

PRINCE
ALBERT
NATIONAL
PARK



Department of the Interior

Hon. Chas. Stewart - - - *Minister*
W. W. Cory - - - *Deputy Minister*
J. B. Harkin - *Commissioner National
Parks of Canada*



Photo by W. J. Oliver

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the heart's deep core.

Yeats.

*Prince Albert
National Park*

by

M. B. Williams

Foreword

I see a great land waiting for its own people
to come and take possession of it.

—Edward Carpenter.

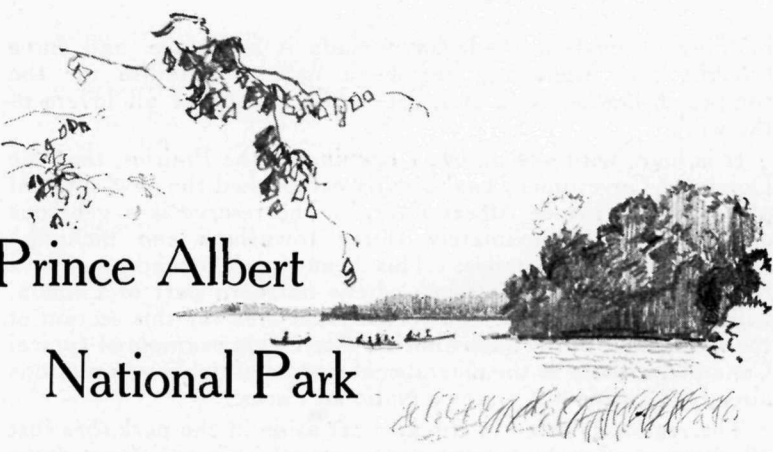
The conservation of places of outstanding beauty and interest for the perpetual and free enjoyment of the people is a movement which marks a step in our national development. It is an evidence that we are growing out of a pioneer stage in which all energies are bent upon the opening up of the immediately necessary resources of the country and are making provision for satisfying other needs, less imperative, but perhaps not less real.

Of the great system of public reservations set aside in our national parks we as Canadians may be justly proud. They are preserving for future generations typical examples of our original Canada and providing for the people of today vast playgrounds of unspoiled nature, where wild animal and plant life is protected and where people are free to camp and fish and enjoy those healing and vitalizing influences of Nature which in our increasingly strenuous and industrialized life become more and more necessary to well-being.

The latest addition to this system is the Prince Albert National Park, which sets aside a typical example of that rich lake and woodland region lying in the northern part of the province of Saskatchewan. Rich in historic interest and the romance of the early days of pioneer exploration and the fur trade, the new park possesses, in its chain of beautiful lakes and streams, opportunities for giving health and enjoyment to thousands, while as the gateway to that vast maze of waterways stretching away to two oceans, it seems destined to become a region presenting an irresistible lure to the canoeist and lover of the wilds.

There is, I think, noticeable everywhere today a movement towards a freer life in the open. In a new sense we may, as a people, be said to be taking possession of our own land. As time goes on these great possessions will, I believe, render us an ever greater and nobler service. They are a heritage which we hold as custodians for those who love the wild beauty of nature the wide world over. In days to come I see them adding to the prestige of our country and attracting thousands from other lands to our shores; I see them, too, contributing in increasing measure to the life and well-being of our own people, providing perpetual opportunities for rest and recreation and for the cultivation of those finer appreciations of nature which enrich and stimulate our lives.

M. Macdonald King.



Prince Albert National Park

IN the northern part of the Province of Saskatchewan there lies a region of rocks, woods and waters, which seems almost to have been formed by Nature as a special playground for man. Here thousands of crystal lakes—from tiny rock basins only a few hundred yards across to great bodies of fresh water over fifty miles long—reflect in summer the intense blue of the Canadian sky. Between, tying one to another like crystal threads, run innumerable little rivers and streams, weaving the whole region together into a jewelled network of waters intricate as some pattern of the silversmith's art, and providing continuous waterways for hundreds of miles. The white birch, the jack pine and the white spruce grow here to unusual size and beauty and clothe the shores with their diverse greens. Scores of white sand beaches, shelving out gently and clean as a floor, invite one to linger and bathe. Pickerel, pike and great trout swarm in its unfished lakes; the wild duck and the loon, the cormorant and the pelican nest by its quiet waters and through its undisturbed woods roam the black bear, the deer and the moose.

