

A TRIP TO ÎLE-À-LA-CROSSE IN 1915

The following account was originally published in *The Press*, Battleford in the 17 February 1916, edition. It is an account of a journey made from Battleford to Île-à-la-Crosse in the fall of 1915, and was written by Rufus Redmond Earle, a Battleford lawyer, who was one of the members of the party that made the trip.

Born in Ontario in 1876, Mr. Earle became a school teacher and was principal of the Killarney, Manitoba high school from 1898 to 1901. He was admitted to the bar in Manitoba in 1904 and in the North-West Territories in 1905. In 1911, he served a term as Mayor of Battleford. At the time the article was originally printed, Mr. Earle was practising law in Battleford.

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The Editor

Last fall, in company with Mr. J. D. Noel, of Battleford, District Superintendent of Government Telegraph lines, I made a trip to Île-à-la-Crosse and it has occurred to me that perhaps a short account of our trip might prove of interest to some of your readers.

We left Battleford at 7 a.m. on Monday, September 13th, 1915, by motor car, heavily laden with our grub box, blankets, valises, etc. It was a typical, fine snappy, western fall morning, and we left the Old Town feeling tip-top in every way. We had obtained various reports on the condition of the road north, and did not know how far we could go in the car, but intended to go as far north as the road was passable for a car. Mr. Noel had previously arranged with the telegraph linemen at Glaslyn and Meadow Lake, the first Government Telegraph Stations, to meet us with two rigs at Glaslyn in case we could not take the car any further. We reached The Narrows, a distance of 26 miles from Battleford, at 9 o'clock, having been delayed a little on the road, fastening our baggage more firmly on the car. Here, Mr. Dunbar, of Battleford, has a general store. There is a small settlement at this point, which is beautifully situated between Jack Fish and Long Lakes. A visit at this point will well repay anyone who enjoys beautiful scenery and good fishing. Six miles further on, following the road leading north west from the Narrows, we reached the ranch of Mr. Bourre, known to many in the two Battlefords. Mr. Bourre has evidently made good in this district. He has a large, beautiful native stone dwelling house, with full sized basement, heated by a hot air furnace, neat grounds and garden, a large herd of cattle and horses, and is raising considerable quantities of grain as well. The country all the way so far, and up to fifty miles and over north from Battleford, is a first-class farming and ranching district. After that you begin to strike the forest.

We reached Glaslyn, the first telegraph office in the main line north of Battleford (Meota is a loop line six or eight miles west) a distance of fifty-three and a half miles from Battleford at 11:30 a.m. By this time we had worked up a very fine appetite for our lunch. Here we met Mr. McCartney, the bachelor agent in charge, and fared most sumptuously at his hands. Mr. McCordick, the



Île-à-la-Crosse, 1908.

Saskatchewan Archives Board, Crean Album.

telegraph agent from Meadow Lake, was also there with his democrat and team ready to convey us from there to Meadow Lake. He reported, however, that we could go a considerable distance further with the car, so after completing our lunch we got away at 1 o'clock in the car, leaving Mr. McCordick to follow with his team. For about fifteen miles further the road was pretty fair, except for occasional stumps of chopped trees and many stones. We pushed on however, in the teeth of a blinding snowstorm which had come on about the time we reached Glaslyn, and which made it more difficult to manoeuvre the car over the stumps and stones. The road was steadily getting worse. We had a number of close shaves with the stumps, and the car caught them several times in spite of my careful driving. We kept on, however, being determined to shove the car as far as it would go. Finally, at 6 o'clock, it was getting very dark in the dense forest through which we were passing, the stumps had become very bad, and I was getting so tired driving the car, that we decided to go no further with it, having reached a distance of 95 miles from Battleford. When we got out to examine the car we found that we had torn off the pan underneath, evidently having caught it on a stump. We got it the next morning by going back on the road about a mile. We therefore decided to camp for the night, although there was no water available so far as we could see. We had a small quantity of drinking water in our water bag, however, and soon had the tent up, a roaring fire blazing and supper ready. There had fallen by this time, about two inches of snow, and we had to spread our blankets that night on the snow inside the tent. Taking everything into consideration, however, we spent a fairly pleasant night. For our coffee the next morning we had to melt snow, but despite this the coffee was fine — at least so it seemed to us. The night was exceedingly cold for this time of the year, and I nearly ruined the radiator of my car by neglecting to run off the water; in fact, it took all the next forenoon to get it thawed out, we having finally to light a fire in front of the radiator for this purpose. We thought that we were about fifteen miles from Meadow Lake and knew that Mr. McCordick was behind us with his team and democrat. We examined the road ahead and decided it would not be safe to risk the car any further. We therefore decided to wait for Mr. McCordick. He came along about noon, and we then transferred the baggage from the car to his democrat, and chopped down enough trees to allow us to back the car off the road, which is pretty narrow through the forest at this point. After eating lunch we drained the water out of the radiator, put the top up with all the curtains on, locked the car, and took everything out that could be easily carried off. We then left the car there awaiting our return. Between Midnight Lake and where we left the car we had passed the previous day The Divide, that is where the water begins to flow north; all south of this drains into the Saskatchewan River. It is in the vicinity of The Divide that some of the best moose shooting is. The fifteen miles between this point and Meadow Lake is pretty rough road. It took us about four hours to drive this, the democrat being heavily laden, of course, with the three of us and the baggage. We reached Meadow Lake at 7:30 p.m., cold, tired, and ravenously hungry. For a considerable distance around Meadow Lake there is first class farming land, open prairie in many places, interspersed with poplar groves, very similar to the Bresaylor district. The country around this point is practically all homesteaded. All the district from about 75 miles north of Battleford to near Meadow Lake is a splendid moose country. We had passed several hunters' lodges along the

