

CHE-MUN

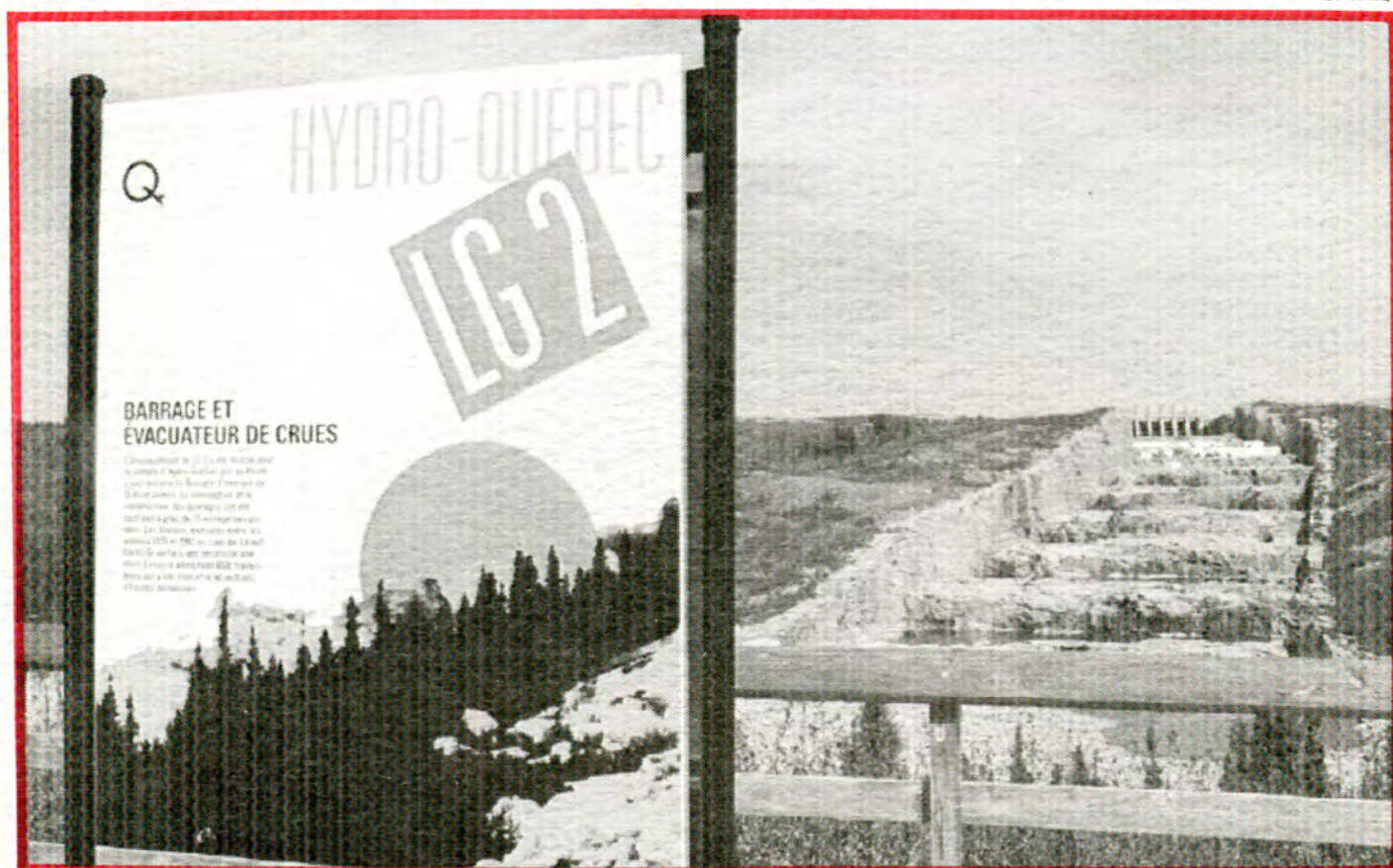
(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 68

CHE-MUN

SPRING 1992



NEVER AGAIN--This emergency run-off channel along once was the La Grand River

will never be repeated hopefully. The recent cancellation of the New York power contract

has thrown the entire James Bay II hydroelectric development into well-deserved uncertainty.

James Bay

Victory at hand?

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The Classics

Son of the North

Camsell's Canadian classic

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Call it the

Hitchengrounds

Cliff ties his toughest knot

Page 3



Spring Packet



There were not a lot of letters in the post box this winter. Perhaps the recession has made it difficult for many readers to write from inside their cocoons. But a few of you took the time to drop us a line and we thank you.

The rest of you - take note - we like to hear what you're up to, what questions you have, where you're planning to go and what interesting historical gems you have uncovered.

The mystery poet of the canoeing world has dropped us some more wonderful offerings.

Our poet notes that Don Smith of Valley Ventures (Box 1115, Deep River, Ont K0J 1P0) have included 12 poems in their current issue of publication called Trip Notes.

APRIL

The cookstove is polished to a fairly nice gleam
My paddles are varnished and bright
The packsack is airing out on the line
The thermometer's rising tonight

Somewhere the ice pulls away from the shore
Somewhere the rivers break free
Somewhere April is calling the name
Of someone real close to me

It's not that the house isn't friendly and warm
It's not that the water's not cold
But how often do winds come singing one's name
How often does springtime unfold

The maps are tucked in a big plastic pouch
The canoe's on top of the car
Measure tomorrow by the length of my stroke
And my life from the first morning star.

MAY

I suppose I've been sitting in the office chair
Making paddling motions
For about two weeks now

I suppose I've been staring at the map on the wall

By the desk

Doing the company out of time and time

I think management should chuck
A few of us into the wild
Each May, for a week or two
Just to find out if it improves our work
And appreciation of company benefits

I'm available

Canoe, paddle, dreams and all

I'm available.

Richard Reed, 930 Garry St, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 5P9 took the time to pen these thoughts to Che-Mun recently.

"I enjoy your magazine very much but I am sad to hear of all the wilderness areas being destroyed across Canada. We enjoy canoeing in northern Saskatchewan, mostly on the Churchill River. It is becoming overcrowded in some areas, especially the Devil Lake/Otter Rapids area.

"There is one outfitter who runs 20-foot jet boats up and down the rapids in the area of Barker Lake and I fear some hapless canoeist will be injured or worse.

"They seem to pay little heed to safety as they attempt 'air time' while blasting up and down the rapids at top speed.

"With all the history involved in this area from the fur trade era it is too bad the Churchill wasn't made a Heritage River and protected from further development. We have noticed a lot of survey work done in the area by geologists and we fear they will find something that will start a rush to develop mining along this historic river.

"I sincerely wish that something could be done to save the Churchill."

Thanks for your concerns, Richard. I think all of us who are worried about such special places could not have received a better lesson

about what can be done than the recent Cree victory in the battle to stop James Bay II. We all must do our bit - write a letter, become educated on what is going on. Common sense can only prevail once it is obtained.