Since the great days of the fur trade the trapper and the trader have gone up and down these water highways to and from the north country and Hudson Bay. The Indian has travelled through the woods and cut a few hunting trails in search of game, but until very recent years the region has lain beyond the reach and knowledge of all but these and a few adventurous travellers. The rapid development of the prairies in this century, however, has brought the tides of civilization to its once remote confines. The coming of the motor car and the

building of modern roads have made it accessible and have brought this interesting region—a natural paradise for the camper, fisherman and canoeist—within reach of all lovers of the wild.

It is here, with one gateway opening to the Prairies, that the Dominion Government has recently established the new national playground, "Prince Albert Park." The reserve is a generous one covering approximately thirty townships and including about 1,377 square miles. This beautiful lake and woodland region, characteristic of much of the northern part of Canada, will not only provide a rich recreational area for this section of the Dominion, but it adds another interesting example of typical Canadian scenery to the magnificent system of public reservations already set aside in Canada's National Parks.

The region, typified in the area set aside in the park, lies just off shore of that first great continent whose worn down rocks still remain to us in the great Laurentian shield. The land now forming the park lay once on the floor of a warm ancient sea, receiving through countless ages ever-deepening deposits of silt, washed down from the once proud mountain ranges to the northeast and east. After long centuries the western part of the continent rose, shaking off the covering waters, only to be submerged again beneath those vast seas of ice which moved downward through the successive Ice Ages. The debris carried down by these ancient glaciers, the great masses of boulders which are often so inextricably piled together as to seem an actual wall, forms one of the interesting characteristics of the district. They give the landscape some of the ruggedness that belongs to many other parts of northern Canada, but the peaceful green-walled lakes, the beautiful birches and pines are more like some of the older parts of Canada. The expatriated easterner is almost startled by a feeling of "home." If he could forget his latitude he might believe he had dropped into one of those beautiful lake and woodland regions found in many parts of Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec.

Yet the briefest visit will be sufficient to show him that this is neither east nor west so much as north. For he is here at one of the main gateways to that great hinterland of Canada which for two centuries has excited the imagination of the adventurous and provided the scene for one of the most romantic and stirring chapters in the history of the Dominion. The conversation he hears belongs to a new world. The talk is of canoes and dog trains and fur catches, of the Hudson Bay Company and mail for

the northern posts. Historic names like The Pas, the Churchill and Fort Nelson, Lac la Ronge, Great Slave and the Mackenzie reverberate in the conversation. The Hudson Bay factor, the trapper, the Indian, the missionary and the Mounted Policeman, have suddenly become the chief figures on the stage of existence.

The region now within the park was once the hunting ground of the Cree Indians, a tribe of whom now live on a reserve immediately adjoining the park to the east. They are a peaceful



Evening on Cream Lake

and friendly people, retaining still many of their ancient traditions and beliefs. Their mythology is rich in stories relating to the supernatural or semi-supernatural beings in whom many of them still believe. The most popular hero of these legends is *Wee-sa-ka-chack*, the supernatural trickster, who has the power to assume any form or shape he chooses, and to change the appearance of any animal or bird. The tales relating to his exploits are so numerous that the old story tellers can relate one each night from autumn until spring without exhausting them all, and he still lives as vividly in the imagination of the Indians

of today as he did in the minds of their ancestors hundreds of years ago. He has been seen, they will tell you, by Indians now alive, and is there not a rock in the Waskesiu River, known as "Old Man Rock," which is his special habitation and which no Indian to this day will pass, without leaving some votive offering, be it only a pipeful of tobacco or eagle's feather, to gain his good will and ensure a favourable outcome to his journey! Stories of the Deluge, of how Wee-sa-ka-chack formed the earth from a little mud brought up in the muskrat's paws, of how the various animals acquired their distinctive characteristics—how the diver got his red eyes, the kingfisher his beautiful plumage, the ermine his coat of white fur and the wolverine the strips on his back—these tales are told today about the Indian's campfires near Montreal Lake and in the long winter evenings they still form part of the entertainment of the tribe, taking the place of books, newspapers, radio and movies.

