis Allyn, a New England whaling schooner, were two cedar Peterborough canoes, 19 feet and 19 1/2 feet respectively. In February 1902 Hanbury gathered up his gear and entourage and headed out towards Tibielik Lake, now called Beverly Lake. From there, following a small river valley he headed north west to the Buchanan River, originally named by George Back and later renamed the Consul River. From its mouth he worked



The mouth of the Coppermine River taken on his way up the Coppermine on his way to Great Bear Lake.

his way east to Pelly Lake then turned north again in search of Armarktuk Lake (Armark) and River.

By May 14th Hanbury had reached the Arctic Coast. Travelling west, he eventually abandoned his dog sleds and resorted to his canoes to make the Coppermine River. On July 19th, he reached the river and began his ascent to the Kendall River that leads into Thomas Simpson's 'Dismal Lakes'.

After quickly reaching the head of the lakes, Hanbury searched for the elusive headwaters of the Dease River that would take them to Great Bear Lake and, eventually, home. After several days of searching and packing their gear over the three to four mile portage, the group started down the small stream that flowed into Great Bear. Hanbury, in honour of his companion who found it, called the stream Sandy Creek.

By early December Hanbury and his group, after being frozen in at Fort Mackay on the Athabaska River for one month, arrived on horseback in Edmonton. Aside from the great distance Hanbury covered, what makes his account in *Sport and Travel* in the Northland of Canada so fascinating are his observations of Inuit life. Contrary to Pike, Hanbury found the Inuit cheerful and trustworthy and he admired their ways. He adopted their methods of clothing and travel and tried to speak their language. Hanbury also preferred to use the Inuit names for the places he visited. In the book's appendix he included a substantial list of Inuit words and phrases in two dialects.

But, like all the travellers of his time, he had a Great White Father attitude. He sometimes appears patronizing and always superior. Hanbury seems to have neglected the fact that, while he was the one in charge of the expedition, it was the Inuit who got him to where he wanted to go. He misjudged the Indians, like Pike and Douglas—who later came to regret his premature judgement on a complex and foreign culture—and treated them like children. Perhaps Hanbury's opinions changed too, but since he never returned to the north, it's unlikely.

Hanbury's *Sport and Travel* is one of the best written narratives on Canada's north and one of the most sought after. Like Pike's *Barren Ground* and Douglas' *Lands Forlorn*, Hanbury's account is an outstanding example of a period travel narrative in Canada's north, without the formality of a Franklin or other British officers' account. One of the reasons this book is so tantalizing is its scarcity. Like its fellow classic, *Lands Forlorn*, *Sport and Travel* remains un-reprinted. Only the original 1904 edition exists, this despite the fact the book is widely known, often quoted and considered among the best of turn-of-the-century northern travel. It is a handsome book but not spectacular. Hanbury was an adequate photographer and the best photos in the

book are the ones of Tyrrells used frequently.

UPCOMING BOOKS: A biography of George Douglas is slated for release this April. Published by Broadview Press in Peterborough, it will be 200 pages long and will include several unpublished photos. Excerpts appear in the Feb./Mar. issue of *The Beaver*.

According to C. Stuart Houston two forthcoming books are sure to interest John Franklin fans. Apparently the journals of Samuel Wilkes, an English seaman and Lieutenant George Back written during Franklin's first expedition are being prepared for publication. Also, never before seen sketches of George Back from that same trip will be published soon.



Hanbury's party ascended the fast flowing, crystal-clear, Kendall River which drains the Dismal Lakes into the

Coppermine. The river was previously travelled by Richardson and Rae and others in the nineteenth century.

WCA IV



The packed house at York University in Toronto listen intently to Phil Ches-

ter as Grey Owl at the annual Wilderness Canoe Association Symposium.

The fourth annual Wilderness Canoe Association Symposium sprang forth in a yet again expanded form.

The annual event has grown from an intimate livingroom affair to an overflow lecture hall at Toronto's York University.