road the previous evening. They also hunt bear, jumping deer, an occasional elk, together with duck, geese, timber wolves, coyotes, etc. There is a settlement of whites and half-breeds at Meadow Lake, and the district tributary thereto of about two hundred. The settlement has a substantial Roman Catholic church, school house, two general stores, and the Government Telegraph office. Meadow Lake is not so well supplied with fish as the lakes further on, Green Lake, and La Crosse.

There is a great deal of ranching carried on around Meadow Lake; in fact, between Meadow Lake and Green Lake the next day we passed through one of the finest hay flats it has ever been my experience to see. We passed through mile upon mile of hay nearly six feet in height, all very green and succulent. The ranchers have cut an enormous amount (thousands of tons) this year, and yet they have not cut more than half of it. I understand that at times this district is flooded so that it is impossible to cut the hay, but this year having been so dry, it was practically all available. Here, I learned, lived a client of mine, Mr. J. Clark Nelson, who has his ranch about 6 miles from Meadow Lake. Mr. Bouillet, who keeps a general store at Meadow Lake, is a Frenchman, from France, having moved, with his family, to this point about five years ago. One of his sons, a French Reservist, is now at the front fighting in the armies of the Allies.

We left Meadow Lake the following day, Wednesday, September 15th, at 2 p.m., and reached the half way camping place between Meadow Lake and Green Lake, known as Island Hill, at 9 p.m. We camped here in a beautiful open, dry pine grove, and enjoyed the night very much. We left for Green Lake at 7:30 a.m. the following day. The Government road and telegraph line follow pretty closely along the Beaver River, all the way to Green Lake, and thence to Île-à-la-Crosse. The country, with the exception of the Meadow Lake district, is densely wooded practically all the way from Midnight Lake to Île-à-Crosse, composed largely of spruce, pine, poplar, white birch, and tamarack. The poplar and other trees here grow to a good height from fifty to sixty feet. Sometime or other it is possible there will be a pulp industry established up north. Speaking of Island Hill, this is so called because in high water when practically all this hay flat district is flooded, this point is practically an island.

We reached Green Lake at 1 p.m., a distance from Meadow Lake of about 45 miles, and from Battleford 150 miles. Here the Hudson's Bay Company and Revillon Bros. have general stores both in charge of Scotchmen by the names of Campbell, not related in any way. Mr. F. G. Campbell, manager of the Hudson's Bay post at this point, is a very interesting personality. He has been thirteen years in the wilds, although apparently quite a young man at the present time — I should say not more than from thirty-five to forty years of age. He tells us that this is the nearest he has been to civilization during this period. He has been here only a few months, having previously been up in the Mackenzie River district. His wife is from Scotland like himself. They have one child, a little girl, who was born in the Mackenzie River district. Mrs. Campbell made the trip from the north last year with the child, and on home to her people in the old country before coming to Green Lake. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell have a very cosy comfortable home, and were exceptionally kind to us in every way. They insisted on us going up for tea in the evening, and then prevailed upon us to stay all night with them and have breakfast in the morning. We highly appreciated their kindness after the somewhat novel experience to us of having "roughed it" for

two or three days. Mr. Campbell had already arranged with two native guides to take us in one of the Company's canoes from Green Lake to Île-à-la-Crosse. We had already travelled from Battleford, a distance of 150 miles by land, and it is about 150 miles from Green Lake to Île-à-la-Crosse by water.