A Canoeist's Paradise

The new park has an elevation of about 1,800 feet above sea level and enjoys in summer a climate which makes it possible to live under canvas for months at a time. It is less than 600 miles distant from Winnipeg by motor highway and 500 miles from the international border. The main port of entry for visitors from the United States is North Portal, Saskatchewan, though direct connections may be made through several other points both east and west. As yet there are no hotels or bungalow camps in the park, tents and other equipment must be brought in from outside. A public campsite, however, has already been laid out on the shores of Waskesiu Lake, in a beautiful grove of spruce bordering the Big Beach.

The southern boundary of the new park lies about thirty-three miles north by west of the city of Prince Albert. Its western boundary is formed in part by the Sturgeon River, its eastern by the Third Meridian. At about the 54th parallel, however, the park limits swing eastward, so as to touch but not include the waters of Montreal Lake. Within the park lie three other important bodies of water—Waskesiu Lake, Kingsmere Lake and Crean Lake—as well as some forty or fifty smaller lakes. These large lakes in the northern part of the park are so closely connected by waterways that, with only a few short portages, a continuous trip can be made by water visiting them all, affording a circular canoe route of approximately one hundred miles.



Looking back from Clare Point to Island, Waskesiu Lake

Gateway to the Far North

But aside from its own immediate attractions the region makes one other appeal, irresistible to the adventurous. For these beautiful lakes and rivers, worthy as they are to be an end in themselves, are the natural gateways to that more distant north-land of Canada, still redolent with the glamour of the difficult and unknown. Beyond park boundaries, to the north, west and east, lie a succession of other lakes and waterways, extending like the links of a silver chain for literally hundreds of miles, on the northwest finally reaching the waters of the far North and the Arctic Ocean, on the east the Hudson Bay. Such innumerable possibilities for travel are, therefore, open to the canoeist, one may believe that just as the national parks of the Rockies and Selkirks have become the most popular outfitting and starting points for expeditions of adventure and exploration in the Canadian Alps, so Prince Albert Park will become the most frequented gateway to the waters of that alluring hinterland of Canada as yet so little known.

Wilderness Playground

The beauty of these northern lakes and rivers, the primeval freshness of the entire region, must make this new reserve a much sought playground. To paddle for days by these uninhabited shores, far beyond the sound of motor car or railway, to travel through woods so solitary that even the breaking of a twig becomes exciting because it may mean the passing of an unseen wild animal, to make camp beside some clear flowing