This year's theme was Northern Ontario and 20 speakers, over 15 hours and a day and a bit, presented slides, movies, sketches and costumed tableaux on the wide variety of canoeing experiences related to Ontario's vast north. Around 550 people were comfortably seated (a must) in Curtis Lecture 1, about double last year's number.

The shape of Symposia to come was revealed. 1990 will see Labrador as the topic of discussion followed by the High Arctic (1991) and Northern Quebec (1992). The list to 1995 was filled with TBA's.

The unique feature of this canoe meeting is the speakers. They are not typical "speakers" i.e. polished, slick presenters. But they are real people who do some very real things. Consequently you get an incredible diversity of presentations from wildly funny to uniquely moving.

The short Friday evening session was highlighted by Paul Mason's slide tribute to his father, Bill. Paul's humorous and touching stories and pictures of his famed father were a fitting memorial. Also featured was Moon Joyce, an Outward Bound instructor who came to know Wendell Beckwith, the eccentric 'genius' who built a small group of beautiful log cabin on Whetwater Lake in the Wabikimi Park area north of Armstrong where he built things

and pondered the stars. Wendell was not an independant hermit, he relied on the outside world for many things. He was an inventor of sorts who left the 'civilized' world to live in Northern Ontario's woods.

Wendell's cabins, in the Hollywood style, beautiful but not functional, became a favourite stopping place for canoe trippers in the area.

Wendell loved to talk and people loved to gawk at his inventions which included a spruce barometer which with the help of a metal spring expanded and contracted as the humidity changed. He built a beautiful 8-foot canoe that looked great, but wouldn't stay upright. He died several years ago and the cabins are the subject of a fight over whether to destroy or conserve them.

The Saturday sessions started with a real eyeopener. The Lacasse brothers, Jean-Marc and Louis showed why they can't interest anyone in accompanying them on their trips. This one down the Severn River was subtitled Death Wish III. The trip started at Sioux Lookout, many miles from the Severn's headwaters. Their rules were simple: 16 hour days, no more than one night at a campsite and only swim when you capsize. They paddle full tilt until they drop and motor through the roughest country at top speed. Their film was hilariously funny and completely unique.

Bob Davis, veteran solo paddler told of his Albany River trip in 1973 which included his practice of sleeping in the canoe and a paddle down the dangerous coast of James Bay.

The next session featured the organizer's daughter, Tija Luste, who spoke about canoeing with your parents. Her tale of paternal horror stories provoked a round of good natured boos when father George took the mike after her talk. These incidents included being given the bailer when she had to go to the bathroom, being told to chew her tongue when she was hungry and insisting that she stay in the tent after having been ordered there, even though the adults were looking a a beautiful rainbow at sunset. Tija was told she could look at the pictures later!

One of the most thought provoking talks was given by Hugh Stewart on the topic 'Wilderness Contradictions and Ironies'. Hugh is a canoe builder and guide who now lives in the Gatineau Hills just outside Ottawa. Hugh quoted G.K. Chesterton; "Adventure is an attitude towards discomfort". He added that as the years go on more and more people want more comfort when on a canoe trip. They demand more detailed maps, notes, journals about the place they will visit. This is an under-cutting trend.

A guide is only a part of the wilderness experience. People demand the feel of risk while actually lessening it. There can be no instant high level of canoeing skill, it's something that must be built up over time. Stewart added that it is important not to bring the format of city life into the wilderness. When we look back the the early canoe trips of the Geological Survey of Canada and people like Camsell and Low we should remember that the GSC was an economic entity, looking for mineral wealth to be exploited. The only reason they were in a canoe is that it was the only way to do it then.

Phil Chester, as Grey Owl, was up right after Hugh and gave his typical acerbic and humorous look at Grey Owl's wilderness. Phil commented on the fact that Grey Owl, a white Englishman who masqueraded as a very successful Indian writer for many years, is often referred to as a fraud.

"If becoming what you want to become is a fraud, Phil said, " then we all are."