We have a request for trip info from American paddler Richard Puls, RFD 1, Box 2400, Freedom, Maine 04941.

"I am in the process of organizing a trip to the Godbout River on the North Shore (of the St. Lawrence).

"Is there anyone out there who's been down the Godbout who might offer some advice about the river. Or is there any written info on the area."

Che-Mun has no files on the river - and to tell you the truth - we hadn't even heard of it. So anyone that can help Richard could should please drop him a line.

Readers John Conkling sent us this note with his recent subscription renewal.

"Took my 90-year-old father fishing in Temagami last summer. Great fishing in Cross Lake.

"But who would believe the house boats - and I've been goping to the area on and off for the last 25 years. It sure is a different world today.

"But the 90-year-old pro caught a 13 lb. lake trout and a 10 lb. walleye. Some fun."

Che-Mun echoes John's thoughts. The house boat explosion is happening throughout the less well-regulated areas of Ontario and elsewhere. They tried to invade the Muskoka region where the Hide-Away Canoe Club is located. But extremely vigilant cottager opposition kept them away.

They are a real hazard because they're large boats driven by people with little skill and no knowledge of the area.

CANOE TOONS

PAUL MASON



Editor's Notebook

Another spring is upon us and the sounds and smells of the awakening North are stirring our woefully deprived senses once again.

I don't ever recall a year where I was so grateful and entranced to hear the sounds of the birds in the spring. If this is a sign of growing old, then I can only welcome it.

Of course, I've heard the birds every year but they never meant more than just a simple sign of the changing seasons. But I think we all know now that a simple season change is not something we should take for granted.

Never did I think just where most of those birds spent their winters. They just flew away. But of course they were flying south to rainforests that are being destroyed, through air that has grown ever more foul, using water that each day has become more polluted.

The greatest birdsong chorus I ever heard was paddling along the banks of the lower Missinaibi in early June of 1981. It was our first northern big river trip and our eyes were opened to many marvellous sights.

The thinning forests of the James Bay lowlands were alive with the sweet and tranquil singing of millions of birds - those lucky enough to have made it that far. Sweeping along the wilderness still is the lower Missinaibi; the sun, the water, the birds - it all seemed so perfect. It was.

The word of New York's cancellation of their Hydro-Quebec contract was a welcome as the spring that accompanied it. This is truly wonderful news and though the project isn't officially dead - it soon will be, we believe at least put back several years.

With this issue of Che-Mun, we enter the era of desktop publishing. Almost everything in these pages is being produced through a Macintosh computer. So bear with us as we grapple with the changes.

Many of you will be well advanced in your planning for the great adventures of the summer of 1992. I know we are. And certainly the business of trying to scare up some sponsors has seen better days - along with the rest of the economy.

So, grow old with me - as the poet said - and embrace the warmth of spring. But savour this sweet season, for every day brings us closer to fall.

Michael Peake, Editor.

A double tent ring ceremony?

It will be - without a shred of a doubt - the greatest wedding to take place on the Hood River this year - or for that matter almost anywhere on the Barrenlands.

For that's where noted U.S. canoeist and author Cliff Jacobson plans to marry Susan Harings. The pair will be part of a group paddling the Hood River.



Susan Harings, the bride-to-be, on her 1991 Lake Superior solo trip.

Cliff and Susie will be married at the lip of magnificent Wilberforce Falls on the west side of the Hood - one of the most spectacular and scenic spots in all of Canada. One of Cliff's friends, Dr. Bill

Forgey, has been officially designated an NWT "Marriage Commissioner" to perform the service. Forgey is perhaps best known to canoeists as owner of ICS books - Cliff's publisher.

Cliff, who lives in Hastings Minnesota, is a teacher and canoe trip leader. He has published many books most notably *Canoeing Wild Rivers* a superb guide for those heading north to tackle the big water.

Susie, is a teacher in Wisconsin and in love with the outdoors. She's canoed on Great Slave Lake, the Churchill River and many other places.

The original plan called for her to fly-in and camp out for a week waiting for the wedding/canoe party to arrive. But a vacancy developed on the trip and she jumped at the chance.

The bride will wear a white cotton wedding dress and knee-high rubber boots. White gloves and a shoulder-length veil of mosquito net will adorn the outfit if bugs arrive as unwelcomed guests.

The bride will carry her things in a pure white Duluth Tents and Awning #2 pack. Included in her essentials will be "sufficient libation for a jolly good party", says Cliff.

The wedding date is set for August 12 but, as Cliff notes - that's assuming a polar gale doesn't change plans. Everyone at Che-Mun and I'm sure all our readers extend the very best of wishes to Cliff and Susie for a full, exciting and happy life together.



James Bay UPDATE

Hydro-Quebec's Assault on the North

N.Y. zaps H-Q

New York state's cancellation of a \$17-billion energy contract with Quebec is the kiss of death for the controversial Great Whale project, says a Cree leader.

"If Great Whale is built, what are they going to do with all that electricity?" said Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Grand Council of the Cree. "They don't have a purchaser."

New York state pulled the plug on the contract, the largest in Hydro-Quebec's history, in late March after Quebec refused to knock down the price down by 30 per cent.

"Energy consumption in Quebec will still force us to build Great Whale," insisted executive vice-president Pierre Bolduc, who negotiated the deal with the state-owned New York Power Authority.

The Cree campaigned hard against the New York contract because of its links with Great Whale.

The money from the New York deal would have been used to finance the project, and the energy to feed the state generated by flooding an area of northern Quebec almost the size of Prince Edward Island, destroying traditional native lands.

Namagoose predicted Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa will have a hard time financing the project because "he needs those American dollars and American projects to go ahead with Great Whale."

"He is confident the demand will increase again," said aide Sylvie Godin in the only statement from the premier's office. "He still believes hydro-electricity is the best form of energy."

But Namagoose said Bourassa will have to face the fact that the trend is away from increasing energy consumption.

"Hydro-Quebec should do what the rest of the world is doing, and practise energy conservation measures and demand-side management," said the Cree leader. "That's what everybody around Quebec is doing, except for Quebec itself, which has resisted."

Namagoose called New York's decision a victory for the little guy.

"I'm beginning to have hope for the power of the

grass roots," he said. "It was a long shot, but we hit the target bull's-eye."

However, Bolduc argued that the Cree shouldn't



Legendary former Grand Chief Billy Diamond led the original fight against James Bay I in the 70s.

celebrate their victory too quickly because New York could still sign a new deal.

"New York Power Authority has told us they still want to buy energy from Quebec and they may very well come back to the bargaining table in a couple of years," said Bolduc.

"Don't assume this deal is cancelled forever and don't assume that Great Whale will not be built."

The Great Whale hydroelectric project in northern Quebec will have to be drastically revised because of the loss of a \$17-billion power deal with New York state, Quebec Energy Minister Lise Bacon said.

