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freed from further pressure, would not only cease to advance, but might melt rapidly away and retreat up the nala again, as it is said to have done after the first advance.

I made another observation of interest in connection with the Hasanabad glacier. The soil of the district for several miles around the opening of the Hasanabad nala is saturated with sulphate salts, which whiten the surface and impregnate all the water, making it bitter and unpalatable, as well as, physiologically, unwholesome. We were unable to use the water for either drinking or cooking for several days till Nagar was left behind, though the inhabitants appear not to be inconvenienced by it.

While examining the ice-cave of the Hasanabad glacier, with considerable difficulty, I managed to filter with a Berkefeld filter enough of the mud-laden water of the stream issuing from it to fill my two-quart water-flask, thereby obtaining a water of crystal clearness, that, as tested by its taste, appeared to be as pure as any spring-water I have ever met with, and certainly was free from the suspicion of containing salts of any description. The presumption is, therefore, that the rocks of the mountains enclosing the Hasanabad nala are different from those of a large district around it, at any rate, as regards the presence of sulphates in their composition.

CANOE ROUTES FROM LAKE SUPERIOR TO THE WESTWARD.

By LAWRENCE J. BURPEE, F.R.G.S.*

IN the broad field of geographical investigation offered by this continent of North America, no more fascinating study will be found than that of its far-spreading river systems. The rivers of North America are not merely interesting for their own sake, but because of their intimate connection with the exploration and development of the continent. Their names conjure up a thousand stories of pluck, endurance, and heroic endeavour. Their waters have borne the varied craft of explorers and fur-traders, missionaries, and pioneers. They have been the highways of war and peace; their banks have echoed to the yells of Indian warriors, and the songs of French *voyageurs*. They have seen the marvellous transformation of this new world, from a boundless wilderness, tenanted by scattered tribes of savages, to the home of a hundred millions of white people. In themselves, they present perhaps the most remarkable system of waterways in the world. They afford communication with every quarter of North America. It is not merely theoretically true, but it has borne the test of actual experience, that a man might set out in a birchbark canoe from Winnipeg, and with nothing more than a few practicable portages, make his way east to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, west to the mouth of the Columbia, north to Hudson bay or the Arctic, or south to the Gulf of Mexico.

Knowing the important part played by the rivers of North America, as avenues of transportation, particularly in the early history of the continent, it is not difficult to realize the vital significance of the portages. These well-worn paths over the height of land were the essential links in the network of rivers; and the discovery of a practicable portage was of scarcely less importance than the discovery of a great

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river-system. The object of the present paper is to give a brief account of a single group of portages—connecting Lake Superior with the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg.

Up to the middle of the seventeenth century, no white man is known to have reached the western end of Lake Superior. In 1661, however, two French explorers from Canada, Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart, coasted the south shore of the lake to Chagouamigon bay, and wintered among the Sioux of Mille Lacs, in what is now the State of Minnesota. The following spring they returned to Lake Superior, crossed the foot of the lake, and paddled along the north or north-western shore. Their subsequent adventures, which have been the subject of violent controversy, do not concern us here. Sixteen or seventeen years later, Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Du Lhut, went to the head of Lake Superior, and, after wintering with the Sioux, made his way by water to the Mississippi.

It was not, however, until 1688, that any attempt was made to explore the waterways leading from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg. In that year, Jacques de Noyon, of Three Rivers, reached the mouth of the Kaministiquia river, and, learning from the Indians of a water-route that, as they said, would bring him to the long-sought shores of the western sea, determined to make the discovery. So far as is known, he left no narrative of his journey, but a description of the route that he followed is contained in a memoir of the Intendant Begon, dated November 12, 1716. Leaving Lake Superior, he entered the Kaministiquia river (or Gamanistigouen, as it is called in the memoir), and ascended it for 10 leagues, to a portage of ten arpents. A series of rapids brought him to a long portage called the *Portage du Chien*, or Great Dog Portage. Passing through what is now known as Dog lake, he entered Dog river. Following that stream for 15 leagues another portage brought him into a small lake at the height of land, now called Height of Land lake. It is described as about ten arpents wide. At the end of this lake, he portaged into a swamp; thence into a small stream, down which he paddled for 10 leagues, and reached Canoe lake (now Lac des Mille Lacs). Six leagues brought him to a portage through a point of trembling poplars, to a small stream (Seine river) full of wild rice, or wild oats, as it was then called. Down this stream he paddled for two days, making about 10 leagues a day; to a waterfall (Sturgeon fall), where a short portage brought him into a lake 3 leagues long, at whose western end there was a rocky strait, opening into the lake of the Crists or Cristinaux, now known as Rainy lake. This is described in the memoir as about 8 leagues long. At the western end of this lake, or on the banks of the Takami-mouez or Ouchichig river (Rainy river), he wintered with a party of Assiniboines.