Sandy Beach on Crean Lake

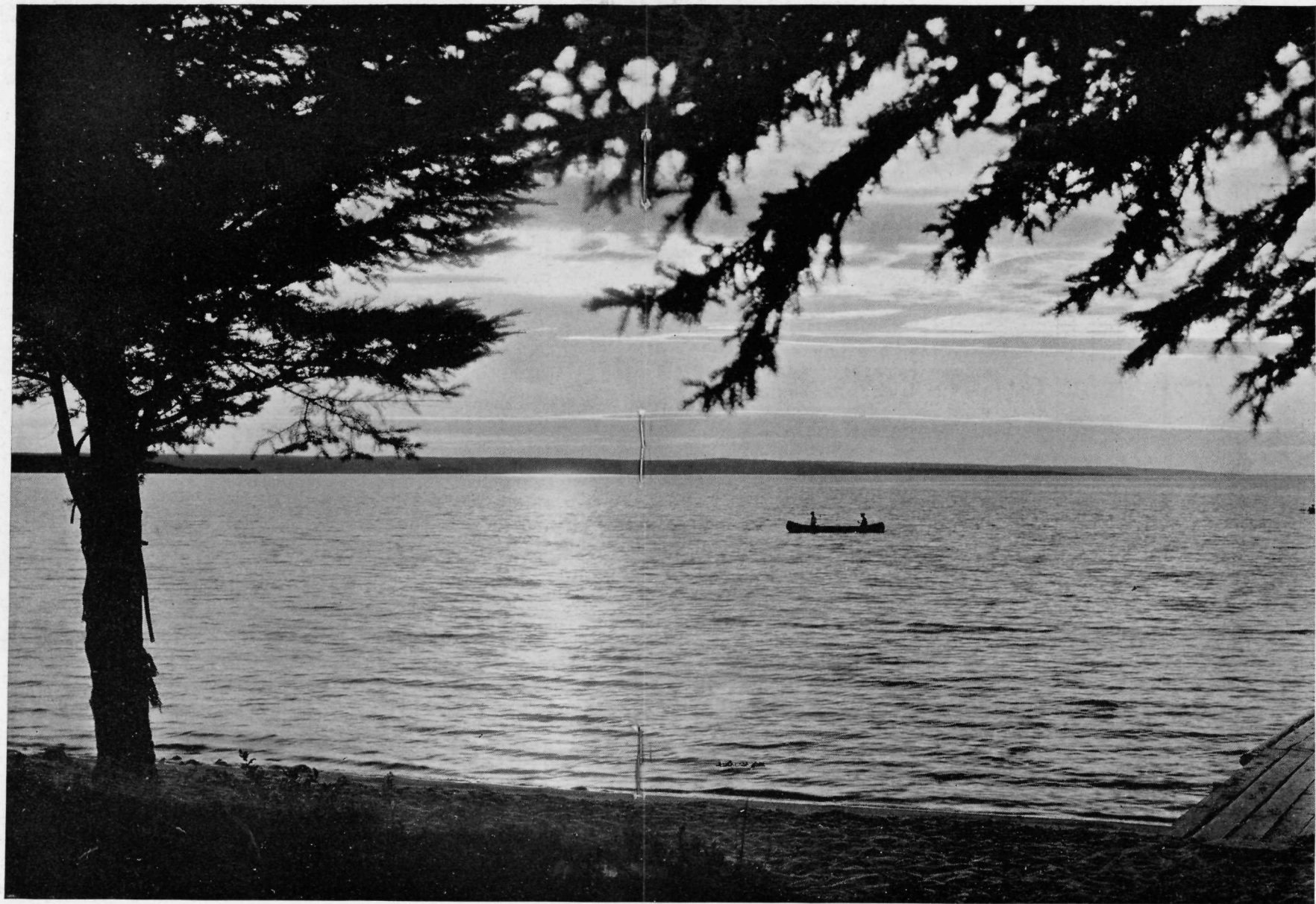
stream, to sleep under the stars—for nerves wearied by the increasing pressure and rush of modern civilization what holiday can be so sanative or medicinal! After a few days a man relaxes. The mental habits of the modern competitive life slip off like a garment. The ancient rhythms of trees and water, the scent of pines, the smoke of the evening campfire, the wild cry of the loon, stir deep-buried ancestral memories, “felt in the blood and felt along the heart,” and evoke some peculiarly potent magic for the restoration of health and happiness. In spite of wind and weather and the vicissitudes of the wilderness, he re-discovers a sort of wild joy in mere existence, and re-proves by his own experience, that most ancient theorem of the liveableness of life.

APPROACH TO THE PARK

The approach to the park lies by way of the thriving city of Prince Albert, the most northerly city of the province. In the old fur trading days Prince Albert was one of the most important centres of traffic. Here the dog trains outfitted in winter for the Far North and here in summer arrived the rich loads of fur brought down by canoe from Isle la Crosse. By its doors flows the North Saskatchewan, born amid the glaciers of the Rockies and carrying the tributes of hundreds of miles of prairies to Hudson Bay. The old site of the town was a little farther down the river. The present city, however, has already counted its 60th birthday and shows many evidences of settled occupation. Situated on high rolling land overlooking the river, it is one of the prettiest towns of the West and its well kept streets, beautiful homes, gardens and fine avenues remind one of some of the charming smaller cities of Ontario.



Smith's Portage, between Kingsmere
Lake and Clare Lake



"When evening falls on Waskesiu"

From Prince Albert a motor highway leads to the southeast corner of the national park where it connects with the government road to Lake Waskesiu, the first of the large lakes of the park, which lies thirty-five miles north of the park boundary.

Leaving the town the road passes through the splendid pines of the Nisbet Forest Reserve, which contains some of the finest stands of jack pine in the country. Emerging, for the next fifteen miles or so it leads through a fine farming district, with

large wheat farms and settled homes. At the 14th base line a turn is made to the left and for the next twelve miles the road runs through rolling country heavily timbered with poplars—which reach here an unusual beauty and size—to the southwestern boundary of the park.