The \$13.1-billion Great Whale development will

now be broken into three parts, she said.

Phase one is scheduled to be completed by the year 2000. Completion of the second phase has now been set for 2005, while the last phase should be finished in 2008.

The project originally was to be completed around the turn of the century.

Bacon blamed the Cree of northern Quebec for the cancellation of Hydro-Quebec's contract with New York and accused them of threatening the province's economic well-being.

She demanded to know if the Cree "are Quebecers or not" after they lobbied for months to block the deal with the New York Power Authority.

"It's unacceptable for Quebecers to see their economic situation reduced or put in danger by natives," she said outside the legislature in Quebec City.

"I blame them for discrediting Quebec all over the world. Do you think Quebecers can accept that? I don't think so."

At a forum on the Great Whale project in Montreal, Hydro-Quebec officials gave more details on the new timetable for Great Whale.

"We will still need about one-third of the 3,000 megawatts proposed for Great Whale by the year 2000," said Rene Boisvert, the utility's planning director.

"That means we would start construction on the infrastructure for the first powerhouse in the fall of 1993. Total cost for phase one would be between \$4 and 7 billion... out of the total \$13 billion.

"The second and third phases will be delayed well into the next century."

However, energy consultant David Cliche accused Bacon and Boisvert of using Great Whale for political purposes.

"I think Hydro-Quebec is engaging in more political doubletalk on Great Whale," said Cliche, a defeated Parti Quebecois candidate in the 1989 Quebec election.

"The real reason for announcing that construction will begin on the infrastructure for phase one in the fall of 1993 is that Premier Robert Bourassa can be shown on television cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the project.

The Quebec government is making the Cree scapegoats for its embattled Great Whale project and creating an "us against them" mentality, Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come said.

"Instead of taking the blame for what's happening to their project, the government of Quebec is looking for a scapegoat," the grand chief of Quebec's 10,000 Cree said in an interview.

"I don't think her comments contribute to a constructive and rational debate about the project," Coon-Come said.

"Unfortunately we had to go outside to defend



Current Grand Chief of the Quebec Northern Crees, Matthew Coon-Come, chats with Robert Kennedy Jr. who testified at the James Bay II hearings on behalf of an American environmental group.

Cree rights," Coon-Come said.

But he dismissed Bacon's suggestion that through their vigorous opposition to Great Whale, the Cree have tarnished Quebec in the world's eyes.

The provincial government "still has the mentality of us against them the Indians against Quebecers," the grand chief said.

Responding to Bacon's suggestion that if they were real Quebecers the Cree would not discredit their province, Coon-Come said, "I'm a Cree first."

And he disagreed with the energy minister's insistence that northern Quebec is provincial real estate.

"It's Cree territory, we're the original occupants," he countered.

"Quebec cannot assert additional powers in northern Quebec or claim it as territory without the consent of the aboriginal people."

The cancellation of the 21-year deal, the largest in Hydro-Quebec's history, should mean the end of the project, Coon-Come said.

"The government of Quebec should concentrate on energy conservation now."

Coon-Come said he's uneasy about what will happen to the comprehensive environmental review process now that the project has been split in three.

Hydro Quebec says New York's cancellation of a \$13 billion energy contract will not stop the utility's controversial Great Whale dam-building project in the northern James Bay region.

"Energy consumption in Quebec will still force us to build Great Whale," Pierre Bolduc, Hydro's executive vice president for external trade, said after the cancellation.

"There might possibly be a delay of one year in construction of the dams, but Great Whale will be producing energy by the year 2000," he said of the \$10 billion project, the second phase of a \$62 billion plan.

The New York Power Authority announced Mar. 27 that it was cancelling the contract because it wanted to knock down the price by 30 percent. Quebec refused to budge.

"We felt we could not lower our price without affecting the security of the people of Quebec and risking the stability of our other contracts with other American states," Bolduc told a hastily called news conference.

Bolduc spoke after New York Gov. Mario Cuomo issued a statement saying he was recommending cancellation because "circumstances have

changed dramatically since this contract originally was signed in 1988."

Because of energy conservation measures and independent power production "we do not need new electricity generating capacity until after the turn of the century," Cuomo said.

The deal with New York was signed in 1988. It was scheduled to take effect in 1995 and would have lasted for 21 years.

"This is a tremendous, tremendous victory," said Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Grand Council of the Cree of Quebec. "We've been fighting this issue for 2 years at the grassroots level, taking on Hydro Quebec - which I think is the fourth largest utility in the world. The odds were against us." Business people in Quebec said they were not worried by the announcement - partly because they had been hearing rumors for weeks that the deal was in trouble.

"This is not a big surprise," said Richard Le Hir, president of the Quebec Manufacturers Association.

"The American economy is in a recession and Governor Cuomo is thinking about elections. So this is a perfect way to please the environmentalists in New York and put pressure on Quebec to lower its price."

"It's American hardball," he said.

Robert Kennedy Jr.'s appearance before a committee studying the Great Whale hydroelectric project in mid-March brought some American-style glamour to the proceeding but caused a few sparks to fly as well.

"It's not our role to tell the people of Quebec how to develop their resources, that's a decision they've got to make for themselves," Kennedy, an environmental lobbyist, stressed repeatedly throughout his 25-minute presentation.

"We're not telling people what to do, we're offering assistance."

Earlier, a high-profile Quebec business leader criticized Kennedy's decision to appear at the hearings.

"I don't take very seriously young people who don't hesitate to take a jet every weekend to their third home in Palm Beach - and who then tell us how we save energy," sniped Guy St. Pierre, president of the engineering giant SNC Group. SNC is the firm with the lion's share of northern hydro work.

"These are a Noah's Ark of estuaries, a species warehouse," Kennedy said, warning the province is "playing Russian Roulette" by tinkering with them.

Peter Jacobs, co-chairman of the hearings, thanked Kennedy for his presentation, but seemed to take him publicly to task.

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The Classics

Charles Camsell

Canada's Northern Son

Son of the North

By Charles Camsell.
The Ryerson Press, Toronto 1954.
244 pp.

By Michael Peake
Che-Mun Editor

The period between the disappearance of John Franklin and the beginning of World War I was a time of northern travel that closely resembles today's canoe adventures.

From the 1870s until 1914, a relatively small but energetic band of adventurers criss-crossed the Canadian north without the resolute conviction of those laying claim for some far-off Queen. It has been called the age of the "Gentleman Adventurer" - the Purposeful Wanderer - men like Hanbury and Pike, who came from far away to revel in the pure, harsh wilderness that was northern Canada.

The occasion of a Canadian born in the north and doing such trips is rare indeed - or at least poorly documented. But that's exactly what Charles Camsell did for so many years across his native NWT.

