WILEY

Across Labrador from Nain to the George or Barren Grounds River

Author(s): H. Hesketh Prichard

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 6 (Dec., 1910), pp. 691-692

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1776842>

Accessed: 14-06-2016 06:44 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Geographical Journal

out. Such are the lines which would supply improved communication with Buluwayo from Johannesburg on the one side and from Delagoa bay on the other. An obvious means of shortening the route from Beira to Buluwayo would be the extension of the Gwelo—Felixburg line to Umtali. The line shown on our map as proposed, from Mailana near Lourenço Marques to Breyton, would supply a slightly shorter route from Delagoa bay to Johannesburg, and that from Durban to Dundee by Greytown would shorten the distance from Durban to Johannesburg, though it is understood that this line is projected merely to give access to the coalfield of north-west Natal.

ACROSS LABRADOR FROM NAIN TO THE GEORGE OR BARREN GROUNDS RIVER.

By H. HESKETH PRICHARD.

WE sailed from London on June 22, 1910, by the Moravian Mission ship *Harmony*, and arrived at Makkovik, Labrador, on July 15. After visiting Hopedale, we finally disembarked at Nain on July 20, and left that place for the interior on the 23rd. Our object was to cross from the eastern coast of Labrador to the George river.

Our party, which consisted of G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, Robert Porter, a Newfoundland canoeman, an Eskimo named Boaz Obed, and the writer, made its way to the head of Nunaingoak bay, which lies to the north-west of Nain, and found that the Fraser river discharges into this bay, and not into a bay further north as is marked upon the charts. We followed the river, and, after passing through several narrows connecting small sheets of water, came to a large sheet of water about 20 miles long by 2 in width lying almost due west. It would be equally correct to describe this sheet of water as a lake, or a widening of the Fraser river, in the same way as Indian House lake may be regarded as a widening of the George river. The cliffs on both north and south rose to a height of over 1000 feet. At the western end of the lake, the Fraser flows over a sandy bed. There was some fairly large timber in the sheltered valley, including black and white spruce, juniper, and birch.

On July 31 the Eskimo demanded more wages, and, being refused, decamped in the night.

On August 3 we found it impossible to follow the Fraser any further in canoes, and on the 5th began to "pack" a part of our outfit and one canoe up a defile trending south. We named this defile Bear valley; it rose 1500 feet in a distance of some 3 miles, and led to a treeless plateau where there was no firing obtainable except dwarf birch. This plateau stretched out on all sides, its contour only broken by the deep rift through which the Fraser flows. After advancing about 7 miles in a south-westerly direction through a chain of small lakes with short portages, we

were confronted by a very long portage and therefore decided to *cache* our canoe and some provisions and to start with light packs to walk to that George river. We were only able to take enough food to supply us with a small daily ration, but we hoped to supplement it with game. In this we were successful, as on the way to the George we killed two Barren Ground caribou as well as some ptarmigan, and in almost all the lakes were able to catch lake-trout, or *namaycush*.

The plateau, which at its highest rose to 2090 feet above sea-level, rolled in a series of ridges covered with boulders of Laurentian gneiss, between which spread great areas of reindeer moss. Some grass grew on the margins of the many lakes.

On August 11 we passed over a succession of sandy ridges, and that evening found some patches of alder, the first wood, except dwarf birch, that we had seen since leaving the Fraser. Over the whole tableland mosquitos made life almost unbearable. After August 11 we were every day expecting to reach the watershed and to find water flowing west, but it was not until we were within a few miles of the George itself that we crossed the watershed. On August 17 we noticed some small spruce and several larger trunks of dead wood. On the 19th we reached the George river at Indian House lake. Here I unfortunately strained my ankle, and had to lie up for ten days. At the point where we struck the watershed, the Height of Land is not more than a few miles from Indian House lake.

Every indication bore witness to the fact that vast numbers of Barren Ground caribou had passed here in the spring, the hills to the east of Indian House lake being cut up with their paths, and the banks of all the fords, where they shake themselves on emerging from the water, being covered with the shed hair of their spring coats. Although too late to meet the migration of the main herd, we saw many stragglers. The country round Indian House lake has been a veritable place of slaughter, for it is here that the Naskaupee Indians kill the deer on migration. Judging from all signs at their camps, they had slain a number of deer earlier in the year. The antlers of these deer showed that they were only half grown and still in velvet.

On August 31, having only 21 lbs. of flour and a very little deer meat left of our provisions, we started for our march back to the Fraser, taking a much more southerly course than that by which we had come. Thanks to our good fortune in killing a caribou stag, we were able to make forced marches every day and to reach our *cache* on the Fraser in good time. After August 26 we were not troubled by mosquitos on the high ground, though all the early part of September the black flies were plentiful in the sheltered valleys.

NAUSKAUPEE TYPE.

THE VALLEY OF THE FRASER.

THE PLATEAU OF LABRADOR.

NORTHERNMOST SPRUCE TREES SEEN ON THE PLATEAU.