Entrance to Kingsmere Lake from Kingsmere River

Entering the park and rising to the summit of a small hill, the visitor looks down over a charming expanse of country, dotted with groves of poplar, jack pine and white birch, and set with green meadows bright with a profusion of prairie flowers, through which the silver waters of Little Red River take their winding way. Dropping down again to the level, in about six miles Meridian cabin, the headquarters of the former Sturgeon Forest Reserve, is reached. About three miles farther on the road

touches Shady Lake, a pool of green jade, shut in by heavily timbered shores, with a beautiful beach of fine sand at its eastern end. Crossing the Little Red River, Lone Lake and Trapper Lake are visible to the right, then the road runs across rolling country covered with young growth. A mile or so beyond Trapper's Lake is the forestry lookout, "Big Blue Bell Tower," rising from a little grove literally carpeted in early summer with these delicate flowers. From this point the road rises gradually

still passing through thick woods, until at last, topping a low ridge, one catches the first view of beautiful Waskesiu Lake.

And what a picture it is! Stretching away like a great uncut crystal for nearly a dozen miles, its waters coloured with the hues of heaven, its shores a rich unbroken green. In the centre of the lake, like a green frigate at anchor, is King's Island, rising high above the water and completely covered with pines. The south shores of the lake are low, broken by little capes with small bays and sandy beaches, but on the north they rise often from fifty to one hundred feet.

Turning to the right the road curves about "Prospect Point," a high bluff heavily wooded with pines, spruce and poplar, at an elevation of about one hundred feet above the water, then drops



Young Bull Moose

down to the main Waskesiu Beach, where the campsite is found. "Big Beach," as it is called, forms one of the chief attractions of the park. Nearly a mile and a half long, paved with clear white sand and shelving off so gradually that a man may walk out for almost 200 yards before getting out of depth, it forms a happy playground all summer long for old and young.

Many visitors make Waskesiu Beach their permanent head-

quarters, using it as a starting point for short canoe trips about the lake and through the adjoining waters. Canoes and boats may be hired here, but tents, supplies and other camping equipment should be brought in by the visitors from outside.

CANOE CIRCUIT OF THE PARK

The more adventurous visitor, however, will not be content with merely seeing Waskesiu Lake, lovely and interesting though it may be—he will want to adventure farther, to see other sections of the park. Practically his only means of travel is by canoe, but, as has been said, he may, with only a few short portages, make a complete circuit of the park by water, passing through nearly a score of lakes en route.

The trip is best made from east to west, though the reverse order may be followed if desired. Leaving Waskesiu Beach the route in the first case lies northwest, following the south shore of the lake around green Prospect Point, past Clare Point, with its magnificent stand of white spruce, with King's Island looming to the right. This green eyot, wooded all over and rising at its highest point about fifty feet from the water, is about two hundred yards long by half as much across. Just west of the northern tip of King's Island is Twin Point Bay, cradled between long green peninsulas, so evenly matched in length and shape as to make an almost perfect pair.

The Narrows

Now the north shore of the lake begins to close in, the passage becoming only about a mile wide. This narrow neck of the lake extends for about three miles then the two shores are pinched so closely together that there is only a narrow strait between. Immediately, however, they open again for about two miles more, then re-close to form a second Narrows, opening out once more into another expanse a little over three miles in length. This upper section of Waskesiu Lake is extremely picturesque, with successive capes overlapping each other and quiet bays between.

From Waskesiu Lake to Kingsmere Lake

Kingsmere Lake, three miles to the north of Waskesiu Lake, has an elevation of about twenty-two feet higher. A small stream, known as the Kingsmere River, unites the two and

forms a pleasant waterway from one to the other. Leaving Waskesiu Lake, for the first two miles the paddling is easy. The waters flow down without a murmur, slipping silently as an Indian, through a thick forest of willow, white birch, poplar and spruce. Here and there, in the low places along the shores, families of wild ducks make their home and at the sound of the



"In the heart of the listening solitudes"

paddle a little brood of ducklings will often scurry to cover. Rounding some bend one may come, too, upon a moose feeding by the water's edge or catch a glimpse of a Red deer coming down to drink. About a mile from Kingsmere Lake, however, one strikes a picturesque rapids, about a quarter of a mile long. Here the canoe must either be pulled up through the rough water or the short portage trail taken through the woods. A wagon for the canoe will be found on the trail. Beyond the rapids another three-quarters of a mile or so of quiet water brings one into Kingsmere Lake, where a good campsite is found about three-quarters of a mile to the left on a high plateau with ample shade and grass.

