

# CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 59

CHE-MUN

WINTER 1990

Water  
& Sky  
& Champagne?



**BARRENS BUBBLY** - The Water and Sky canoe party, (l-r) Beth Dilley, Craig and Alan Kesselheim and Marypat Zitzer examine a bottle of champagne found by Chipewayan gravesite on Selwyn Lake. How did it get there? What is Water and Sky? Find out inside.

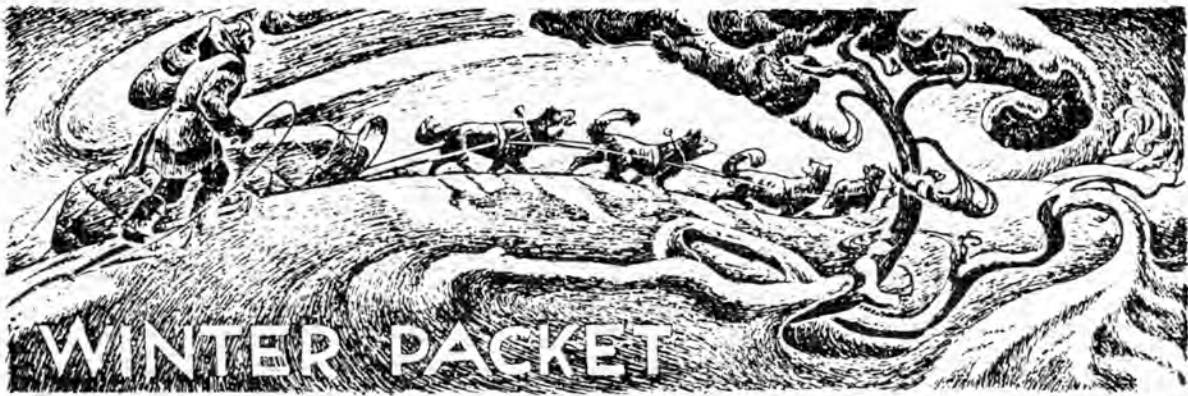
**Brothers Tyrrell**

Page 4

**Water & Sky**

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**ACROSS THE SUB-ARCTICS** - Another canoeing party in the same region, 93 years earlier, is shown in the smaller photo (inset). The Tyrrell brothers stopped for this picture at Cairn Point, Carey Lake on their way to Hudson Bay via the Dubawnt River.



## WINTER PACKET

**G**ot a note last September just after we brought Outfit 58 to press, from Alex Hall. Alex runs Canoe Arctic, one of the oldest and most respected outfitting services in the N.W.T. He's at P.O. Box 130, Fort Smith, N.W.T. X0E 0P0.

"Here's my two-year subscription to Che-Mun. Hope you had a good summer, I did. Just finished on Labour Day after three months non-stop - full all season. We had a pretty hot summer - so hot in later July and early August that the bugs all died off good and early. Also water levels were generally very high. By August there were a lot of fires all through the forested areas of the N.W.T. and south into the provinces (smoke was bad at times even hundreds of miles out on the Barrens when the wind was right.) However, big rainstorms beginning August 19 put out the fires for good throughout all regions."

**P**eople hear about Che-Mun from all over the place. But we were quite surprised when this letter from our (now) newest and furthest flung subscriber Akitoshi Nishimura from Tokyo, Japan.

"I am a Japanese who loves canoe tripping. For the past three years, every summer, I have taken a canoe trip in the N.W.T. This summer I took a solo kayak trip from Yellowknife to Gjoa Haven - via Great Slave Lake, Fort Reliance, Artillery Lake, Hanbury River, Sifton Lake, Moraine Lake, Baillie River, Back River and Chantrey Inlet. It took about 70 days from June 28 to September 6. By the way, after my trip, I visited James Raffan in Kingston, Ontario. In his home I saw your Che-Mun. It is a good canoe newspaper for the wilderness canoeist, I thought, especially for me. I am probably the only Japanese canoeist taking a trip in the Barrenlands of the N.W.T. It is very hard to get information about far northern Canadian canoeing in Japan, so I would like to subscribe."

Welcome aboard, Akitoshi, I hope we will hear more about last summer's amazing trip.

**C**he-Mun's Danish connection Carl Traeholt is a reliable contributor to the Packet. He told us about his plans for an Orinoco River trip in South America last time.

"I was very busy this past summer as I had to finish my M.A. in zoology and work on our South American trip. I've worked hard to get sponsors, but I'm sad to say,

that we did not succeed in getting enough support. Actually we were given some camping equipment, two aluminum canoes and splashcovers etc, and insurance free of charge - but we couldn't raise any cash. So we have called it off for the moment and will probably try to earn the money by working instead. Then you'll be sure to obtain the cash needed for such as trip. However, this will be in the future, perhaps two or three years, as we are all a little poor at the moment.

"I have been doing some canoeing, with my girlfriend, in northern Sweden. We had a very nice trip on a small river with lots of fish and game. At the moment I am trying to obtain a Ph.D sponsorship, so I can continue the work I started in my M.A. thesis. If it comes through, and I should know by February, I'll probably have to go to Southeast Africa for two years. That will really be nice and I hope I will get a chance to do some canoeing in Borneo and Sulawesi.

"However, I'll try to extend the Ph.D period to start next autumn because I badly want to make a trip to Canada again. Unfortunately you cannot always get things to happen the way you want.

"This year I haven't heard of many Danish parties going to Canada. There was one group that went down the Horton River (near the mouth of the Mackenzie). They had a good trip and were impressed by the amount of game around. They also had a bear attack where one of the members was chased by a grizzly for 200 yards. He was alone in the camp when a caribou came running through it - with a grizzly 30 yards behind. The caribou didn't see anything as it ran past three tents and the one canoeist but the bear stopped when he saw the lone paddler. His companions were on the other side of a small hill collecting berries. Of course he ran like hell (only a few have the guts to lie down and act dead) (Ed. Note - that's what the experts say to do). Fortunately he reached the hilltop from where he could see the others and when the bear saw (or smelled) them he turned and fled. At that moment he was only 10 to 15 yards behind the poor fellow. It must have been quite an uncomfortable experience.

**S**id Robinson is a Che subscriber in Saskatchewan (Box 1254, La Ronge, Sask. S0J 1L0). He also was our shuttle man on last summer's Churchill River trip - see Outfit 58. He sent his thoughts on our story of the river he knows well.