Born in Fort Simpson in 1876, Camsell was one of 11 children of Chief Factor Camsell of the Hudson's Bay Company. Fort Simpson, at the junction of the Liard and Mackenzie rivers. The name Camsell still graces several features in the north after both the father and his successful son. But the Camsell River could very nearly have been called the Onion River if Camsell's father had not returned to his native England after he left the British Army and changed his surname to that of his mother's maiden name of Camsell.

In 1954 Camsell, a successful and prosperous man then in his 70s was convinced to write the story of the early days in the north. This book is the result and it is a highly readable account - not so much from the author's style, which is quite straightforward, but more because of his seat in history.



Charles Camsell in his official portrait as NWT Commissioner taken sometime in the 1940s.

Growing up at Fort Simpson was a secluded affair. The mail packet came in and went out twice a year and the nearest doctor was 2000 miles away.

Camsell went away to St. John's School in Winnipeg at the age of eight - and owing to the difficulties in travel at the time - could not return until he was 18. On his way to the school he was among the last to travel the old traditional voyageur route that used the Methye or Long Portage as Camsell called it. This gruelling 12-mile carry connects the Clearwater River with the headwaters of the Churchill River system. It is just such an incident that make Camsell's book absolutely fascinating.

He describes his journey across Long Portage and the great amount of work that went in to the much anticipated event. He concluded, "It was a man's job and the man who did it had reason to boast that he had reached man's estate."

A few years later the traditional route had shifted from the Methye to one via the

Athabasca River route north of Edmonton.

Camsell returned to the north when he was 18 and began travelling. His first job was in Fort Norman where the Great Bear River, draining Great Bear Lake, meets the mighty Mackenzie. He boarded at the house of Joe Hodgson, the Bay Post Manager. Alert readers will recognise that name from the travels of George Douglas some 16 years later. Hodgson built a cabin at the mouth of the Dease River in Great Bear Lake where Douglas' party did the same.

Among Camsell's adventures at the time was to get stranded on an island in the middle of the Mackenzie for seven days just when the river was breaking up - an event he described as "the grandest sight in the whole north."

While at Ft. Norman, Camsell also described the arrival of a group of Indians who came down the Gravel River in boats made of raw moosehide. The boats were designed to get the natives to the trading post and not be taken back. Camsell noted they were quickly devoured by the dogs.

After two years Camsell turned to Fort Simpson in 1897 - right at the time when news of a gold strike in the Yukon was slowly creeping its way across the continent.

Camsell and his group made like thousands of other hopeful prospectors who headed to the Yukon. Their route took them up the dangerous Liard River travelling with dogs in winter.

His account of their ascent through the Grand Canyon of the Liard is riveting. On Christmas Day they had to portage up 1000 feet to the rim of the canyon as the force of the water had kept the Hell Gate Rapid open and unpassable. Camsell also dispenses many nuggets about the history of travel through the area by the HBC and why it was main abandoned.

In the heart of the Liard lay legend of a "Tropical Valley", a supposed oasis of warmth in the otherwise frigid north. He notes the area once a secluded spot with natural hot springs. The area now lies close to the Alaska Highway and its springs were destroyed by the U.S.

Army during construction. Camsell failed to find any of the fabled monkeys or parrots, just some luxuriant growth of grasses and trees.

The Klondike party made poor progress with no luck at hunting and by February they began killing their dogs for food. By the spring they were not much better off and one day they met a group of fellow prospectors who were well-stocked with food but would not share any.

Though desperately hungry they were not allowed to buy any food nor were they asked to join in by the pair. Camsell noted it was the first and only time that he was not invited to a meal when meeting fellow travellers in the north. It would come back to haunt that pair of neophyte prospectors for they ran into Camsell later on when they were hungry and without food. And received a full belly many times over.

After they gave up the quest for the Klondike, Camsell and his brother Fred became packteers on the Stikine River, running the mail from Telegraph Creek to Wrangel. They soon gave up on that after being ripped off for their salary and they decided to head back to the more familiar ground of Great Slave Lake - a distance of 700 miles in their 18-foot canoe.

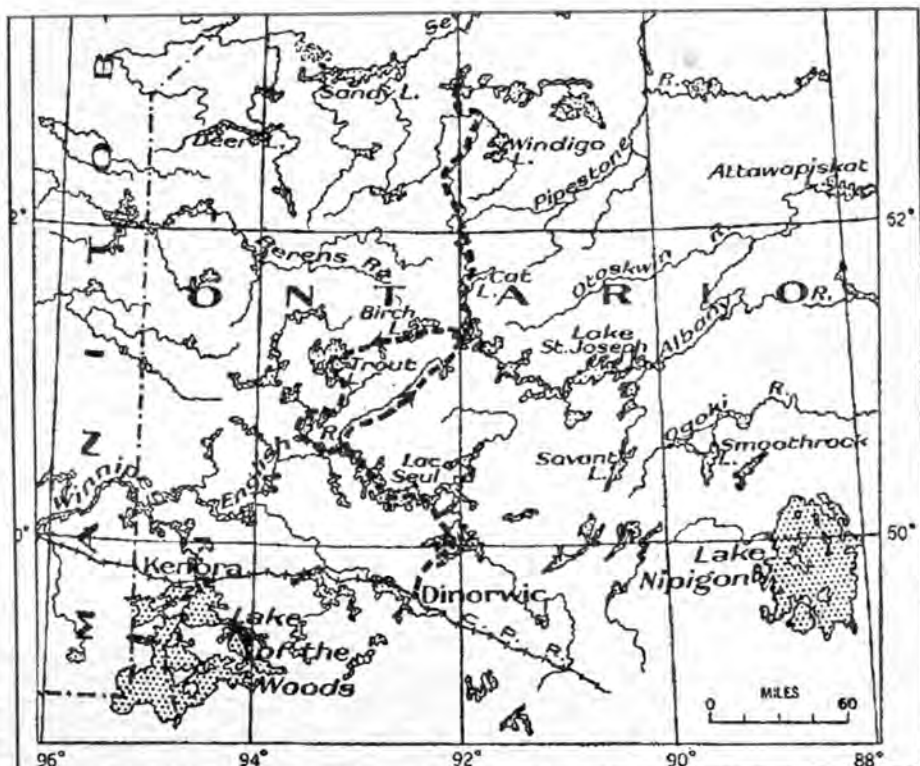
"The trip down the Liard River by canoe from Dease Lake to the Mackenzie is one of the finest canoe trips that one can find on the continent," Camsell noted. "It should, however, not be attempted in high water unless one is well equipped. Indeed, it should not be attempted at all unless one is an expert canoeist."

Camsell noted that in the previous 60 years (from 1954) fewer than six parties had made the trip. (Ed. Note: *Am I reading the minds of several Che-Mun readers?*)

Camsell related how he spoke to David Hanbury about the trip that the noted Brit made along the same route and of his experience at Devil's Portage.