Kingsmere Lake

This lovely sheet of water, six miles long by five wide, arouses the admiration of all who visit it. Its crystalline waters are very deep, reaching in places a depth of one hundred and fifty feet. Its high shores, mantled with a rich forest that has never known the scarring touch of fire, run out into bold rocky points built up by large boulders into a kind of rude masonry. Between lie white beaches of clear sand which offer ideal spots for bathing and camping. Among its proudest ornaments are several groves of white birch—perhaps the loveliest of all Canadian trees—which reach here a fine luxuriance. Their white boles, often from 18 to 20 inches through, scarcely mutilated as yet by the vandal jack-knife, gleam palely against the rich green of pine and spruce and when the lake is still, are reflected in double beauty on its calm surface. Fishing in this lake is, perhaps, the best in the park. Pike, pickerel and Great Lake trout are all found in abundance.

Kingsmere Lake may be crossed directly to its northern shore but a more interesting trip is to make a circuit of the small lakes near the western boundary of the park, re-entering the lakes again a few miles farther north. These lakes are in succession Clare, Lily and Spruce, all shallow lakes about a mile by half a mile in area, connected by waterways.

Smith's Portage

Between Kingsmere Lake and Clare Lake there is a short portage of about 200 yards—locally known as Smith's portage—a clear cut trail through deep pine woods where the heavy silence is broken only by the sharp alarm of the woodpecker or the excited scolding of a Red squirrel at one's approach.

Clare Lake is green and cool, with shallow waters and little bays thickly covered with lily pads. During the fly season these bays made a cool and appetising feeding ground for moose and at this season one may often come upon the monarch of the woods, his head buried to his shoulders in the water, as he grubs for the delectable tubers that form part of the roots of the plant.

Lily Lake

From Clare Lake another portage of about 200 yards brings one into Lily Lake, a shallow body of water almost entirely covered with lily pads, where moose are likely to be seen at any time of the year. From Lily Lake there is a natural waterway

to Spruce Lake, a charming little sheet of water shut in by high shores heavily timbered with white spruce. From Spruce Lake an arm running south from Kingsmere Lake provides a waterway to the western end of Kingsmere Lake, where two fine white sand beaches form a "silver strand," that reminds one of Loch Katrine in the Trossachs.

Kingsmere Lake to Lavallee Lake

North of Kingsmere Lake lies another cluster of beautiful little lakes, connected by waterways, or accessible by short portages, giving access to Lavallée Lake, which lies outside the northern boundary of the park. These are in succession: Cross Lake, Lone Island Lake, Sanctuary Lake, Little Beaver Lake and Lavallée Lake.

The first portage, from Kingsmere Lake to Cross Lake, is about 500 yards long and begins about 400 yards from the Game Warden's Cabin. The spot is plainly marked with a white cross. This is the sign throughout the park for a portage. Similarly, a V sign denotes the entrance to a river, while the exit is designated by the reverse sign \wedge .

These small lakes, with their green pellucid waters, and pure, almost well-like character, are generally much alike. All have deep basins, high heavily wooded banks and boulder strewn shores. Cross Lake is about a mile long by half a mile wide. Lone Island Lake—so named because it possesses one small island—and Sanctuary Lake are somewhat larger, perhaps two miles long by three-quarters of a mile wide. Their waters are almost always still so that they form perfect forest mirrors, their glassy surface reflecting in minute detail every leaf, twig and rock about their shores.

Sanctuary Lake inspired its own name. It is a little watery retreat:

*"Where Carlesse Quiet lies,
Wrapt in eternall Silence farre from
enemies"*

so shut away from the noise of the world that some of its peace descends upon all who visit it even for an hour.