"You cover photo for Outfit 58 of Geof-

frey and Sean in the rapid was excellent. I expect this was your Black Trout Rapid. (Black Trout is a new name to me, but it is a good one. No Indian has ever been able to give me a name for that rapid, so I was calling it Chute. Black Trout sounds better.) A friend and I have been working on a historical canoe guide for the Churchill River for the past few years (we may never finish it). Re: Black Trout, we have, 'These dangerous rapids occur where the channel's flow drops down a rock-walled chute about 10 metres wide and 50 metres long. This chute has about 20 metres of boiling water at its bottom end. To get past (Black Trout) everyone should take the portage on the south-east shore.' Now I think we will have to adopt your name and add a note that the Peake brothers have run this rapid.

"Another rapid you have run that I have not is the upper part of Birch Rapids out of Black Bear Island Lake. For that one we have, 'The north channel of Birch Rapids has the Cree name of Kakinochiwwanak meaning long and flowing channel. It allows motorboat traffic in both directions but it is not a practical canoe route. This is because it contains a long and difficult series of rapids. We have not run these rapids, but they appear to be too risky for anyone who is not an expert. Furthermore, scouting these rapids is not easy. To scout them, it is necessary to land on the big island south of the channel and walk through heavy undergrowth along the shore. Unless you are an expert who likes tramping through the bush, you will want to avoid this route.'"

**O**ur mystery canoeing poet has struck again. We don't know who it is but it's someone in the Kitchener, Ontario area.

January

It's all water, this falling snow  
However still it looks  
This glacial mortuary  
Is springtime's dancing brooks

The January skies recharge  
The waters I canoe  
The shadows of the snowbound hills  
Are deep and secret blue

There hides in every mounding drift  
In every diamond flake  
The sparkle on some summer stream  
The surge upon some lake.



### Editor's Notebook

**W**elcome to a new decade of Che-Mun and wilderness canoeing. As this century, and millenium, draws to a close we naturally reflect on what is ahead for us all.

Certainly wilderness canoeing becomes evermore threatened with each passing year. The very term wilderness may belong in the past tense with the dodo and passenger pigeon in another 100 years. It's the job of each of us to ensure that doesn't happen.

Che-Mun is back to a robust 12 pages again which we hope is to your liking. One unexpected addition is another installment of The Classics. We had promised you the next would be in Outfit 60. But the time was right and we're proud to bring you a report on the Tyrrell's *Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada*.

The Tyrrell brothers' adventure was one of the last great exploratory trips through the Northwest Territories. Their epic journey is great reading and although many of their practices are wildly outdated, we can enjoy the spirit of their adventure.

We are also happy to bring you a full review of an exciting new canoeing book that travels much of the route taken by the Tyrrells some 90 years later.

Alan Kesselheim's *Water and Sky* tells of a 14-month journey from western Alberta to Baker Lake. Alan's first stories about the trip appeared in earlier issues of Che-Mun. We were happy to help with some of their logistical arrangements.

As you can see from the cover photo our paths did cross on the Barrens. They found a champagne bottle we left to commemorate the start of our *Journey Across the Barrenlands*. Talk about a needle in a haystack!

Remember, we love to hear from you. Please send along anything you would like to share with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable readership.

Michael Peake, Editor

## Hey, pass the digital map of Pixel Lake

**C**anada, to most people, is a land of forests, prairies, lakes and streams — and 26 million people.

At the topographical mapping division of the Canada Centre for Mapping in Ottawa, Canada is 10,000 megabytes.

It took that amount of computer information and five years of just-completed processing to convert the 917 reconnaissance-scale topographical maps covering the whole country to maps that can be called up on a computer. Each of the so-called digital maps covers 60-by-90 kilometres on a scale of 1:250,000.

The result of the \$4.5-million project is a series of detailed maps to be used for such things as environmental studies and market surveys.

"A digital map gives you much more flexibility," says Ray Dagenais, the mapping centre's assistant director of production. "With a paper map, you can't do much more than look at it."

A computerized map is one that can be called up on a computer video screen, much like the graphic images flashed about in science-fiction movies.

With these maps, the computer operator can zoom in on specific areas, isolate water bodies to produce flood-plane models or turn the image sideways to depict elevation profiles like the drop of a river.

All information except roads and railway lines can be included, allowing the operator to select transportation routes and prepare schedules.

Ontario Hydro and Hydro-Quebec each have a complete set of maps of their respective provinces to keep track of their transmission lines.

Commercial mapmakers use the computerized maps as a base on which to either add or isolate features they want to appear on their printed maps.

"Digital maps are easy to revise and update," explains the mapping centre's assistant director, Roger Defoe.

Computer maps with population and other demographic data are widely used for market surveys and to project market demand and trends. They are also an invaluable tool for environmental impact studies — several pieces of information can be incorporated into one computer map, instead of several paper maps.

With demographic information added, new electoral maps now can be spun out in weeks, instead of months.

Before you rush out to equip your canoe with a terminal - it had better be a big one. Information is only available on a nine-track tape. That's a half inch wide computer tape on a 10 inch reel. One reel equals one 1:250,000 scale map and each sells for \$500.

Plans are in the works to make the info available to more people, probably using the laser (CD) disc. For right now, stick with the paper. Besides, it's really tough to waterproof a computer.

# Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada

By SEAN PEAKE

As our country grew, and its thirst for new mineral wealth increased, the geologist and prospector encroached onto the barren lands.

They sometimes competed with the wandering gentlemen, like Warburton Pike or David Hanbury, but all contributed to the preliminary mapping of the north.

In 1893, the Tyrrell brothers, Joseph Burr and James William, left on a geological expedition that would make them household words in their time. Their mission was to explore the "Doobawnt" river and follow it to the sea.

J.B. had heard of a great river that flowed north through the land of the Eskimo. "Where it empties into the sea we cannot tell, but it flows a great way to the northward" he was told.

The Tyrrell's were instructed to note the underlying geology and natural features of the land, as well as observe native populations, fauna, flora, climate and any other feature of interest.

Heavily laden with provisions, the party set off from Lake Athabaska on June 21st, 1893 and reached Churchill, half starved and frozen on October 19th.

Sub-Arctics is an important book for two reasons. First, it's a well written account of an expedition into totally unknown country by a Canadian, and it clearly exemplifies the attitudes of wilderness travellers in the late 1800's.