Chester stressed that Grey Owl's message is relevent and contemporary. "We have to put something back to the country."

Other speakers and topics included; Hap Wilson (Temagami), Fred Loosemore (James Bay Winter Trek), Janet Grand and Ron Reid (poetry of Canoeing), Bruce Hodgins (Historical Canoe Routes to the Bay), Nancy Scott (Ogoki-Albany Overview), Brian Gnauck (Pipestone River), Mike O'Connor (Lake Superior), Fred Wheatley (Our Wilderness - a Native Perspective), Craig MacDonald (Travel Routes of NE Ontario), Jonathan Berger (Sketches of Northern Ontario) and Tom Terry (Old and New Canoe Routes).

Despite the seemingly oppressive number of speakers the day went quickly and most enjoyably. The breaks though short, gave you time to talk to the speakers and many of the other interesting people there, which is a big element of the Symposium's success.

Hydro-Quebec Quandary

The irony is delicious.

It would appear some very real forces of the natural world are unsettling the monolithic power of Hydro-Quebec, an entity whose very success is drawn from tapping a very real natural power.

On March 13, of this year a magnetic storm, so strong it could not be precisely measured, wreaked havoc on the tentacles of Hydro-Quebec's mammoth transmission system. The entire Province of Quebec was blacked out for several hours, which is just the most recent in an annoying and all-too-frequent series of blackouts. Such magnetic storms are common in a time of great solar activity as we are experiencing until 1992.

The huge transmission network, stretching from James Bay to Churchill Falls, and through the populated south, collapsed in seconds following a blast of solar particles from space. Experts say a storm of that force occurs only once in 200 years.


The key problem for Hydro is the length of their power lines. Indeed, this fact is touted as the Achilles Heel of the whole 'Power from the North' scheme. Hydro-Quebec pioneered the use of 735 kilovolt lines which stretch great distances between capacitors. Too great it would seem. In the March 13 storm, all five James Bay lines were overloaded and then overflowed the Churchill Falls and Manic-Outardes system. This despite the fact that loads had been reduced 10% following scientists' warnings of an impending magnetic storm.

The latest disruptions have also triggered shock waves from the financial community. One major bond rating agency suggests Hydro-Quebec might have to abandon its policy of building more northern dams. Naturally, their concerns are neither of an environmental nor canoeing interest. Rather, the moneymen believe Hydro-Quebec's inability to provide uninterrupted service will hurt the hunt for more export contracts which in turn will lower its bond rating and thus its ability to raise money to construct the expensive northern megadams.

Another recent development has sent rumblings through the massive Montreal-based, publicly owned utility. Maine's Public Utilities Commission confirmed its rejection of a power deal that would have seen Hydro-Quebec earn as much as \$15-billion during a 29-year power contract. The reason for the decision? Increased U.S. fear of foreign-based power and, for the first time, a very real questioning of Hydro-Quebec's ability to deliver the power consistently.

All this flies in the face of 20 years of a northern hydro policy that Quebec Premier

Economically Viable Hydroelectric Potential



Hydroelectric Generating Stations or Complexes	Available Power at Peak (In megawatts)	Average Annual Output (In terawatt-hours)
Projects in progress		
La Grande 1	1,310	7.3
Laforge 1	820	4.5
Brisay	380	2.3
Future projects		
Laforge 2	270	1.7
Sainte-Marguerite	820	4.2
Grande Baleine	2,890	15.1
Ashuapmushuan	550	3.2
Eastmain 1	510	2.9
Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR)	8,700	45.0
La Romaine	1,710	8.9
TOTAL	17,960	95.1
Other projects under study		
Haut Saint-Maurice	700	3.4
Petit Mécalina	1,450	7.6

The above chart is taken from Hydro-Quebec's latest Developmental Plan Summary. It gives a good idea of what Hydro has their eye on in the future.

Robert Bourassa has made a foundation of his province's political, economic and nationalistic future. Bourassa has jumped in front of the issue assuring Quebecers that his government will take a close look at the management and control of Hydro-Quebec.