The next morning, Friday, September 17th, we left Green Lake at 8 a.m. with two native guides, Abraham McCallum and Celeste Merasty. It was raining quite heavily, and not at all prepossessing for such a long trip by water. We followed the Green River for about ten miles to where it joins the Beaver River, and then the Beaver River for the rest of the way to Lac Île-à-la-Crosse. The Beaver is a beautiful river, almost like a mountain stream. The water is clear and cold, and the banks are high and wooded right to the edge. The leaves had begun to take on their fall coloring, and for miles and miles the scenery was most beautiful. The water is very low at present; the lowest it has been for years, and it was a little difficult getting the canoe over the various rapids in the river. There is any amount of fish and duck, so that we had no difficulty in providing ourselves with all the fresh meat we required.

The guides regularly paddled from 8 o'clock until 11 o'clock, then camped from 11 o'clock till 12:30, when we all had lunch; at it again from 12:30 to 4 o'clock, when the guides have tea and bannock, then paddle again from 4:30 until 6 o'clock, when we put in for the night. It was this afternoon, while we were going down the river, that two beautiful young jumping deer came down to the river ahead of us to drink. We could easily have shot them had we so desired. This same afternoon we passed an Indian camp. They had just shot a moose and were preparing part of it for the table. We camped in a spruce grove, high up on the bank of the river this night, and arose the next morning, Saturday, September 18th, the guides at 5:30, ourselves at 6 o'clock. We left camp at 7:40. At this point I found my kodak film rolls that I had purchased expressly for the trip, did not fit, so that I could not from this time on take any more pictures, much to my regret. It was a beautiful morning and both the guides and ourselves were feeling in fine shape for the day's journey. The former informed us that we would be going through rapids pretty nearly all that day. It is most interesting the way in which these guides manoeuvre the canoe through the rapids. They seem to know every turn and bend in the river. When approaching a rapid, they discard their paddles and use green tamarack poles about two inches through and ten feet long, peeled and trimmed smooth. The man in the front stands up most of the time when the canoe approaches the rapids, and watching for the best place to steer to keep off the rocks. There is a continual stream of Cree language pouring back and forth from the front to the rear of the canoe from this time on, the two guides shouting instructions to one another. We, however, navigated all the rapids without accident, although it seemed to us that we had one or two very close shaves towards wrecking the canoe on the rocks. And, by the way, it is really wonderful the amount these canoes can carry. Coming back we brought an extra man for part of the distance, and the five of us must easily have weighed eight hundred pounds. Our grub box, tent, camp stove, blankets, valises, etc., must have weighed at least another seven hundred pounds, so that we had about fifteen hundred pounds in this canoe, which was only about eight inches above the water. Of course we walked the worst of the rapids, and from the shore had a still better view of the really interesting antics these native guides manipulating the canoe through the rapids. We reached Waterhen Creek, where there is an



Saskatchewan Archives Board, Crean Album.

Residential School, Roman Catholic Mission, La Plonge, 1908.

Indian village, at 9 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 18th. Here we found 32 bales of telegraph wire lying at the water's edge. We inquired from the natives, and learned from them that Mr. Perry, the telegraph line contractor, was short of wire up at Île-à-la-Crosse, that he had arranged with these natives to bring the wire down, and that they had failed to carry out their contract for lack of food. This seemed somewhat of a mystery of us, knowing the large amount of game available. However, Mr. Noel, after thinking the matter over, decided to arrange to have the wire taken down the river. We therefore gave them some of our supplies; bacon, bread, tea and sugar. They seemed greatly pleased at this, and had the canoe, with seventeen bales of wire loaded in a very few minutes, and followed us down the river. It was now cloudy and raining slightly. The guides told us it would be necessary for us to walk past some of the rapids which were now getting worse to navigate, and it was here that a misunderstanding occurred that cost us pretty nearly all the afternoon. One of the guides spoke broken French, and Mr. Noel, in taking the instructions, understood him to say that we would walk about two miles, when, as a matter of fact, it was about twelve miles that he wished us to walk. The result was that after we had climbed up the bank and found the Government road we walked between three and four miles when we decided that there must be something wrong. We then started back on the road, and after walking back pretty near to where we started from and not seeing anything of the guides, decided that we had better go back the other way again. It was now raining heavily, and we went down to the river at several points, but could see nothing of our guides or the canoe. Finally, after walking about fifteen miles in the rain, we got in touch with the guides, who had come up the road to meet us. We reached the canoe at the foot of the rapids about 5:30 p.m., being wet to the skin from head to foot. Everything in the canoe was wet