The expedition, however, bares some resemblance to Franklin's first land expedition. Both trips carried an enormous amount of gear. Franklin and his crew of 17 took four tons, Tyrrell with seven men took two tons and both still ran out (10 voyageurs and one Englishman died on Franklin's trip). Both were unsure how long the trip would take.

The two expeditions also relied on the Indians to pull them through after they had stayed too long on the land. But Tyrrell had advantages over

by J.W. Tyrrell. Ryerson Press, Toronto.



J. W. Tyrrell



J. B. Tyrrell

J. W. (James William) Tyrrell. (b. 1863 d. 1945). He is the author of *Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada*. Educated as a civil engineer and practised in Hamilton, Ontario until the 1893 canoe trip with his brother down the Dubawnt. In 1900 J.W. led a Dominion Lands Survey expedition through the Keewatin. He later was an early mining promoter in northwestern Ontario and became the president of Tyrrell Red Lake Mines.

J. B. (Joseph Burr) Tyrrell. (b. 1858 d. 1957). Worked for 17 years for the Geological Survey of Canada (1881-98). Besides the Dubawnt trip he discovered important dinosaur remains in southern Alberta and coal beds throughout the west. He mined in the Klondike and northern Ontario and became quite wealthy. As president of the Champlain Society he edited the diaries of Samuel Hearne and David Thompson. He died at 99, a very highly respected and honoured man.

The newspaper clipping files are numerous for J. B. Tyrrell. Many stories published on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

"He admits that by far the most thrilling event in his long career was when he and his brother, the first white men to achieve it, crossed the Barren lands, from Lake Athabasca to Chesterfield Inlet in 1893".

In another article in the same year, "But Dr. Tyrrell's rugged philosophy in these matters can best be described by his remark about the several days of hunger his party once experienced as they were plodding south across the barrens, out of supplies, starvation seeming not far away.

"We figured that if we were going to die", he says, "we might just as well die a little further along on the trail."

A diet of raw squirrels - there was no wood in the barrens for a fire - kept them going and Dr. Tyrrell reached Winnipeg weighing 145 pounds instead of his normal 200.

"No maps existed for most of the country we covered," he explains. "It wasn't any use to find mineral deposits if you couldn't show where they were, so we made our own maps as we went along."

Franklin. With superior weaponry and clothing, and was close to a settlement when help was needed. Had Tyrrell been at Baker Lake when the season closed in around him, his chances of survival would have been slim. Both expeditions, however, required determination and grit to complete.

While Tyrrell's view of the wilderness and his idea of sport offends me, I try to remember he was typical of his period. Shooting great, wild beasts was a manly occupation, and nature had to be tamed. But, in every hunter's life, there's an encounter that makes him rack his weapon for good, or at least makes him seriously question his actions.

Tyrrell's moment of revelation came when he encountered the musk-ox. He and his group slaughtered eight of nine musk oxen in a herd, a shameful act he admits is beyond justification. He says it was like shooting cows.

These ill-perceived notions often did not apply to other creatures, notably, the wolf. He wrote that his party was set upon by a pack of huge grey wolves. The leader, with dilated eye-balls, led the attack but was "bored end to end with a slug from my brother's rifle". However, the incident occurred in early August, a time when the wolf is either still in its den, or has left for the north to meet the caribou's southern migration. It's obvious this episode was merely for the entertainment of the reader. It's unfortunate these myopic views still prevail today.

*Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada* came out in three editions. The third, in 1908, was revised and updated by J. W. Tyrrell. He added information on the musk-ox and the Hudson's Bay Company. It is considered the best volume to get. Prices average around \$150 depending on the condition of the book. All editions are illustrated with photos and should contain the map on the opposite page of which we feature part of.



# Water & Sky

Alan Kesselheim writes about a 14-month canoe journey across the heart of the continent. He and Marypat Zitzer paddled from Jasper, Alberta to Baker Lake, N.W.T. and wintered over at Stony Lake. Che-Mun followed their adventures at the time. Now, in WATER & SKY, it's for all to see

## Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition Canadian Odyssey

By Alan Kesselheim



Alan and Marypat at Baker Lake.

When Alan arrived, it probably seemed like a good idea. The idea of a 14-month canoe journey across the heart of the continent. The idea of a 14-month canoe journey across the heart of the continent. The idea of a 14-month canoe journey across the heart of the continent.

The expedition was an early one. It was the first of its kind. It was the first of its kind. It was the first of its kind. It was the first of its kind.



Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition  
The Second Summer

### Looking back Final thoughts

ROBERTA, MONTANA. We are looking back on a journey of a lifetime. We are looking back on a journey of a lifetime. We are looking back on a journey of a lifetime. We are looking back on a journey of a lifetime.

**Water walkers**  
Mason, Gaskin  
Felly & Co.  
Page 3

**Wild Waters Review**  
Mason, Gaskin  
Felly & Co.  
Page 3

**Canada's Heritage Rivers**  
Page 7

**The Second Summer**  
Alan and Marypat paddle across Yathay Lake on the second leg of their 14-month, 1,800-mile Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition. The first segment of their remarkable story appears on Pages 4 and 5.

By MICHAEL PEAKE  
CHE-MUN Editor

An astute canoeist aficionado can tell if a book's any good before reading it.

I knew that Alan Kesselheim's *Water and Sky* was a good read after a 30 second glance through it.

The secret? A major publisher produced it and there are no photographs in the book. That's a publisher's dream - a book without the added expense of color reproduction.

Of course, if pictures were essential they'd be there. But when the calibre of writing is high, they're not necessary. Though I'd still like to see them.

Alan Kesselheim should be familiar to veteran Che-Mun readers. He and Marypat Zitzer were featured on the cover of our Outfit 47. Their 15-month odyssey across Canada's north captured our imagination as well as that of Stoddart Publishing's.

We are proud to say that Alan was a Che-Mun subscriber. But we're even more proud that he's written a wonderful book. *Water and Sky* is a thoughtful and entertaining tale of travel in the Canadian north by two Americans.

Alan and Marypat left Jasper, Alberta on the Athabasca River which flows on a

north-east diagonal to Athabasca Lake. The two hail from Bozeman Montana and were quite active in outdoor pursuits. But Alan and Marypat wanted something different and devised a way to make a northern canoe trip last two seasons.

They would canoe to Lake Athabasca and winter over there. The following spring they would jump up to the adjacent Barrenlands and paddle to Baker Lake, a 2000 mile journey lasting 400 days.

Previous river experience for the two included the Yukon's Rat & Porcupine route over the divide, the Moisie in Quebec and the English river in northwestern Ontario.