Hydro-Quebec has long been thought of as a government within a government, an immense empire immune from public scrutiny or input. Hydro's board contains neither a consumer nor environmental voice. And to top it off, this vast bureaucracy is not performing up to par. With three major blackouts in the past year added to the 19,100 local power failures, even the utility's president admits their record over the last two years is "disastrous."

All this may be the first crack in what until now has been a relatively successful, though not as rosy as planned, method of power generation. One Quebec group, the Centre of Energy Policy Analysis, said the Maine decision confirmed "a hypothesis that we have had for a long time, that in time hydroelectricity would become non-competitive because of technological progress. Other sources become cheaper."

"If we in Quebec did least-cost planning, like they do in Maine, we wouldn't be

building any more dams."

In Hydro's latest Annual Summary (April 1989), they talk about future developments as they relate to their overall plan.

"To meet long-term high-growth demand, Hydro-Quebec must also be in a position to commission facilities as rapidly (sic) as possible. It has already initiated a major program of preliminary project studies which will run until 1993. This will enable Hydro if necessary, to advance the completion of new facilities such as the Great Whale River and Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR) complexes which could be on stream as early as 1997 and 1998 respectively. No decision is required in this regard until the summer of 1990."

On Hydro-Quebec's list of future projects are: a further dam on the Eastmain, three installations on Great Whale River, one on the Romaine on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and the NBR project which would dwarf anything Hydro-Quebec has ever done, producing a whopping 8,700 megawatts. This plan would see the flows of the Nottaway and Broadback, diverted north to the Rupert which would become a super-power river.

News & Notes

TENTS SITUATION . . . Next to the boats themselves, perhaps the most debated piece of canoeing equipment is the tent. American canoeist and author Cliff Jacobson has been a fan of the now-defunct Cannondale. Indeed, Che-Mun's Editor used his for many years with great success. The tents are unique in that the fly and vestibules (yes, there are two!) are permanently attached. Cliff has persuaded Cannondale, who now primarily make cycling equipment, to produce 100 Aristook models this spring. This was the biggest of the three former tent models. The new models will include some recent modifications suggested by Jacobson. Cliff will be handling the selling for \$465 U.S. which includes a \$100 deposit. This is a very good price. These tents are roomy, the interior floor is seven by six and a half feet and there are two pointed six foot long vestibules at either end. They are great for storing wet gear and getting organized and comfortable in the worst weather. They are built tough too. The shock cord inside the three-quarter inch aluminum poles is one-quarter inch thick. The Aristook weighs in at just over 10 pounds and are 54 inches high inside. For more info contact Cliff Jacobson, 928 West 7th Street, Hastings, Minnesota U.S.A. 55033 or call him at 612/437-7497

A GOOD IDEA. . . The Cree Indians of northern Quebec are teaming up to oppose the next phase of the James Bay Project. The new phase, announced last year by Premier Robert Bourassa would see a new dam on the lower La Grande River and its tributaries. The project would cost \$7.5 billion, create 40,000 short term jobs and take seven years to Build - at least those are the estimates now. In 1975 Crees and Quebec Inuit signed a deal that cleared the way for the first phase of the James Bay construction but this time the Crees are saying it must be stopped at all costs. It is becoming clear, they say, that the environmental consequences are much greater than had been originally foreseen. Cree officials say that while the rivers and reservoirs are full of fish, the fish are full of mercury. Trapping has been severely affected by the changing water levels. So, while the agreement allows for unlimited fishing and trapping, if there's nothing to catch the deal is worthless. The Cree feel the best way to help their cause is to publicize the environmental damage that will be done by another major dam.