"When Hanbury and his party came to make the last trip across with their packs, it was found that there was left over a five gallon keg still containing some brandy. No one could add the keg to their load that he already had and no one wanted to make an extra trip across the portage for it. What they did, therefore, was to drive the cork firmly into the bung-hole and throw the keg into the river. The following day about 40 miles down the river near Hell's Gate, the keg was found floating buoyantly in an eddy. With a shout of joy Hanbury picked it up and was able to have his drink that night before dinner."

Camsell reached what he called the turning point in his life in the summer of 1900 when he met Macintosh Bell of the Geological



This map is a detailed section of Camsell's book. It shows the area of some of the author's travels in northern Ontario throughout the early part of this century and the end of the last one.

Survey of Canada. It was a meeting that would begin a good many trips for the pair and it would convince the young Camsell of the need to further his education in the field of geology which offered a bright future in a growing Canada.

The two young men and their party set off from Fort Norman and ascended the Great Bear River and travelled, after some ice delay, around to the Dease River in the northeast corner of the huge lake. They passed Fort Confidence and Camsell fills in some interesting historical date on this place originally built in 1837.

When they reached the Dease the group took off on foot towards the Coppermine. They were among large herds of caribou and even had a highly unusual close call with a polar bear near the Dismal Lakes.

One of the surprising parts of Camsell's book is his unease regarding the Eskimos. Perhaps being brought up close to many Indians made him naturally wary of this tradition enemy of the Indians. Like George Douglas 11 years later, Camsell also met a group of Eskimo who ran off when they sighted them. But unlike Douglas, Camsell remained nervous and wary of the group. They even posted a guard when they slept that night for fear of overnight assassins.

Later the group headed for the south end of the lake and it was here in the course of normal

geological examinations that Bell noted the conditions that were prime for uranium. Several years later Gilbert Labine confirmed the finding and Port Radium, Canada's first uranium mine was founded. It was metal from this site that provided some of the material used to make the atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan in 1945. Port Radium was recently renamed Echo Bay though the mine is now dormant.

The plan was to cross over to Great Slave Lake and they did so with the help of a group of Dogrib Indians they met along the way. Camsell was most complementary about their services. Along the way, Bell named the river which drains a series of lakes into Great Bear after Camsell. The name still stands.

When they arrived at Fort Smith, at the south end of Great Slave they ran into J.W. Tyrrell and C.C. Fairchild who had just completed their exploration (the first by canoe) of the Hanbury-Thelon River system. All in all, 1900 was a very busy year in northern Canada for Camsell.

He next headed to James Bay under the employ of the Algoma Central Railway which was investigating the area in hopes of locating a deep water terminus there - and he was to look for any minerals along the way. He descended the Mattagami River to Moose Factory.

The following spring found him in Athabasca country again for the GSC, whom Camsell, noted travelled hard - without the tradi-

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tional Sundays off.

Camsell then took time off for his education at Queens and Harvard though he still worked summers in the north. Subsequent trips took him to northern Manitoba looking for gypsum - and finding lots - and another GSC trip to the Severn River in Ontario's far northwest. Again he grabbed his brother Fred to go along. His father had by now retired and moved to Winnipeg.

At this time Camsell was notified that he had been accepted for employment into the GSC. He was thrilled but a bit puzzled since he had never asked for the job. The Severn River trip was his first official GSC job and one of his guides was George Hackett, an Iroquois chief who had been with the famous Nile expedition in Egypt in 1884. He had a lot of stories to tell.

As the group headed north from Cat Lake they entered country that had never been mapped and met a group of Crane Indians whose Chief did not want them to go any further when told of their mission.

"His reply was that he did not like white men coming into his country. He had been told by Indians living nearer the railroad that everywhere the white man went he took anything of value in the country and left the Indian to starve . . . It was a moving speech, even as it came to me through the interpreter, and there was a good deal of truth in it."

He finished the trip in late September at the Bay post on Lac Seul. Camsell tells of how financial arrangements were handled.

"In those days a letter of credit from the head office of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg was honoured at any post in the north country and was a great convenience in meeting accounts for wages and supplies. Canadian currency had not yet been introduced to the natives as a medium of exchange. The barter system was still in effect."

It was off to the the Mackenzie Mountains next and an exploration of the Peel River down to the Mackenzie and then up through the Rat and Porcupine to get out of the country. It was a hurried trip since Camsell had agreed to get married that fall and did not want to get stuck wintering over in the north

A sample of Camsell's prose when he climbed Mt. Goodenough - named by Franklin.

"The view from the top of the mountain looking over the delta of the Mackenzie River is a magnificent one and I can still picture it after a lapse of many years. I have looked down on the surface of the earth from airplanes many times since, but from a rapidly moving point such as an airplane, the scene changes too quickly to allow one to absorb all its aspects. As I rested on top of Mount Goodenough, while the light faded from sunset to midnight yet did not vanish altogether, I had time to digest the view and allow the impressions of its grandeur to consolidate in my mind, and there those impressions remain, I can shut my eyes and still see the vast expanse of the Mackenzie delta."

This was a superb book that I really enjoyed

even though for some reason I thought it would be - and it wasn't - an antiseptic account of a couple of trips by a now (then) famous author. For Camsell eventually became Canada's Deputy Minister of Mines and later on Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 1935 to 1946.

But it is very obvious that Charles Camsell was a man who knew the land first hand. The book is filled with interesting characters and trips down rivers that still hold great interest to wilderness canoeists.

The active part of Camsell's travels ended in 1914 with a trip down the Taltson River. He asks himself, as he left one phase of his life to begin another, what appeal such travel holds. His answer hits the nail on the head and is as true today as then.

"Exploration, mountain climbing, canoeing on strange rivers, facing the bitter cold of an Arctic winter and similar experiences all give one a great thrill, because in facing up to those things one is fighting and overcoming not his fellow man, but the forces of nature.

"Perhaps, however, a greater thrill comes from conquering oneself, from overcoming the fear that on occasion accompanies these activities and finding out if you can take it. I may not have been always as conscious of it, but this, after all, may be the fundamental reason why explorers as well as many other, get such a kick out of that sort of life."

Camsell's book is not rare and should cost less than \$30 from any northern book dealer.



The foaming fury of Whiteeagle Falls on the Camsell River a few miles before it enters Great Bear Lake, in this photo from Camsell's book.

Canoelit

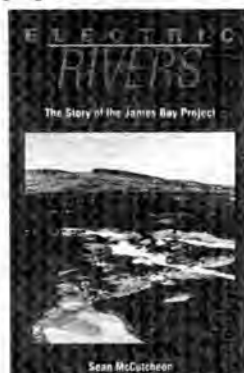
Electric Rivers.

The story of the James Bay Project.

By Sean McCutcheon.

Published by Black Rose Books, Montreal. 194 pp.

Electric Rivers. Precisely. That's the perfect title for this fascinating behind-the-scenes look at Hydro-Quebec's James Bay hydroelectric project.



northern Quebec.