The trip was originally titled Trans Canada Canoe Expedition and was followed in Che-Mun for the full length by stories on the trip and letters from Alan. The full summary appeared in Outfit 47.

Central Alberta is not pristine wilderness and the Athabasca is a very big, glacially fed river. Kesselheim's precise and thoughtful style describes their journey through the many small towns along the river. It was not wilderness canoeing, as such.

Occasionally they would stop at small towns. Kesselheim notes that they felt quite cut off from the scene paddling along the

river. While the Athabasca was once quite a busy thoroughfare it is now, of course, by-passed by modern roads.

The river flows quickly and they had to hold their progress down by taking long lunches and stopping early. The town of Vega, Alberta is one of the few remaining places where a ferry services the river. Alan and Marypat spent some time there and were rewarded with the generous hospitality of Garth, the ferry operator.

Everyone they met asked them if they knew about Grand Rapids, a formidable stretch of river between Athabasca Landing and Fort MacMurray. They did.

The infamous rapids provided a lot of thrills but the major scare was the heavy bear presence. They saw a lot of bears and had a very close encounter on the portage around Grand Rapids. It seemed as though one was following them during the long carry. It wouldn't be scared off and they eventually had to shoot it. It was done with no elation, as the author states, and they were certainly in a state of panic.

The twosome wound up the first season in Stony Rapids on Lake Athabasca. They had planned to either build or rent a trapper's cabin for the winter but were fortunate to get a caretaker jobs at a fishing camp on Lake Athabasca, 40 miles from Stony. Kesselheim's eye-opening reaction of

a southern romantic arriving in his first northern town is wonderful:

"For someone who cherished a sentimental vision of wintering in a remote northern village and capturing some sense of nineteenth-century life, Stony Rapids was a severe letdown. Chipewyan teenagers toted boom boxes down the dirt streets. Vehicles raised dust tornados on the roads. Snowmobiles rested in every yard. The hint of burning trash wafted in the breeze. Flea-bitten canines ran in scrofulous packs. A huge generator plant diesel away behind the town, providing power for videos, televisions, toaster ovens, microwaves, Christmas tree lights."

**T**he winter layover is what separates this book from most canoeing stories. Very few of us would either be able or willing to spend eight months in the dark, freezing north. Their winterlude had both good and bad points and Kesselheim explores them all.

The encounters with natives, the northern solitude, the incredible cold, and their warding off cabin fever are all covered with interest. Kesselheim remarks on how self-sufficient most northerners are. They can fix any engine, build anything and simply get by in a harsh environment.

Alan and Marypat lived in a small cabin without a snowmobile in what was at times both a lonely and crowded existence. Long stretches of solitude were broken by the occasional visits of many friends or trips to Stony with the camp dog who kept them company. At one point the author develops a scary skin infection that turned into an abscess that took a while to heal.

Winter life was a regimented one. The two believed in the old British naval system of daily activity throughout the long winters to keep you sane. It worked for the British and so it did for Alan and Marypat.

**T**heir Christmas stay in Stony Rapids is quite interesting and left them both with terrible colds. They faced bleak January with the relentless cold and no visitors. As the days brightened so did the social scene.

They began planning the second half of the canoeing journey. Alan's brother Craig and his girlfriend Beth were planning to come along. The solitude of the first year was a veil to be lifted, though not without some regret. The pair wanted to try canoeing with another couple.

The foursome finally set out in mid-June. Their first obstacle was wind-sblown Black Lake followed by the slog of the three-mile Chipman Portage up to the height-of-land. The original plan of the trip had been to follow the Tyrrell brothers' route down the Dubawnt River and then on to Chesterfield Inlet. (That isn't in the book, it's in the original Che-Mun story)

Another fluke of history that most readers won't realize is that yours truly crossed paths with the Kesselheim party - one year later. Alan's group ended up camping on a small island in northern Selwyn Lake. On page 239 of *Water and Sky*, Alan describes finding a small gravesite but didn't mention the bottle of champagne there. But there's more to the story.

Our canoe trip, *Journey Across the Barrenlands*, started its 55-day, 1000 mile trip on that same island in June 1985. We, too,

*"As the miles clicked by under our keels, the long days flowed past. I understood the attachment the Inuit had to the Kazan valley. Broad sweeping tundra rolled away from the river in a green carpet, ridges and rounded hillsides providing relief. I imagined the empty land furred with thousands of caribou, teeming with herds, the clicking grunting mass of animals that meant life and wealth. The river itself ran past craggy cliffs with nesting peregrine falcons, down smooth ramps, fast rapids, small falls - a joyous invigorating flow of water."*

discovered that gravesite, its weathered wooden fence scattered on the ground. My brother Sean carefully replaced the rails. We had a small bottle of champagne given to us by brother Geoffrey's girlfriend. We polished it off and left a note detailing our trip to who ever would find it. The Kesselheim group did one year later and sent us a photo to prove it.

Unfortunately the group did not have our sunny weather. For us it had been too hot. The next year was wet and windy. By now they had decided to avoid the Dubawnt with the always ice-clogged Dubawnt Lake, the biggest body of water on the barren-grounds. They took a route running east from Carey Lake. I guess Alan hadn't read Tyrrell's book for he didn't mention passing famous Cairn Point in Carey Lake where Tyrrell posed for a photo beside a large boulder.

**K**esselheim thought that perhaps he was taking a new route though to the Kazan. However, it was done in 1968 by an Eric Morse canoe trip.

The canoeing on the Barrens was much more exciting for the group than the previous year as the Kazan is a great paddling river. They had great luck with caribou, and being on the Kazan, were surrounded by the remnants of the once thriving Inuit who lived on the river for generations. Kes-

selheim writes of the different nature of the trip in having another group along. While everyone got along it was clear there were some tensions. Fortunately, there were no bear problems on this leg of the journey.