VIA CON DIOS . . . The fate of VIA Rail is again under discussion. The agency which is heavily subsidized by the federal government, took over passenger rail responsibilities in 1977. Taking a Canadian train on a canoe trip is one of the great romantic links with our past. It is still possible to jump on most northern Canadian trains and be let off wherever you wish and picked up again on the way out. That historical link is again in jeopardy. The feds are threatening to eliminate VIA's subsidy (\$90 per person, per trip!) and with it VIA. The southern runs are no doubt profitable but the great northern stretches would be hard pressed to make a buck. One of the recommendations is to upgrade equipment which no doubt makes fiscal sense but there is still a great pleasure in experiencing a classic old train. The new ones are always made of plastic. It's likely that nothing will happen for a while but if you're the type who'd like to experience this kind of adventure-better start planning.

NACS . . . For its fourth year, the L.L. Bean annual canoe get-together has changed its name to better reflect the nature of the event. It's now officially called the

North American Canoe Symposium, dropping the Maine name-tag. It will be again held at Camp Winona in the Maine north woods on June 9-11, 1988. Che-Mun's Peake brothers will be there as usual, showing our slide show from last summer's Povungnituk '88 trip. Other speakers include; Cliff Jacobson, noted author and guide (it's his first trip to the show); Harry Rock, perennial U.S. Canoe Poling champ and a real nice guy, to boot; Harry Roberts, canoe guru and Editor of Canoesport Journal (where Che-Mun has a column), Jerry Stelmok, Maine's famous builder of beautiful E.M. White cedar/canvas tripping canoes; Garrett and Alexandra Conover, Maine Guides, nice folks and masters at the art of travelling in style and comfort in the north woods. Of course there are many other speakers, along with dozens of canoes to try out, a lot of interesting people, good food and a great time. It is one of the real highlights on Che-Mun's canoeing calendar. We would never miss it. It's always a sell-out so write early to: North American Canoe Symposium, L.L. Bean Inc., Freeport, Maine 04033 or call 1-800-341-4341 ext. 7800.



CANOEMISMATICS . . . The Royal Canadian Mint will be releasing a new \$100 gold coin (top) and a new silver dollar this year. The gold coin designed by artist John Craig, commemorates the 350th anniversary of the founding of Saint-Marie Among the Hurons, Ontario's first European settlement near Georgian Bay. The silver dollar, designed by artist John Mardon, marks the 200th anniversary of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's exploration of the Mackenzie River to the Arctic.

Our Back Pages

The following back issues of Che-Mun are available for \$3 each. Those with an asterisk are available as photocopies only.

- Outfit 38 - Fort William Rendezvous, Magpie River
- Outfit 39 - Trans Canada Canoe Expedition/David Pelly
- Outfit 40 - Eric Morse Tribute/Story of Les Voyageurs*
- Outfit 41 - Grand Canal Project/Thlewiaza River solo
- Outfit 42 - The Morse River Expedition Part One
- Outfit 43 - The Morse River Expedition Part Two
- Outfit 44 - Bill Mason & Dog River/Athabasca letter
- Outfit 45 - Pipe River by Eric Morse/River Flows
- Outfit 46 - Hudson to Ungava/Stew Coffin report
- Outfit 47 - Heritage Rivers/Trans Canada Expedition
- Outfit 48 - Freshwater Saga-Morse Memoirs/Slide Rest
- Outfit 49 - Kayaking the Queen Charlottes/HBC sell-off
- Outfit 50 - Royal couple canoe the Hanbury-Thelon
- Outfit 51 - Traditional canoeing through Quetico Park
- Outfit 52 - Lands Forlorn/Atomic Proposal
- Outfit 53 - Ungava Crater Expedition, Hubbard/Wallace
- Outfit 54 - Povungnituk 88/Sleeping Island review
- Outfit 55 - Memories of Bill Mason/Twin Otter gone



Packet

named after him and Prince Albert, Sask has a monument to Pond. But in Milford, they don't even know where he's buried.