From Sanctuary Lake there is a portage of about 300 yards to



A good catch from Crean Lake

Little Beaver Lake, one of the most northerly lakes of the park. According to Indian tradition this lake was once the home of numerous beaver, though they are not found there at the present time. To reach Lavallée Lake, two long portages of three miles each are required. The effort, however, is worth while for Lavallée Lake is not only a fine sheet of water but it is the home of hundreds of pelicans and cormorants which have their rookeries on two islands in the lake.

These rookeries are places of great interest, particularly in the spring, when the birds are mating and nesting, circling about above the islands in great excitement and uttering their harsh, weird cries. Both pelicans and cormorants nest on the same island, often within a few feet of each other.

The pelican is one of the quaintest of our northern birds, "relic of a twilight, antediluvial age." Its large melancholy eye, and its huge gullet pouch, which it uses as a kind of pantry for food for its young, give it a semi-dignified, semi-humorous expression that is quite delightful. In flight, however, it becomes a thing of grace and beauty. Rising a little splashily from the water it beats the air for about a dozen times and then sails with outspread motionless wings on a long easy glide.

"The realization" says Mr. P. A. Taverner, in "Birds of Western Canada," "of how well these seemingly awkward and ponderous hulks of birds can fly comes with some little shock of surprise. We expect them to drag their great bulk about clumsily just over the water, instead of which—after a somewhat splashy start that can be excused in such large, heavy birds—once they get in the air their rise is so easy and rapid that before one is aware they are away up and up until, at times, they vanish in the blue sky above."

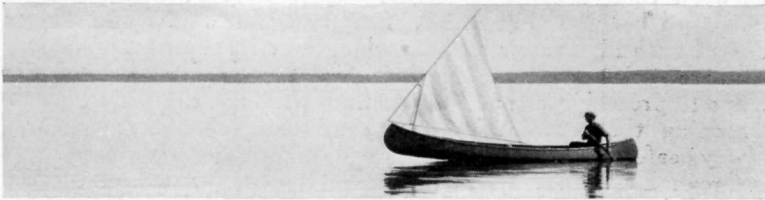


American White Pelican

To the Indian the pelican has always borne a sort of half-human personality. It appears often in their stories as one of the wisest of birds. Was it not the pelican, indeed, who saved the life of Wee-sa-ka-chack and his brother, Little Wolf, when they were pursued by the terrible Rolling Head, so that to this day the pelican is under the special favour of Old Man himself and must not be shot wantonly without incurring his displeasure!

The Double-crested cormorant is a somewhat smaller bird, with black feathers bronzing to green, an orange pouch directly under the bill and a long curved upper beak. In the mating season it wears a tiny tuft of feathers over each ear, a decoration which has given it its name. At a distance the birds look a good deal like loons but they are much more graceful in movement, swimming with a graceful serpentine motion. The cormorants are very expert fishers, often carrying on the business in a communal fashion that is extremely interesting to watch. To quote Mr. Taverner:

"They spread themselves across the mouth of a shallow bay, and, facing inward, make a drive in towards a common centre. As they advance, the enclosed area becomes smaller and more closely guarded, the finny population more congested and



On Lavallée Lake

easily caught. The divers grow shorter and more rapid and more fish are tossed and swallowed in hurried haste for another catch. As the shore is approached, the surviving fish make a despairing rush outward through their enemies, and there is much commotion and excitement; then quietness, and the birds form line again along another section of the water to repeat the operation."

Lavallée Lake is named after Louis Lavallée, an old trapper who came to this region over 65 years ago. Here he has lived ever since, contented not to return to civilization. Lavallée is a good canoe builder and he probably knows more about this part of the wilderness than anyone else, though his age prevents him becoming a regular guide. The return from Lavallée Lake to Kingsmere Lake is made by the same route. From Kingsmere Lake, however, an alternate route is open for return to Waskesiu Lake, permitting a visit to the northeastern section of the park, by way of Crean Lake and the small cluster of waters known as the Heart Lakes. The distance is about thirty miles.