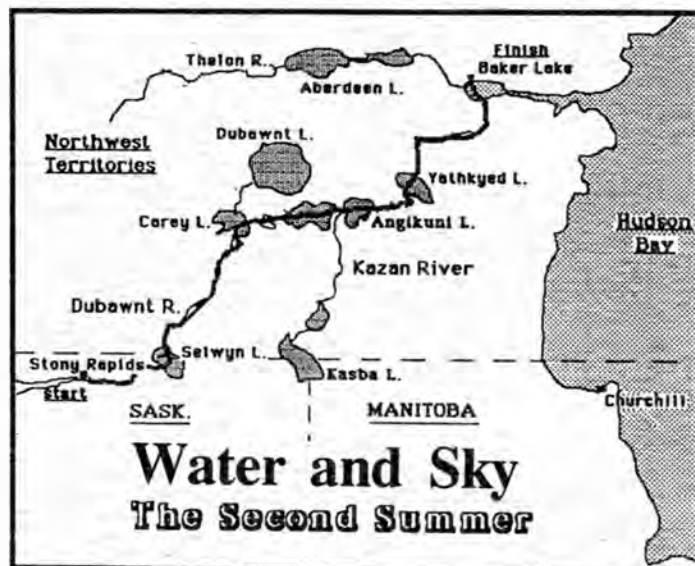
Kesselheim has a wonderful way with a phrase. He worked very hard on this book and it shows. The only flaw being that he called Arctic explorer George Back, Alexander Back. Maybe that's what his friends called him?

The two maps in the book are chintzy. Marypat's small drawings start each of the ten chapters. The only time you miss the photos are when he describes the number of great things they shot pictures of.

Alan Kesselheim captures the spirit of canoeing in this book. And the troubles, travails and joy. It merits your attention.

**H**ow to get *Water & Sky*: In Canada it is published by Stoddart and available at better bookstores. In the U.S. if you can't find it at Waldenbooks, you can order through Fulcrum Press, 350 Indiana St. Golden, Colorado 80401.

A note for book-lookers: That great old Canadian bookshop Albert Britnell's in Toronto will order any book for Canadian or American customers. Canadians can call toll-free 1-800-387-1417. U.S. customers should call them at 416/924-3321.



# Alberta Pulpwars

*Northern Alberta is the latest environmental battleground in Canada's north. The huge boreal forest is up for grabs as the province attempts to diversify its oil-based economy. They've leased huge areas of timberlands to foreign-owned timber companies. The Athabasca River is the proposed site for seven new pulp mills. The Athabasca was the gateway to northern Canada until well into this century.*

**W**ithin the last two years, the Alberta government has leased public timberlands almost the size of Great Britain to a dozen forestry firms.

A giant bleach kraft pulp mill is proposed for the Athabasca River in the town of Prosperity, a farming community about 200 kilometres north of Edmonton. Hearings on the mill were held in November and December, 1989, throughout northern Alberta and southern N.W.T.

The proposal by Alberta-Pacific, controlled by Mitsubishi Corp. and the Honshu Paper Co. Ltd. of Japan, is the flagship of more than \$3.5 billion worth of forestry projects being planned as a means of diversifying Alberta's resource-based economy.

But the Alberta Environment Department says the mill as planned is unacceptable until the company answers serious questions about downstream fisheries.

The Athabasca drains into the Slave River and the Mackenzie River basin through Great Slave Lake. Provincial environment officials told a federal-provincial panel that lack of information about the mill's possible effect on fish is a major deficiency in the proposal.

Bob McClure, head of the Environment Department's water quality department, said effluent from existing pulp mills on the Peace and Athabasca rivers and farm chemicals have reduced dissolved oxygen to dangerously low levels, threatening fish and other marine life.

The bleach-kraft process, which uses chlorine to bleach the pulp for white paper, releases potentially dangerous dioxins and furans into the water. There is fear toxins in the Athabasca and Peace River systems will pollute drinking water and get into the food chain in the environmentally sensitive Mackenzie Valley.

A government official said at a review hearing that the mill would add about 22 grams of highly toxic dioxins into the river each year. That seems minute but is similar to the dioxins that flow from the severely polluted Niagara River into Lake Ontario.

The impact of dioxins in Lake Ontario over the past 40 years "has resulted in a similar level of dioxins in Lake Ontario sport fish as those found in the Athabasca River."

**O**ne report said effluent from Alberta-Pacific would add to existing pollution in the Athabasca so that native people could no longer rely on its fish as a protein source without threatening their health.

At a panel hearing in Fort Resolution native elders and children, hunters, trappers, fishermen, housewives, and leaders of the Dene Nation listened attentively as one speaker after the other told of how north-erners rely on the rivers for food.

"Eighty per cent of my food comes off the land," commercial fisherman Arthur Beck told the panel. "I have two children (and) I will train them to use the land, too, — if the land and the water stay."

Beck, born and raised in the area on the south shore of Slave Lake, told the panel he also hunts and traps in the area. "If the fish are gone and we can't eat them, and if we can't have the money to buy, what will we eat?"

Don Morin, the local member of the territorial assembly, reminded the panel that native people have a different understanding of the environment. "We have never felt a need to conquer the world or to control the environment," said Morin.

"We believe that we have a fundamental responsibility as a people to respect what

has been given to us by the creator . . . and to ensure that it is there for future generations."

Joachim Bonnetrouge, of Fort Providence, about 110 kilometres downstream from the west end of Great Slave Lake, told the hearing people living along the Mackenzie River are apprehensive of pulp mill developments on Alberta rivers.

He said there has not been enough study of the environmental impact the mills will have on people living downstream.

"What affects may there be which will alter our traditional way of life should long-term affects harm the environment?" he asked.

"How does the Alberta government and Alberta-Pacific plan to guarantee no effluent toxicity before discharging wastes into the river?"

"It seems to me incredible that we would repeat the mistakes of the Great Lakes here," said Bob Gamble, a water scientist working for the territorial government.

Gamble said a zero-discharge level is the only acceptable approach because the effect of dioxins and furans on humans is not known.

Jim Borque, deputy minister of renewable resources for the Northwest Territories, said the North is no longer willing to accept pollutants from other regions.

"Our government feels this is totally unacceptable," he said. "Our water can't be used as a dumping site for upstream jurisdiction."

Contaminants are already being detected in fish found in the Mackenzie Basin, particularly whitefish and burbot. He said if the mill is approved, contaminants could make the fish inedible.

Earlier, an official with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs became the second federal official to cast doubt on the project.

Bill Stephen, the department's director-general for the Northwest Territories, said not enough is known about the risks to the environment.

**"T**here are major data gaps that need to be filled before we can confidently predict that this pulp mill will not degrade the water quality of the Slave River in the Northwest Territories," he said.

Ken East, superintendent of the Wood Buffalo National Park west of Fort Smith, said the environmentally-sensitive cannot stand pollution from the south.

"I'm obliged to tell you that (the vast woodlands) are not immune from damage. This extraordinarily dynamic environment can tolerate no more."