and we felt very much depressed. We got in, however, and went a few miles when we decided that it would be dangerous to go any further in our condition. We therefore put into camp. The guides certainly excelled themselves this evening in the speed with which they put up the tent and got the fire going. Soon we were drying ourselves comfortably at the big fire, and shortly afterwards the two men who were bringing down the wire reached us, and we all camped for the night together. During the afternoon, while we were trying to locate the guides, I had fired off my shot gun. The guides told us this had frightened four moose that were evidently close to the bank, and they had swum across the river ahead of the canoe.

I understand that the custom among the natives is frequently for several to go out together hunting moose. If one is shot the carcass is shared among all of the hunters, the hide going to the successful shot. I was very glad to learn that the natives are very careful not to waste anything. What meat is not required at the time is, in the summer smoked for future use, and in the winter frozen up for this purpose. The hide is tanned, made into moccasins, gloves, coats, etc. They are also, I understand, very careful to kill no more than they require, and if later opportunity offers to bring down another moose when there is really no need for it, they refuse to take advantage of the opportunity. In other words they look upon the moose particularly, somewhat as a rancher or farmer looks upon his own herd, that is, that they are their own particular property, and they govern themselves accordingly.

The next day, Sunday, was a pretty fine day although a little cloudy. We rose at 6 a.m. intending to go through the rest of the rapids and reach La Plonge that evening if possible. This we accomplished at 6 p.m. We were now about 35 or 40 miles from our destination, Île-à-la-Crosse. Here at La Plonge there is a large Roman Catholic Mission. It was a novel sight from the river to look up this dark, cloudy Sunday evening and see the buildings on the hill ablaze with electric light at such a distance from civilization. The mission here has an electric light plant of its own, the power being derived from damming up the creek at this point. They have sufficient power to run the electric light plant, and light the Indian school, the church and other buildings. They have also a steam heating plant installed to heat the school and church, a commodious saw mill, barns and other buildings. It is highly creditable indeed the enterprise shown in this connection. The success of the enterprise from the mechanical standpoint is mainly due, I understand, to one of the Brothers, Bro. Joseph Burnhouf who is apparently somewhat of a genius along this line. Although not an electrician he, I understand, has studied the matter up from books and installed the plant on his own initiative. He is a most interesting man to meet, speaks three languages, his native language, French, English and Cree, and is most intelligent and devoted to his work. He has a comfortable motor boat, which he built himself, and operates most successfully. The buildings of this mission were erected about nine years ago. They have over 50 Indian pupils, there being a priest in charge, together with four Brothers and four Sisters. They are also clearing the land and engaging to a small extent in farming. I was informed by Brother Burnhouf that they had oats, a small piece that went 75 bushels to the acre this year. They have also some cattle. It is Mr. Noel's intention, I understand, to have this point connected up with the government telegraph line which is distant about eight miles. They are naturally exceedingly

anxious that this should be done. Across the river there is quite a settlement, about 15 families of whites and Indians.