Sean McCutcheon worked in the north as an exploration geophysicist. He is currently a writer on science and technology living in Montreal.

McCutcheon's former occupation serves him well in this undertaking. He was able to move around the Hydro-Quebec's James Bay "suburb" - for that's how it's considered - with relative ease. He worked alongside the men who changed the course of rivers and diverted mountains of soil and rock.

I have followed the James Bay saga as closely as anyone not directly involved in the scheme so I approached the book with some fear of reading the same old stuff over and over.

And while that may be true - and in escapable - in some respects, there were a great many gaps in my knowledge filled by *Electric Rivers*.

McCutcheon breaks down the story into three parts; Background, James Bay I and James Bay II. He examines the launching of this whole scheme - which can be clearly attributed to one man - Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa. In fact, the author relates how he had to drag H-Q into the whole scheme. That of course meant that the motives were more political than economic. And the word environment

wouldn't enter the discussion for some time.

His accounts of the travails in building the thing - with the massive labour problems - makes for interesting reading. You almost get the feeling someone might make a movie about all this - perhaps *Gone With the Water*.

One of the problems in doing a book as timely as *Electric Rivers* is that you're writing more news than history. That was clearly demonstrated in late March when New York cancelled Hydro-Quebec's \$17 billion contract for Great Whale power.

The book makes great claims on the outside cover that it is the first impartial book on the project. Certainly millions of words have been written about James Bay but so many of those were by the agenda-laden forces of either side.

It was very interesting for me to read this book - and it would be helpful to know what a Hydro-Quebec executive would think after reading it. As a staunch opponent of James Bay, I felt the author was on on "my" side. I don't really know if that is true but it's the opinion reach by his laying down the facts as both side see them.

Perhaps that was the genius behind the Cree's massive public relations campaign to battle the project. For once you get the whole story out in the open and examine just exactly what they want to do up there - it doesn't have a chance.

But that doesn't mean they won't stop trying to dam the north of Canada.

- Michael Peake

The Kazan. *Journey into an Emerging Land.*

Edited by David F. Pelly,
Christopher C. Hanks.

Published by Outcrop,
Yellowknife, NWT. 134pp.

This book had its birth in the 1988 Operation Raleigh Kazan River Expedition which was well reported in *Che-Mun*

In fact, I had a closer view of the trip than most, as I accompanied the crew of 24 Venturers and 8 guides on the first week of their 50-day trip down this beautiful Barrenlands river.

This scholarly and scientific book has emerged four years later to document the findings of the Raleigh trip which in keeping with the aims of the worldwide endeavour were largely scientific and social.

Editors Pelly (a veteran northern traveller, expedition leader and *Che-Mun* subscriber) and

Hanks divvy up the writing into seven distinct sections ranging through birdlife, wildlife, Inuit culture and characteristics of the landscape.

The book is part of the publisher's Northern Heritage Series and contains an introduction from Operation Raleigh's patron, Prince Charles. It is also published in conjunction with the United Nations and Imperial Oil.

Pelly notes similarities between this expedition and that of J.B. Tyrrell's, who descended the Kazan in 1894. The major difference is that there were still Inuit living here when Tyrrell passed through. Today the land is completely devoid of people.

This book is sprinkled with the impressions from the journals of many of the diverse Venturers whose home countries ranged from Singapore to Australia. There are also several colour photos in the glossy 7" by 9" book - though they are all quite small.

The experts, writing in their sections, fortunately remember to keep the narrative in the present tense and include day-to-day activities of the group. This prevents the load of scientific info from becoming too dry.

This is not a canoe trip journal in the usual sense. But rather a deep, probing scientific look into the natural and man-made wonders that make up the incredible Kazan River valley.

The Kazan is a unique book in that it is really the first popular work to scientifically examine a river that many people might blithely canoe with little thought to it's natural or human past.

Most of us have discovered that the more we put in to researching our trips the more we get out of them. That makes this book absolutely indispensable for any canoeing party planning to do the Kazan. As more than one author points out, it is important to study and fully understand the depth of riches the Kazan and other rivers represent.

The book's subtitle - *Journey into an Emerging Land* - comes from Richard Wilson - a Scottish Venturer. He noted that the land has only recently emerged from its glaciation.

He continued, "It is an emerging land in the sense that we're beginning to discover its beauty. . . Now we are emerging from our ignorance of the North, rather than just the land, which rises majestically above my wildest imagination."

-Michael Peake

News & Notes

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN... The canoeing world lost a couple of pretty important people this year. Harry Roberts, the irrepressible canoe enthusiast died in January of a heart attack in Michigan at the age of 55. Roberts was associated with Sawyer canoes for many years and started Canoesport Journal in 1986. He was best known for his high-spirited canoeing talks and was someone who loved to paddle.

And it was truly bitter irony that New York State Assemblyman Bill Hoyt, 54, died the day before his state cancelled the James Bay hydro contract which he fought so hard against. Hoyt had just been successful in bringing forth a bill that would require an environmental assessment of the project before New York accepted any power. Hoyt, like Roberts, was a Che-Mun subscriber and lived to travel in Canada's far north. A few years ago he was one of the organizers of *On the Polar Sea* - a film of his group's trip down the Bonnet Plume River.

Both men made a valuable contributions to the canoeing world and will be greatly missed.

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MORE DAM FOOLISHNESS... It now appears that China is about to go ahead with their massive Three Gorges dam project - the largest hydroelectric project in the world. This huge damming of the massive rapids on the Yangtze River will displace over a million people from their homes. It is the type of project that could only be undertaken in a totalitarian country.

Environmentalists around the world are trying to work against the scheme. Any dissent of it is officially outlawed in China which is seeking \$11 billion in international financing for the project which is officially titled the 'Three Gorges Water Control Project.' Several Canadian firms were involved with the planning of the project including - to no one's surprise Hydro-Quebec, SNC-Lavalin (H-Q's main engineering firm), and BC Hydro International. The projects' \$14 million feasibility study was financed by a Canadian government development agency in hopes of getting big contracts for the above companies.

In its recent ruling the Jury of the Second International Water Tribunal found the Canadian government and the companies guilty of what amounts to collusion and secrecy in recommending the dam be built. They state the dam will "submerge land, change river hydrology, affect ecosystems, jeopardize cultural heritage, displace people and deprive them of their livelihoods."

* * *

CANOE GET-TOGETHERS... A couple of canoeing events in the near future will interest those who might be near. In Toronto on May 2 and 3 Harbourfront will be holding *CanoeFest '92*. This is a continuation of a longstanding event that has waxed and waned through the years. We hope this year's is a waxy one. The two day festival will feature birchbark canoe builder David Gidmark from

Maniwaki Quebec who will be bringing a birchbark boat for people to paddle in - that's a rare treat. Also on hand will be Phil Chester a.k.a. Grey Owl to give his unique blend of talk and philosophy. Numerous slide shows are featured including Che-Mun's Michael Peake showing the Morse River and Ungava trips. Admission is free and it's on each day from noon to six.