Residents of Fort Smith also expressed concern at the hearing, held in the community's Roaring Rapids Hall.



"Let's not throw away mankind's future for the sake of a fast buck," said high school teacher Michael Jones.

An Environment Canada official also questioned how oxygen levels in the river will be maintained if the mill is built.

"It would be better to try to find out and address the problems before they go ahead," said Bryan Armstrong, head of the department's Environmental Assessment branch.

"It would be foolish, I feel, to go ahead and build something and find out there is a problem later," he said.

Armstrong said the work couldn't be done within six months to accommodate a spring construction start for the pulp mill.

"This is our last great chance to protect this region. Let's not hurry this examination," Gamble urged the panel.

The panel also heard from environmentalist David Suzuki, who supported the Bigstone Cree band's opposition to the mill.

"Within 30 years there will be no wilderness left anywhere in the world," said Suzuki. "Listen to the wisdom that lies within our elders. You cannot buy your life back."

The chief of a Vancouver Island Indian band told the panel his tribe is currently threatened by the effects of pulp mills.

"Twenty-five years ago they convinced us there would be no problems and that our people would be employed and that our deer and elk would never be affected," said Simon Lucas.

British Columbia government and health officials have conceded the pulp mills have contaminated the streams where Indians used to fish, said Lucas.

"If the clams are dying, then we must die along with them. I know the stench of the air, the loss of our forests."

Northern residents are split on whether the mill should be built.

Proponents of the project say it will create 1,300 direct jobs in the region.

Some residents of Prosperity opposed the deal. "This is a major agriculture area," said spokesman Ron Wallace. "Listen to the people who have farmed in the area for three generations. There are alternatives for the location of this project."

The association also doubts the company's predictions that pollution to rivers and wells will be slight and odor minimal.

Consultant Bob Caton said the smell would probably wait for five kilometres rather than the 1.5 kilometres the company says.

# Wild Rivers update

The Athabasca River is featured prominently in this Outfit of Che-Mun. It is also a designated river in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System which seeks to identify and protect Canada's most significant rivers, though it has no legal force.

The designation step is final one after nomination. Thus far 17 rivers have been either designated or nominated. The latest nominees are the Thelon and Kazan Rivers in the Northwest Territories.

The following is the description of the Athabasca River from the CHRS.

"The Athabasca River rises in the Columbia Icefields on the Alberta and British Columbia border, a 'hydrological apex' from which flows rivers to the Arctic and Pacific Oceans and to Hudson Bay. The section of the Athabasca River that has been nominated for inclusion in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System consists of the uppermost 105 miles of the river, whose total length is some 950 miles.

"The river's upper reaches in Jasper National Park flow through extensive gravel flats, numerous rapids and the spectacular Athabasca Falls. It scythes through the Front and Main Ranges of the Rocky Mountains, which rise more than 8,000 feet above the valley floor. Along its shores are sizeable populations of bighorn sheep, grizzly and black bears, coyotes, moose and elk, golden and bald eagles and ospreys.

"Unknown to non-native explorers until the 19th century, the Athabasca River was found by David Thompson in 1811. Since this time it has played a continuous role in Canadian development, first as a key link in the fur trade, then in 1862 with the Overlanders and Cariboo Gold Rush. In the late 19th century the valley saw the development of two transcontinental rail links, and in the early part of the 20th century, the opening of roads, notably the world famous Banff-Jasper Highway.

"The Designated section of river offers park visitors exhilarating white water experiences in an area of great natural beauty and diverse wildlife. The length of the river may be travelled by raft, and most of it by kayak or covered canoe. The lower 35 miles contains water suitable for experienced canoeists."

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board consists of representatives of all participating governments. To date, eight provinces (all except Alberta and B.C.) and both territories are represented. The next meeting of the board takes place in Ottawa this month and further river nominations and designations are expected. For further info about the CHRS contact: The Secretary, CHRS, c/o Canadian Parks Service, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3.

## Designated Rivers

River	Province (Park)	Designation Date	Length
French	Ontario (French River P.P.)	Feb. 1986	110 km
Alsek	Yukon (Kluane N.P. Reserve)	Feb. 1986	90 km
Clearwater	Saskatchewan (Clearwater R. P.P.)	June 1986	187 km
South Nahanni	NWT (Nahanni N.P. Reserve)	Jan. 1987	300 km
Bloodvein	Manitoba (Atikaki P.P.)	June 1987	200 km
Mattawa	Ontario (Mattawa River P.P. and Samuel de Champlain P.P.)	Jan. 1988	33 km
Athabasca	Alberta (Jasper N.P.)	Jan. 1989	168 km
North Saskatchewan	Alberta (Banff N.P.)	Jan. 1989	49 km
Kicking Horse	British Columbia (Yoho N.P.)	Jan. 1989	67 km
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,204 km</b>

## Nominated Rivers

River	Province (Park)	Nomination Date	Length
St. Croix	New Brunswick	June 1984	185 km
Missinaibi	Ontario (Missinaibi P.P.)	June 1985	426 km
Bloodvein	Ontario (Woodland Caribou P.P.)	June 1986	106 km
Boundary Waters	Ontario (LaVerendrye P.P.)	June 1987	250 km
Seal	Manitoba (Prop. Seal R. P.P.)	June 1987	260 km
Jacques Cartier	Quebec (Jacques-Cartier P.P.)	June 1987	128 km
The Thirty Mile (Yukon River)	Yukon	Jan. 1988	48 km
Thelon	Northwest Territories	June 1989	615 km
Kazan	Northwest Territories	June 1989	545 km
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,563 km</b>



# News & Notes

**SLIDE FEST V . . .** The annual Luste canoeing get-together has grown again - both in age and numbers. Labrador will be the focus of this year's annual Canoeists' Slide Fest and Wilderness Symposium, held in Toronto on Friday evening and all day Saturday, January 26 & 27 at Monarch Park School. The meeting is sponsored by the Wilderness Canoe Association. This year's line-up is again impressive. John Ruge and James Davidson will be talking about Great Heart; Maine Guide Garrett and Alexandra Conover will tell of their winter toboggan trips; Stewart Coffin, Bob David, Dick Irwin, Robert Perkins, Pat Lewtas and many others make up a list of superb speakers list. Friday night will feature the author of True North, Elliott Merrick reminiscing on his northern years. Other speakers are coming from Goose Bay, Cornerbrook, Minnesota, South Carolina, Maine and points between. By the time this is published it will very close to the date. For details on attending call George Luste at 416/534-9313. There is room for 600 - a big increase from previous years and the cost has risen somewhat - but it's still a stimulating bargain. Che-Mun will have a full report in Outfit 60.