"It was a thrilling canoe trip, done with three guides from Horizons Unlimited, La Ronge, Sask. and myself providing historical expertise. You might know Pond was the first white man over the thirteen mile long Methye Portage and down the Clearwater to set up the Northwest Company's richest trading post that almost put the Hudson's Bay Co. out of business. But HBC finally swallowed the Northwest Company in 1820. As for Mackenzie, it was Pond who put the bee in the Scot's bonnet to try that river emptying Great Slave Lake to see if it ran to the Pacific Ocean. It didn't, but Mac was pumped up enough about the prospect to try again in 1793, down the Peace and several more rivers.

"Anyway, I get going about Pond and start boring people. I'm just trying to build him up on this side of the border. I'd like to see more of your magazine to keep track of the progress of the Mackenzie celebration. Maybe Pond will figure in along the way, somehow.

"The other hook was your recent trip retracing Robert Flaherty's footsteps. When I was in college in Vermont in the mid-60's, we had a Robert Flaherty film fest and they showed all of his films courtesy of his wife, Frances, who lived nearby. I'll never forget, Nanook, Man of Aran, and The Louisiana Story. So he was a canoeist too. That makes him just about the complete individual.

Dick Winslow, 1 Harbourview Dr. R.F.D.#1, Portsmouth, New Hampshire wrote recently and stocked up on a few back issues of Che-Mun. Dick took the time to tell us of his trip last summer - an ambitious adventure in the N.W.T.

Dick accompanied U.S. outfitter and guide Jim Abel's party (of 18!) for a two month journey of 1100 miles (with 50 portages) on the Lockhart, MacKay, Alymer, Clinton-Colden Lakes and the Baillie, Back, Bullen and Perry Rivers.

"On one unforgettable day I saw a herd of muskox, a wolf trying to cull a crippled caribou from a large herd (our approach scared the wolf off), a two to four thousand-strong caribou herd crossing the tundra on their southern migration and swimming across a river, and after lunch my canoeing partner and I in the lead boat spotted a grizzly near stalking us. The bear, a mature sow with two cubs, came almost down to the riverbank until it was frightened away by our expedition leader blowing a whistle.

"The canoeing trip was, in short, on of the highlights of my life. I yearn to go back to the North with my companions for more exploration in this wilderness. During the trip I jotted down notes and snapped photographs. Presently I am fashioning my

field notes into a more polished piece of writing in hopes of eventual publication.

Another new subscriber, Dave Bober, Box 22-1, RR2, Hudson Bay, Sask. S0E 0Y0 is looking for partners to join in a northern trip.

Dave is interested in paddling the Taltson or Thoa Rivers this summer. Anyone out there who might be inclined that way should get in touch with Dave, soonest.

The loquacious and definitely original Phil Chester (the man who becomes Grey Owl) wrote again to Che-Mun.

Phil said he's working on a poem dedicated to Bill Mason entitled "Behind the Waterfall" but he informed us that it will take time.

He added, "It seems to me that Bill Mason was part of a Canadian Tradition as well as being an outstanding artist and individual talent. To suggest that he was the 'guru of Canadian canoeing' demeans his memory in my opinion. This is not just the story of a man and his canoe and a love of nature.

"Maybe I'm full of ---. I don't know. A friend once told me that everyone's full of it. But some are full of good --- and the rest are full of bad ---. Then there are people who wouldn't say --- if their mouth was full of it.

"You know we have a museum full of canoes (Kanawa) and that is a most necessary thing and I'm sure Kirk Whipper had many doubtful moments when he was assembling them. But wouldn't it be wonderful to remember also the men who paddled them. I imagine a fine old Victorian house with many rooms. Each room dedicated to men and women like Pauline Johnston, Ernest Thompson Seaton, Jack Miner, Grey Owl, Omer Stringer, Eric Morse, Bill Mason. The visitor would be allowed to stay in each room for an hour or so to look at the photos, journals, books pertinent to the life each person had."

Che-Mun's Great Dane, Carl Traeholt has written again from Copenhagen.

"I wrote you some time ago (Spring 1988-I think) and told you that there were some Danish paddlers going to Canada in the summer of 1988.