Our guides were pretty tired by this time and we decided to request Brother Burnhouf to take us the balance of the way to Île-à-la-Crosse in his motor boat. We found that we had only about 15 gallons of gasoline, which by the way costs from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a gallon at this point. He said it would take about ten gallons to make the trip that we wanted to make, which would leave him only about five gallons of gasoline for the rest of the season, as it would be impossible for him to get any more before winter. The Brothers were exceptionally busy at this time as they are now completing their new church and Bro. Burnhouf has supervision of same, and apparently many other duties to perform. Despite this, however, he very kindly consented to take us in his motor boat the next morning, and the guides were highly pleased over the news. Accordingly the following morning, Monday, we left in the Brother's boat at 8 a.m. and had a most beautiful trip down the Beaver river to Lac Île-à-la-Crosse in the forenoon. We anticipated some difficulty in crossing the lake in case there was a wind as the lake is very rough sometimes and people in canoes and even motor boats have occasionally to wait for several days at the entrance to the lake before they can cross to the settlement of Île-à-la-Crosse. We lunched on one of the islands at a beautiful sandy beach, and found the lake rather rough. By the way Lac Île-à-la-Crosse is a very large lake. It has bays leading off it from 15 to 40 miles long. The name, I understand, is derived from the word "lacrosse," the first settlers having discovered the Indians playing a game on one of the islands very similar to the game of lacrosse. For this reason they gave the name of La Crosse to the island, Île-à-la-Crosse. After lunch the Brother decided it would be all right to cross the lake to the mission, which we did. In crossing the lake the first object that meets the gaze is an immense cross erected on a high pole on a high point of land near the mission. The sight of this cross made somehow, and quite unexpectedly, a deep impression on me. It recalled most vividly in these wild surroundings the teachings of my childhood, learned at my dear old mother's knee, of that other lake spoken of so frequently in the Bible accounts of the journeyings of the Founder of the Christian religion. I thought to myself, does this cross and all that it stands for in our modern 20th century, rotten as it is with Tammany politics, graft and hypocrisy, war-ridden, and apparently half demented with the craze for pomp and display, explain why this mission was founded so many years ago. Does it explain why these people have given up the comforts of refined homes in many cases, and the privileges of the better side of our modern civilization to spend their lives among the races of Northern Canada endeavoring to uplift them to a higher standard of living. These devoted missionaries are endeavoring to teach the poor simple natives a better way to live and worship than their old way, so well described by the great Irish Canadian who met his death by assassination on the streets of Ottawa on April 8th, 1868, the eloquent Thomas D'Arcy McGee, describing the return of Jacques Cartier from Canada to his native country France:

"He told them of the Algonquin
Braves, the hunters of the wild,
Of how the Indian mother in the forest rocks the child,
Of how, poor souls, they fancy in every living thing
A spirit good or evil that claims their worshipping."

And at nine o'clock on the evening when we left the mission a couple of days later and I looked back over the beautiful moonlit waters of Lac Île-à-la-Crosse, the last thing I saw was not the commodious buildings of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson Bay commonly called the Hudson's Bay Company, or the trading post of the more modern Revillon Freres, but it was the gigantic pole on the hill surmounted by the emblem of the religious faith common to Roman Catholics and Protestants, to Briton and German — the Cross of Christ.

We called at the mission and met Father Rappe, the senior priest in charge. Father Rappe informed me that he had been here since 1879, a period of 36 years, this being his first and only mission. The Indian school is closed here at present since the opening of the school at La Plonge. I understand, however, that they expect to get some Sisters in the spring, and if so they are going to re-open it, and it will then be a school for both whites and natives. I learned that Father Rappe frequently travels nearly one thousand miles in the year visiting his people. The church at this point is a large and commodious building and at times, I am told, is filled to the doors. As many as a thousand people are tributary to this point. We obtained some very interesting information with reference to this mission. It was established in 1840, seventy-five years ago, and the Sisters went in 1860. It seems to me that very few people are aware of the age and importance of this mission. Here also are the stores of the Hudson Bay's Company and Revillon Freres, and before the war broke out a very large trade was done at this point in furs.



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Saw mill, Roman Catholic Mission, La Plonge, 1908.

At the present time, however, this industry is paralyzed by the war, and business is very flat as a consequence. It will no doubt pick up again after the war is over. The whole country up here is a veritable hunter's paradise. Game of all sorts is in abundance. The natives live well when times are normal. So long as they can get reasonable prices for their furs to enable them to buy flour, tea, sugar and tobacco, they are happy. Of course at certain times of the year it is more difficult for them to catch fish and get the other game, but they have all sorts of methods of preserving the meat — for example, as I have before intimated the moose meat they will smoke and dry, and thus preserve it in the summer. In the winter it is an easy matter to freeze it up. While we were there fish were in abundance and a splendid quality.