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**REBORN BOOKS . . .** A couple of old classics have been re-released lately. Cliff Jacobson's wonderful *Canoeing Wild Rivers* (published by ICS Books) has been out six years. In the new second edition, Cliff has added more than 200 changes and dozens of additions. Cliff mentions in the preface how quickly things are changing up north - with more people going to more once-remote rivers. Cliff's book is a gem and belongs on any northern tripper's shelf. When we next see Cliff, which will probably be in June at the L. L. Bean Canoe Symposium, we'll ask him why one of the photos on the front cover is backwards or do they really make a canoe call 'nwoT dIO'? The second book to resurface is one of the milestones of wilderness canoe writing - *Dangerous River* by R.M. Patterson about his trips on the Nahanni River in the 1920's. This is high adventure and spellbinding reading. The latest edition is brought out by Stoddart.

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**ASKSPILL . . .** Two million litres of contaminated water - enough to fill three Olympic-size swimming pools - leaked from a northern Saskatchewan uranium mine recently. The water, containing radioactive particles, nickel and arsenic, leaked from a faulty valve at the Cameco uranium mine near Rabbit Lake. But the mayor of nearby Wollaston Lake, 800 kilometres north of Saskatoon, wasn't so quick to accept the company's reassurances that there was no danger. Cameco is a giant uranium company jointly owned by the Saskatchewan and federal governments. It was created last year by the merger of Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corp. and Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. The contaminated water flowed over frozen ground to nearby Collins Creek, about 300 metres away. The creek flows into Collins Bay on Wollaston Lake.

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**MANDAMS . . .** Manitoba has no plan to launch a full environmental impact study of \$3.3-billion Conawapa hydro dam on the lower Nelson River. The government said the environmental damage caused by the mega-project, the largest in the province's history, will be "very minor. Because of the nature of river and the steep embankment, virtually no additional flooding is caused by Conawapa," it said. "No additional trees are going to be flooded as a result of this project and there will be no need to ask the Clean Environment Commission to conduct a full study and public hearings." But the construction of a related \$1.7-billion hydro line to carry the 1,270 megawatts the dam will probably raise environmentalists' ire. Preliminary indications are that the line will have to be brought to the south along the eastern side of Lake Winnipeg. "That country is pretty virgin and undisturbed," said a government official. "I'm sure there will be a great deal of concern, as there ought to be, as to the impact of constructing a transmission line through that country." Ontario and Manitoba

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recently signed a power deal under which Manitoba would sell Ontario 1,000 megawatts of electricity a year for 20 years beginning in 2001. Construction is planned to start on the Conawapa dam and transmission line in 1991.

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**MASON MEMORIES . . .** *Friends of Bill Mason* is the name of a group trying to raise money to keep alive the ideals of the legendary canoeist, environmentalist and filmmaker who died in October 1988. The group is trying to raise \$150,000 to promote wilderness education and environmental consciousness. They have established a Bill Mason Centre on the shores of Lake Superior at the former site of a government worker's camp. It is located at Beaver Rock near Lake Superior Provincial Park on the east coast of the big lake, 80 miles north of Sault Ste. Marie. The centre will teach week-long courses from mid-June to mid-September on canoeing, natural history, music and many other topics. They hope to raise 75% of their funding from these programs. FRIENDS also is campaigning to re-name the magnificent Denison Falls on the Dog (formerly University) River as the Bill Mason Falls. It was one of Bill's favourite places and would be a most worthy tribute to his memory. Those interested in giving money to help *Friends of Bill Mason* can write to the group at 126 York St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5T5 or phone 613/232-1482. The Canadian Recreational Canoe Association is also raising money in Bill Mason's name. They are trying to get together a \$10,000 Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship fund to allow an annual \$1000 scholarship in Bill's name to a deserving outdoor education or environmental studies student. To contribute send to the Bill Mason Memorial Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 500, Hyde Park, Ontario N0M 1Z0. The final Mason movement is to try and get him installed in the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame as a "builder". The 1989 application was turned down with an invitation to try again in 1990. If you wish to add your voice to this cause please write a letter of support to: Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, Nominations Committee, Exhibition Place, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3C3.

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**EFFECT I . . .** Most of us are aware that the greenhouse effect is something to be reckoned with - sooner or later. While most of central North America did not experience the record heat of the last few years, northern Canada did. An unusual circulation pattern brought warm air from the south, setting record temperatures as the mercury soared into the mid-thirties C. (mid-90's F.) The village of Coppermine, located north of the Arctic Circle on the Arctic Ocean, experienced an all-time high of 34.9 degrees C. (95 F!). Fort Simpson in the western Arctic had 18 days of temperatures at 30 degrees C (86 F) or above. The previous record was set in 1975 when they had nine days of 30-plus. The hot, dry weather promoted the outbreak of forest fires in the northern areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In Manitoba, 600 fires forced over 23,000 people out of their homes. In terms of forest area lost to fire, 1989 ranks as the worst since 1910.

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**THE PELLY PULL . . .** Veteran Arctic traveller David Pelly is offering adventurous types a unique and interesting northern travel experience this spring. Pelly will be running the Arctic Dog Sled Expedition for 15 days in April 1990. It will be a traditional sled trip of 300 miles along the northern coast of the Territories from Gjoa Haven to Spence Bay to Pelly Bay (yes, that's one of David's relatives). You will travel with local Inuit and no snowmobile back-up. You will learn how to drive a dog team, build traditional igloos every night on the trail and sample native food - along with 'southern' fare. The trip is not for the faint of heart or short of cash. The \$6000 (Canadian) tab includes return airfare from Ottawa, travel, hotel and meals, caribou skin clothing, Inuit guide services and an obviously fantastic travel adventure. Pelly is prepared to take 12 people with no previous experience required. (I think he'd have trouble finding 12 of us who did have that kind of experience.) For more info write Arctic Sled Expedition, Box 1334, Station B, Weston, Ontario, Canada M9L 2W9.