Also on tap again on June 5-7 is the seventh annual North American Canoe Symposium at Camp Winona, Maine sponsored by L. L. Bean. This annual event is a proven winner and this year will feature Joannie McGuffin, one half of the couple who have saddled, cycled and hike over much of Canada. Three of the Peake brothers will also be in attendance (Geoffrey's missing as he and wife Leslie are expecting a baby right about then). The brochures are about to go out and you can contact Bean's for more info by calling their toll-free number 1-800-341-4341 extension 7800. The event runs from Friday night through Sunday dinner at the 83-year-old boys camp and is a guaranteed good time.

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BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE... There are very few canoe craftsmen still making birchbark canoes but David Gidmark is one of the best and he will be showing those interested in learning this most ancient canoeing art just how he does it.

Gidmark will give two birchbark building courses on the Wisconsin shore of Lake Superior from June 27-July 12 and again from July 18-August 2. Gidmark learned his stuff from master builder William Commanda, an Algonquin native. The course will feature the construction of a full-size Algonquin birchbark canoe called a *wabanaki tciman*.

Students will participate in all stages of the process including selection of cedar, birch bark and spruce root. At the end of the course each student will build a 1:4 replica birchbark canoe from material he has gathered in the area. For more info contact David Gidmark at Box 26 Maniwaki, Quebec J9E 3B3. Cost of the course is \$750 US.

Our Back Pages

The following back issues of Che-Mun are available at four dollars each including postage. Those denoted by an asterisk are photocopies of the original issue.

- Outfit 38 - Voyageurs trip to Old Fort William
- Outfit 39 - Caribou drown in N. Quebec, Cross Canada Canoeing
- Outfit 40 - Eric Morse and The 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 & the Dog R., Athabasca letter
- Outfit 45 - Pipe R. by Eric Morse, River flow chart
- Outfit 46 - Hudson Bay to Ungava, Stew Coffin report
- Outfit 47 - Heritage Rivers, Trans Canada Expedition
- Outfit 48 - Freshwater Saga - Morse R. memoirs, slide fest
- Outfit 49 - Queen Charlottes kayaking, HBC sell-off
- Outfit 50 - Royal couple canoe the Hanbury/Thelon*
- Outfit 51 - Traditional canoeing through Quetico Park
- Outfit 52 - Lands Forlorn review, Atomic Arctic proposal
- Outfit 53 - Ungava Crater Exped., Hubbard & Wallace
- Outfit 54 - Povungnituk 88 - Ungava, Sleeping Island
- Outfit 55 - Memories of Bill Mason, Twin Otter gone
- Outfit 56 - Canoeing stamps, Hambury review, WCA slidefest
- Outfit 57 - North American Canoe Symposium, book reviews
- Outfit 58 - Churchill River trip, The Lonely Land
- Outfit 59 - Tyrrell brothers, Water & Sky, Alberta Pulp wars
- Outfit 60 - Via Rail, Missinaibi R., James Bay, HBC exit
- Outfit 61 - Inside LG2, Aki on the Barrens, Grey Owl
- Outfit 62 - Across Ungava via the Kogaluk and Payne rivers
- Outfit 63 - Canoeing in the 1930s, Hydro-Quebec chairman
- Outfit 64 - Rupert River in 1914 remembered, Keewaydin Guide
- Outfit 65 - Churchill River hydro, Robert Perkins, James Bay
- Outfit 66 - Lands Forlorn, HACC in Japan, Needle to the North
- Outfit 67 - NWT division, Canoe Museum, James Bay

Update continued.

"I just want to remind you we, too, have traditions," he told Kennedy, who listened attentively.

"They may not be identical to yours, but I do believe the system we have in place, while not perfect, has proven very effective up until now."

But Kennedy, 38, said later he wasn't telling anyone what to do.

"My message is just: Let's look before we leap," he said.

* * *

Hydro-Quebec is conducting a smear campaign against Cree opposing the Great Whale project, the chief of the Whapmagoostui Nation told a committee reviewing the hydroelectric project.

"Hydro-Quebec is conducting a campaign of lies against the Cree people," Chief Matthew Mukash said. "This is designed to aggravate racism in Quebec."

The stocky, ponytailed native leader said the message had been carefully crafted by an American public relations firm and that Quebec media had fallen for the scheme.

"When aboriginal peoples defend their rights in foreign countries, it is listed as a front-page attack on Quebec," he told the crowded hearing.

But a Hydro-Quebec official later called the remarks "deplorable and utterly false."

"Hydro-Quebec has never - be it through a third party or a consultant - organized such a campaign against the Cree," said Stella Leney.

"Hydro-Quebec respects the Cree, even if there are differences of opinion on some points.

"Our opposition is not one which opposes development," Mukash said. "On the contrary we believe in development which is compatible with our way of life and our traditional activities.

"The La Grande project itself was to have been made compatible with our way of life. It has not proved to be so."

In other presentations, Ian Goodman and Robert McCullough, two energy consultants speaking on behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, said the review of the project should not be rushed because Hydro-Quebec had already said it can accommodate a one-to-three year delay in the project.

They also said the provincially owned utility should explore other efficient alternatives to hydroelectric megaprojects, such as buying power from other utilities, and developing thermal, nuclear and windmill power capabilities.

"Quebec is blessed with a very large wind resource," Goodman said.

* * *

Hydro-Quebec would have suffered a loss of at least \$400 million in 1990 if it hadn't been for cheap power from Churchill Falls in Labrador, Norman D. Hawkins and Associates, a management counselling firm, says.

Instead, the Quebec utility finished the year with a profit of \$404 million, an accounting study by the

Hawkins company indicates.

Hydro-Quebec, which contracted with the Newfoundland government in the 1960s to buy Churchill Falls power at what are now considered bargain rates, has dismissed the study as purposeless and out of context.

The contract is scheduled to until the year 2041.

The Hawkins study, using information from the 1990 annual reports of both Hydro-Quebec and Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corp., figures the gross profit from the contract to Hydro-Quebec at about \$928.1 million in 1990, arriving at the result by simple arithmetic.

In that year, according to the reports, Churchill Falls provided 17.3 per cent of the total power Hydro-Quebec had at its disposal.

Gross sales in 1990 came to \$5.82 billion; and 17.3 per cent of that is \$1.007 billion. In that same year, Churchill Falls bought back \$79.2 million worth of power from Hydro-Quebec. Subtracting that from \$1.007 billion leaves \$928.1 million.

The Hawkins study then deducts estimated maintenance costs and amortization on the three 735 kilovolt transmission lines, which carry the power to Quebec, and gets a net profit of about \$800 million.

John Hanna, executive vice-president of Hydro-Quebec, rejects the Hawkins study. If Hydro-Quebec had not concluded the contract with Churchill Falls, he says, it would have stepped up its development program to create power elsewhere at the rates then applicable in the 1960s.