"There were four Danish guys that paddled, first the Anderson River and then the Hood. They had a very nice trip even though the charter flight expenses were (understandably) high. They were flown in to the Anderson from Yellowknife, and then picked up and flown (from Yellowknife) to the Hood and again picked up at the end of the Hood and back to Yellowknife. (Unfortunately, not every Dane can afford to do that!) Their entire trip was about two months.

"Another Dane paddled almost the same distance the others flew. Accompanied by a Norwegian he travelled through the North-

west Passage in kayaks. They started out in Greenland in May 1988 and were planning to go the Baffin Island by dogsled. As you might have heard, Greenland has some disease among their dogs resulting in a 90% setback in their canine population. So there were no dogs to buy so they flew to Baffin in a Twin Otter and continued by plane to Resolute on Cornwallis Island (Barrow Strait). From there they dragged their small kayaks on sledges until the ice broke up.

"They followed the old Amundsen route (via Gjoa Haven) before ending up in Liverpool Bay in October 1988. The same two paddlers plan to go the the North Pole in 1990.

"As for my own paddling - there wasn't too much in '88. I'm almost finished with my Master's in zoology/ethnology and I should be finished with it this summer. While in Malaysia, on zoological business I could not resist a short trip into the jungle. So I made a minor 90 mile trek with my girlfriend and after that a 150 mile canoe trip. The jungle is as fantastic as the northern wilderness as long as you can get into the remote undisturbed areas. The water is cool and clean, everything is green and butterflies are all around you. Very beautiful indeed.

"At the moment I am planning a major trip this year (with three others) to Venezuela/Brazil which should last for six to eight months. During that time we hope to stay with Indian tribes for much of the time and then continue over the Tapura-Peco mountains. If you're curious get a map of South America. We start out in Venezuela's southern region in Puerto Ayacucho where we'll paddle the Rio Orinico and Casiquiare until the mouth of the Rio Siapo and cross the mountains before continuing on the Brazilian side on Rio Paduari before we end up in Manaus. On our way upstream the Rio Siapo we hope to use small outboard motors as this journey is 250 miles. We plan to get going this August.

"Everything has to be sponsored and I've sent applications to many societies, firms, etc.

"No matter what happens, I'm sure I'll be back in Canada for a major trip in 1990. Peace River to Fort Smith, then by plane to the headwaters of the Dubawnt and then crossing over to the Thelon via Sid Lakes etc. as your group did in the Morse River Expedition in 1985. We'll end up in either Baker Lake or Chesterfield Inlet.

"Lastly, I was interested to hear about the Yangtze River trip (Outfit 55) and glad to read that they don't want to do the entire river in canoes. Too many lives have been wasted in trying that already. I had similar plans but dropped them because of the wild and long stretches of turbulent water on the upper parts of the river. Canoeing should be a way of life, not a way of death."



GEORGE'LL DO IT— Wilderness Canoe Association organizer George Luste is not showing off some of his secret technique for getting the right speakers to appear at the annual Symposiums which get bigger and better each year. Actually George is using one of the rather short telephones at Toronto's York University during this year's WCA show. George is well over six feet tall and stoops to conquer. See Page 8 for details.

Subscribers note

We again offer our usual reminder to subscribers to check the expiry date on their address label. For those expiring with this outfit it will bear an expiry date of SP89. Also, please note the list of back issues on Page 10. The price includes postage.

And speaking of postage, effective January 1, Canada Post, yet again, raised postal rates. It now costs just under a dollar to mail an issue to the U.S. and that's a big part of our costs. Che-Mun plans no subscription increases in the near future. We'll hold off as long as we're able to keep the subscriber base growing.

Che-Mun

Founded by Nick Nickels

**The International Newsletter for
Canadian Wilderness Canoeists**

CHE-MUN is published quarterly.

**Box 548, Station "O"
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4A 2P1.**

<p>Subscription rates: One Year \$10 Two years \$18</p>
--

**CHE-MUN is owned and published
by The Hide-Away Canoe Club.**

Michael Peake, Publisher.