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## More News & Notes

**H**YDRO HEAT . . . The pressure has been turned up on Hydro-Quebec. Low water levels in northern Quebec has dried up reservoirs and forced power shutdowns for some industries. Consumer confidence is at a record low after another year of blackouts across the province. In Vermont, the pitch to sell that state massive amounts of future power are being challenged by local environmentalists and the James Bay Cree who are attending the hearings. The National Energy Board will also hold hearings in Ottawa this winter to decide whether to grant H-Q an export license. The spring should also heat up opposition to James Bay II at Great Whale River where the utility plans to dam that river, and many others in the area. We'll be following all this closely.

**U**NGAVA ROCKS . . . A strong earthquake rocked the Ungava Peninsula of northern Quebec and parts of Baffin Island on Christmas morning. The Geological Survey of Canada reported the quake measured 6.3 on the Richter scale. "An earthquake over 6 points can cause severe damage in a populated area," said seismologist Robert North of the GCS's Ottawa office. "Fortunately the quake took place in a scarcely populated area." North said his village had received a telephone call from the Inuit village of Igloolik to report the quake. There was also a recording in Iqualuit (Frobisher Bay) on Baffin Island.

**C**REDIT CANOEISTS . . . Both sides won in a recent Supreme Court of Ontario ruling regarding the right of canoeists to use a river versus the right of a property owner to prevent canoeists trespassing on his land to portage around a falls. The court ruled that the Credit River, in southern Ontario just west of Toronto, is navigable to canoes and other water craft. In a case between Canoe Ontario and landowner Julian Reed the court said that "the Reeds have no right to construct or maintain fences on the river which deny public access to the part of the river which runs through their property." The five year fight surrounds a stretch of the Credit near Norval, Ontario. The Reeds also maintain a small hydro dam on the river which means canoeists must portage. The court ruled canoeists should use alternative portage routes other than through the Reed property. But the key issue was won by the canoeists. The court ruled that, "if the waterway serves... a legitimate public interest in that it is, or can be, regularly and profitably used by the public...then it must be regarded as navigable and as within the public interest."

## Our Back Pages

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

- 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 Fest
- Outfit 49 - Kayaking the Queen Charlottes/HBC sell-off
- Outfit 50 - Royals canoe the Hanbury-Thelon
- Outfit 51 - Traditional canoeing through Quetico Park
- Outfit 52 - Lands Forlorn/Atomic Arctic Proposal
- Outfit 53 - Ungava Crater Expedition, Hubbard/Wallace
- Outfit 54 - Povungnituk 88/ Sleeping Island review
- Outfit 55 - Memories of Bill Mason/ Twin Mtter gone
- Outfit 56 - Canoeing stamps, Hanbury review, WCA slidefest
- Outfit 57 - North American Canoe Symposium, Canoebooks
- Outfit 58 - Churchill River Expedition, The Lonely Land

**M**AINE WOODS . . . The Wilderness Society proposed a plan to protect more than 2.5 million acres in Maine that the group fears would be sold if Georgia Pacific Corp. wins its hostile takeover bid for Great Northern Nekoosa Corp. Georgia-Pacific is pursuing a hostile \$4.5 billion, or \$63 a share, takeover of Great Northern Nekoosa. Great Northern owns 2.1 million acres in Maine and is the state's largest landowner. Georgia-Pacific owns nearly 550,000 acres in Maine. The top priority is to protect Great Northern lands near Baxter State Park and elsewhere within a society-proposed 2.7 million Maine Woods Reserve in the Katahdin region. The plan calls for the companies to sell or donate to the state development rights within the proposed reserve. The companies also would give the state an option to purchase over the next five years full title to the most sensitive lands at low sales prices. The society suggested a bond issue to finance such purchases.

**S**ASKDAM . . . Saskatchewan may carry out further environmental review of a proposed northern hydro dam, Premier Grant Devine said. "We haven't ruled out anything," said Devine. "It's wide open for discussion and review." Indian bands in Saskatchewan and Manitoba have complained they weren't consulted before construction of a new dam on the Churchill River was announced earlier this year. Saskatchewan Power Corp. is planning to build a \$37-million replacement for a decaying, 60-year-old dam which diverts water to the Island Falls generating station. The Indian bands claim the existing dam has hurt them by reducing stocks of muskrat, beaver, waterfowl and fish, all important sources of income. SaskPower spokesman Richard Perry said the Crown corporation has done its own studies which indicate no ill effects downstream from the dam. But Devine said he has given Grant Hodgins, his new environment minister, the go-ahead to order a further review.

**E**FFECT II . . . Future changes in climate caused by the greenhouse effect could have a significant impact on the boreal forests of western Canada, according to Environment Canada's latest report in its series on the impact of climatic change. The boreal forests, which stretch up through the western Arctic, are very clearly dependant on climate. The report suggests a northward shift in the northern forest boundaries of approximately 60 to 400 miles and in the southern boundaries of from 30 to 500 miles. The report also concludes that there could be a potential decrease in forest growth rates of up to 12% for the southern part of the boreal forest, and up to 50% for the northern part. The report examines the many changes that might occur with regard to fire, insect and disease on northern forests.

**K**EEWATIN CLAIM . . . The Inuit of the Keewatin District of the N.W.T. and the federal government have reached agreement—in-principle on the Inuit's long-standing land claim. The claim, when ratified by both sides, could divide the Northwest Territories into the Nunavut region of the east (Inuit) and Denendeh of the west (Metis and Dene). The western border of the area is roughly the treeline which angles from Churchill to the mouth of the Mackenzie River. The deal also includes Baffin Island. Nunavut means 'homeland' in Inuktituk. The deal gives the 17,000 Inuit a land mass three times the size of New Brunswick - about 100,000 square miles and \$580 million in compensation over 14 years. The deal will be voted on by plebiscite in the first half of 1990 by the Inuit who make up over 80% of the population of the region. Over the past five years the Inuit of the Western Arctic, as well as the Dene and Metis of the N.W.T. and the Yukon, have signed agreements to their land claims. The current agreement-in-principle includes the right for the Inuit to politically control the region, as well as hunting rights and the freedom to decide what areas of land they will want. The Inuit can select the most valuable land based on mineral, oil and gas, or tourism potential. Whether this will have any effect on paddlers travelling through their land is not yet known.



The Canadian  
Heritage  
Rivers  
System



*Founded by Nick Nickels*  
The International Newsletter for  
Canadian Wilderness Canoeists

**Future Che**

We will be following what's sure to be a busy year for Hyrdo-Quebec. Opposition to James Bay II and the damming of the Great Whale River should become more public. We welcome input from our readers whether it be suggesions, trip reports or news items.

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