* * *

Analysis

Whew! It's been a very hectic and exciting spring and perhaps it's time to just sit down and think about how far the James Bay hydro issue has come.

We seem to have arrived at the unthinkable. New York has unplugged Hydro-Quebec and the future of the Great Whale project is hopefully in doubt.

That this moment has arrived at all is a tribute to the Crees of Northern Quebec who have fought this project tooth and nail all the way - with the tools they received for the La Grand project. Hydro-Quebec gave them the means to do it and that's fitting.

The aftermath of the N.Y. announcement has seen the predictable shrill blast from Quebec Energy Minister Lise Bacon who firmly declared that the Crees were acting like traitors and the project would proceed regardless. Bacon's blasts have lost much power and meaning over the past several months.

The reaction in the Quebec media was more interesting. They saw the cancellation as perhaps a good thing. Many editorials felt it was perhaps time to cool down this superheated issue with some reason.

Despite the confident cries from Hydro-Quebec, the Great Whale project is mortally wounded. And even more significantly, the politics of power as played by Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa has been soundly repudiated.

The scenario will probably play out like this: Following a closer look at the situation Hydro-Quebec, upon urging from Bourassa, will insist that they now have the time to more thoroughly study the project - as they always wanted to.

They might even concede that the environmental ramifications deserve to be studied to the utmost. With that in mind, H-Q will say they are slowing the project - perhaps even indefinitely postponing it - in order that all questions of environmental,

social and financial concerns be met.

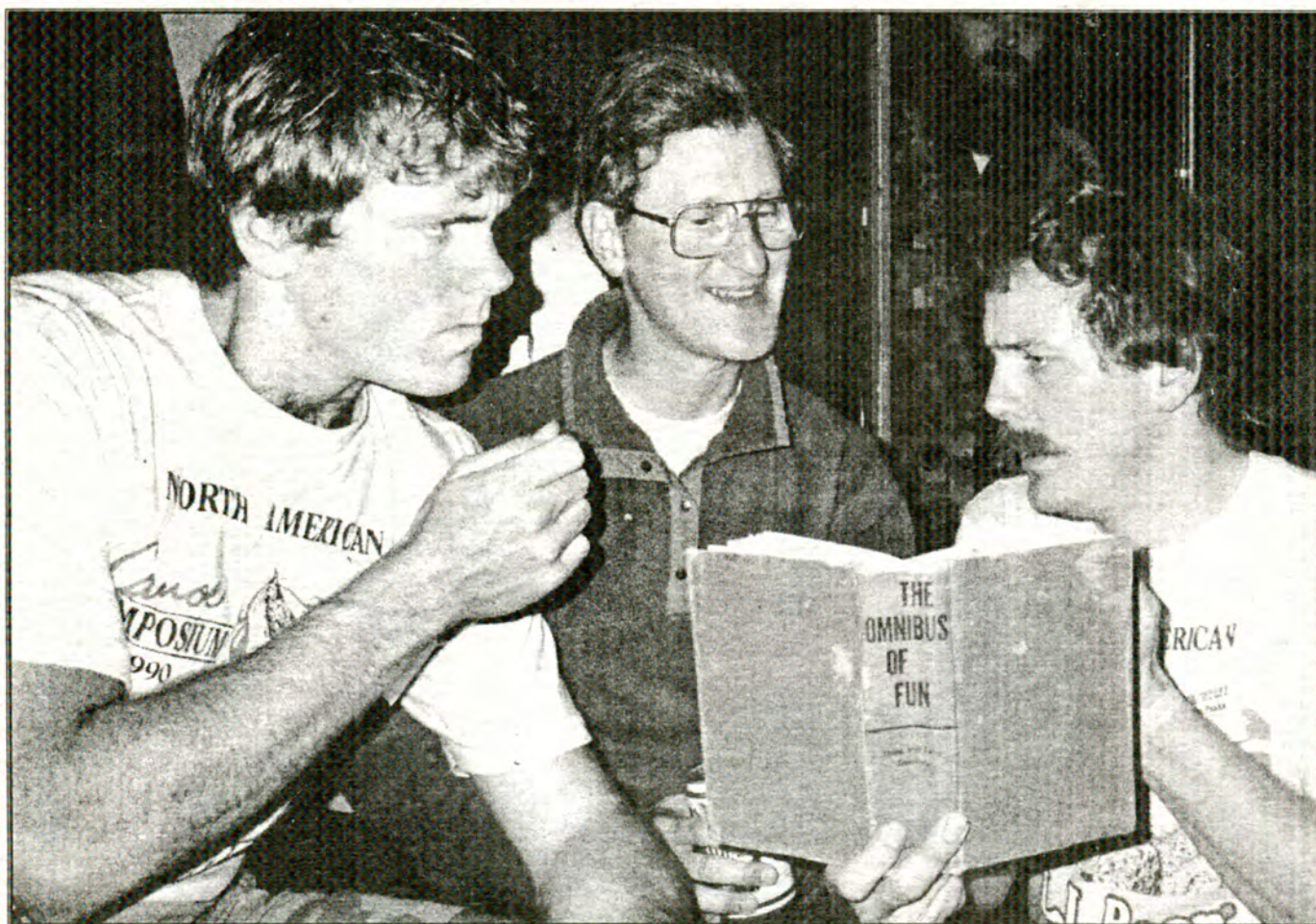
Now is not the time to gloat, but a great many people who have fought long and hard against this project must at least stop for a minute and let out a whoop of joy.

The battle is far from over - and who can really tell what might happen. They could even build the bloody thing someday.

But one thing is certain, never again will groups like Hydro-Quebec blithely march into vast areas of wilderness and begin monumental environmental changes without first answering to the people. We won't do it first and ask questions later ever again.

The days of the mega-blunder are dead. But it behooves all of us to consider how much energy we use. How much demand do we create. For massive hydro plans never really die. They just go to sleep for a few years until we forget about what it took to stop them.

But we must never forget. The giant may sleep but we'll be the ones to awaken it.



Cliff Jacobson, center, thoughtfully shares his secrets of humour with Geoffrey (L) and Sean Peake at the annual L.L. Bean North American Canoe Symposium held every June in Bridgton, Maine. Cliff's book, *The Omnibus of Fun* lists helpful

suggestions for making boring canoe trip slide shows and mundane equipment presentations more exciting and entertaining. The Peake brothers have sought Cliff's sage counsel for many years and they proudly claim that he is the secret of their excess.

Upcoming Che-Mun

Heart of the North. The Hide-Away Canoe Club gears up for another trip from Great Bear to Coppermine - but by a much different route.

There are profound changes about to happen in Canada's Northwest Territories. Some of them directly affect canoe trippers and tripping. We'll delve in to what could become the issue of the 90s.

CHE-MUN

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