Crossing the northern end of Kingsmere Lake to its east shore a portage will be found leading in about three-quarters of a mile to Chippewan Lake. This lake, thickly covered with lily pads, is little more than a shallow pond, but it provides a welcome break in the portage to Crean Lake. From Chippewan Lake another portage of three-quarters of a mile leads to a little unnamed lake, beyond which another portage of about the same distance is necessary to reach Crean Lake.

Crean Lake

Crean Lake is a very beautiful sheet of water, approximately twelve miles long and eight wide, with beautifully scalloped shores. High rocky points projecting far out into the lake hold between their arms lovely little bays, many of which possess fine sand beaches that are delightful for bathing. The lake is dotted with high rocky islands, which, like its shores, are heavily timbered with white spruce, jack pine and poplar. This forest helps to protect the shore line so that although the wind may be whipping the centre of the lake to foam, canoeing is nearly always safe and possible by following about the little bays.

Crean Lake abounds in fish, pike, pickerel and Great Lake trout being very abundant. Deer are plentiful too, about its shores and are often seen even on the islands in the middle of the lake.

The Heart Lakes

Crean Lake is connected with the Heart Lakes by a narrow strait opening from its southwestern end. The Heart Lakes, themselves, are so closely connected that they form virtually one sheet of water, approximately eight miles long. Their high banks enclose numerous shady bays, green with lily pads, where moose come to feed and where the red deer loves to drink. It is an ideal feeding ground. Small poplars and aspens supply good browsing while the stillness of the water allows the slightest noise made by an enemy to be heard. A portage of about 500 yards connects the Heart Lakes with Waskesiu Lake, emerging at a point on its northeast shore almost opposite King's Island and approximately six miles from Waskesiu Beach.

The entire circuit of the park by this route covers approximately one hundred miles and can be made with steady paddling

in from four to five days. A more leisurely trip, however, is to be preferred and from eight to ten days will give the visitor a chance to explore byways and to enjoy a little fishing and bathing as he goes.

FARTHER AFIELD

To Montreal Lake

For those who wish to proceed beyond the confines of the park many possibilities are open. Just outside the boundaries of the park at its northeast corner lies Montreal Lake, one of the largest lakes of the region, over thirty-four miles in length and about seven miles in width. Montreal Lake may be reached by the Waskesiu River which flows between the two lakes, a paddle of about forty miles.

The Waskesiu River can be run any time in the year, except in the late fall when it becomes too shallow. The paddling is good, with long stretches of quiet waters, broken by rapids which break the monotony of the trip. Midway is found the Old Man Rock, referred to above, which is held in such superstitious awe among the Indians of the region.

Another delightful adventure is to take the trail from Waskesiu Lake and hike. The distance is only about twenty-two miles; there is a good trail and all lovers of the wild will enjoy this walk through the virgin woods. The first few miles lead through a rather low country covered with large poplar and groves of black spruce; then the trail rises to a delightful tableland, covered with park-like groves of jack pine, free from undergrowth and so well spaced that they suggest the work of a landscape gardener. The spruce partridge is found in this region in great abundance and the birds are so tame that they will fly down directly across the pathway of the traveller, often alighting so near that one can pick out the colour of individual feathers on the beautifully plumaged cocks.

With an early start the hike can be made in one day, but the more leisurely will find plenty of good camping spots with access to the river for an overnight rest. At the bridge, six miles from Montreal Lake, there is a particularly good campsite, on a level plateau rising above the river and commanding a fine view.

To the Churchill River and Hudson Bay

Montreal Lake is the route to the far east waters of Hudson Bay. The route lies by way of Lac la Ronge to Churchill Lake,

thence to Pelican Narrows and Sturgeon Landing through Cumberland Lake past its historic Hudson's Bay post, "Cumberland House," to The Pas. Here return may be made by rail to Winnipeg or the journey continued by way of the Churchill River to Hudson Bay.

To McMurray and the Far North

On the northwest the waterways open straight away to the Arctic Ocean. The route lies from Lavallée Lake to Doré Lake, thence to Lac la Plonge, Lac Isle la Crosse to Frobisher Lake. Here a portage is necessary to cross the height of land and reach the Clearwater River. Now the great streams flow northward and one may follow the Clearwater till it loses itself in Lake Athabaska, thence by way of the Peace, Great Slave Lake to the mighty Mackenzie, which pours their gathered floods into the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean.