We went in the motor boat to find the construction camp of Mr. Parry, who is completing the telegraph line to Île-à-la-Crosse. We finally located the camp by running up a little creek leading into the lake. We found Mr. Parry and his men in good spirits with the line pretty nearly completed. Mr. Parry had an abundance of supplies at the camp, and treated us right royally while we were there. We stayed at Île-à-la-Crosse a day and a half. On the second day we went with Mr. Parry to the end of the wire, which was back seven or eight miles from the camp. Mr. Noel tapped the wire at this point, and endeavored to get through to Battleford. He had considerable difficulty in this, however, and it was not until about four o'clock in the afternoon that he was able to get his messages through to North Battleford, and have them repeated from there to Battleford. He forwarded telegrams conveying our greetings to the mayors of Battleford and North Battleford, and sent also some personal messages for ourselves to relatives at Battleford. Mr. Parry hoped to complete the line the following Saturday, that is September 25th, and expected to leave for Battleford with his men on the following Sunday, September 26th. He thought it would take him about two weeks to come in with his men and outfit over the government road. He will probably go back later, after the ice freezes, and put in the line across the water of Île-à-la-Crosse proper. High masts will be required for this purpose as the water span is pretty wide, and the ice at times jams badly. He will also, he tells me, if he is instructed, connect up La Plonge mission with the trunk line by putting in a loop line about eight miles. We left the camp on the evening of Tuesday, September 21st, called for a short time at the Île-à-la-Crosse mission, and then the Brother thought that as there might possibly be a wind on the following day it would be better to cross the lake in the evening. We therefore had a beautiful moonlight ride across the lake. The evening was mild and the trip was one of the finest I have ever enjoyed. We camped where the river joins the lake, and came up the Beaver River to La Plonge the following forenoon, where we had lunch at the mission. The officials at the point were exceedingly kind to us and supplemented our larder with some of their own fresh butter, bread, etc. We got away in the canoe, paddled up the river back towards Green lake about 2 p.m. and covered considerable ground that afternoon, part of the time with a sail constructed out of a loose piece of canvas, sailing with a fine north wind blowing. The following day we overtook and passed three men, fire inspectors, going up the river. Here also we passed, anchored in the river the gasoline launch of Mr. Beattie one of the government officials of the north. Friday, September 24th, was a very unpleasant day as it snowed hard all day. We stayed in camp all the forenoon and made about ten miles in the afternoon,

very uncomfortably. The following day we left camp at 7:15, picked up another man at Waterhen Creek who wished to come with us, promising to paddle all the way if we would let him come with us. This was the hardest day's paddle we had, about 40 miles to Green Lake which we reached about 7:15 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell of the Hudson's Bay post very kindly invited us again to spend the night with them at their house, which we did and were very glad to get under roof again, and get cleaned up and rested. On Sunday we got away about noon on our drive to the half way camp on the road to Meadow Lake and completed our journey to Meadow Lake the following Monday forenoon. Monday afternoon we drove the 15 miles from Meadow Lake to where the car was. Here we found Mr. Eli Nault with his gang of men working on the government road, and we camped with them. Mr. Nault is doing first class work, taking out the stumps and stones and levelling the road. He hopes to get through to Meadow Lake this fall. The following morning we started up the car and came home the ninety-five miles the same day, reaching Battleford at 6:40 p.m. . . .

Now for what impressed me most on the trip. Two things loom up largely in my mind as the result of the journey north. One is the importance of this government road and telegraph line, extending so far north from the Battlefords into the northern country. It ought to mean a great deal to both these places, as it will no doubt divert considerable fur and other trade this way, and have a tendency to open up this north country. The whole country as I have already intimated is a splendid game reserve, and what surprises me is the more people do not take advantage of it from this standpoint alone. Hunters in Ontario will go hundreds of miles to obtain no better shooting than can be found 75 miles north of here, at very small expense. For two or three fellows who wish to have a fine outing I know of nothing better. A good time to go is during the month of September when the flies and mosquitos give no trouble. With a canoe and one Indian guide, providing they are willing to paddle some themselves they could travel hundreds of miles throughout this district and enjoy outdoor life with the best of scenery and fishing, and shooting for their own use only, of course during the closed season, on the way.

The thing that impressed me the most, however, was the devotion and energy of the Roman Catholic missionaries in this part of the country. It certainly requires, it seems to me, great devotion to live the lives that these people are. There is no doubt of the beneficial influence that has been exerted over the natives through these missions; in fact apparently the only civilizing and refining influence of work in this country, practically speaking, is the Roman Catholic missions, and the effect is very noticeable throughout the whole country, in the manners and modes of living of the Halfbreeds and Indians. In conclusion I would say to the people of Battleford and North Battleford, take advantage of this government road, and learn more of the north country. It will repay the time and expense necessitated; in fact the actual expenses may be very light and a first class trip can be made in from three weeks to a month.