The Assiniboines offered to conduct De Noyon in the spring to the Western sea, where they were going, they said, on a war expedition to the number of one hundred, to fight a nation of dwarfs, described as $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 feet high, and very stout. The Indians, never lacking in imagination, told De Noyon of fortified towns and villages where the men were white and bearded, and rode on horseback with the women behind. They spoke of ships that fired big guns, of a city with walls of stone, and of many other wonderful things. All this they told de Noyon, or he thought they told him, which perhaps is nearer the truth. The wish was father to the thought, and the imagination of the Indians may have been spurred by his eager suggestions.

De Noyon did not accompany the Assiniboines to the Western sea, but he evidently went with them as far as Lac des Assiniboines, or the Lake of the Woods. This is proved by the memoir of Begon, which gives a detailed description of the route. "We follow the Ouchichig river," says Begon, "for six days, making about 80 leagues, without any rapids. About 2 leagues after entering the river, there is a fall (Choudière) where a small portage is required, and there are also two other

small falls (Manitou and Long Sault) where portages must also be made, and then we come to Lac aux Iles, otherwise called Assiniboiles or people of the Black stone, which is of 500 leagues circumference. On entering this lake to the left, the country is barren, and on the right hand it is furnished with all kinds of trees, and it is filled with many islands. At the end of this lake, there is a river emptying into the Western sea, according to the report of the Indians." The river last mentioned is evidently Winnipeg river, and consequently the "Western Sea" is Lake Winnipeg. The Assiniboines had told De Noyon that at the mouth of this river, the water rose and fell. Where so much was fiction, no particular weight need be attached to such a statement. However, in this case the Indians probably described what they had seen, as one finds constant references in the narratives of later travellers to this curious phenomena. La Vérendrye was deceived by a similar statement made to him by the Indian Ochagach. Keating, the American traveller, explains the phenomena as the result of a high wind blowing the waters of the lake into Traverse bay and piling them up the river. He confesses that, had he not been aware of the cause of this local rise, he might readily have mistaken it for the effect of a regular or periodical movement, which it very much resembled. As a matter of fact, the lake always rises and falls in a change from northerly to southerly winds.

De Noyon's discovery had no immediate results. It was not, in fact, until 1717 that any attempt was made to follow it up, so far as the records show. In that year Lieut. Zacharie Robutel de la Noüe was sent by the governor, De Vaudreuil, to establish a post at Kaministikwia, and there is some reason to believe that about the same time he also built a post on Rainy lake, following no doubt the route discovered by De Noyon.

Five years later we hear, for the first time, of another canoe route to the westward from Lake Superior. An officer named Pachot writes urging the establishment of a post at Tekkamamiouen (one of the many variants of the Indian name for Rainy lake). This, by the way, seems to throw doubt upon the probability of La Noüe having already built a post on that lake. However, the interesting point in Pachot's letter is this: "The best route," he says, "to go to the proposed establishment (on Rainy lake) would be by a small river named the Neutokaogane (or Nantokouagane) which is about 7 leagues from Kaministigoya." This is evidently Pigeon river, and the route the afterward famous grand portage route.

In 1731, the first determined effort to penetrate the country to the westward of Lake Superior was made by Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye—one of the greatest, most persevering, and most unselfish of western explorers. La Vérendrye reached Grand Portage in August, 1731, with his three sons, his nephew La Jemeraye, and a party of soldiers and *voyageurs*. The men had been tampered with by La Vérendrye's enemies, and refused to cross the portage. La Vérendrye was therefore forced to winter at Kaministikwia, while his nephew with a few loyal followers went west to Rainy lake, where they built Fort St. Pierre. The route is briefly described in a letter to the governor, Beauharnois, dated October 19, 1732. There are, he says, forty-seven portages to be made in going from Lake Superior to Takamamiouen, or Rainy lake. He learns, however, from La Vérendrye, of another route to the north of that followed, which involved only nine portages, and was believed to be more practicable. In a further letter, dated October 8, 1734, Beauharnois reports a conversation with La Vérendrye on these routes. The more northerly route proved on investigation to be unsatisfactory, as it added 120 leagues to the journey, and moreover it was so shallow that eight-seat canoes could not be taken through without great difficulty. La Vérendrye had therefore decided to stick to the first route. Here he had employed his men for some time in improving the navigation, and had succeeded in reducing the portages to thirty-two. He had

also cleared the portage paths, so that seven could be made in a day. Thus, as he says, he had been able to reduce the wages of his *engagés* from 500 livres, which they had formerly demanded because of the hardships of the portages, to not more than 250 or 300 livres. It is not certain if the more northerly route mentioned by La Vérendrye was the Kaministikwia route discovered by De Noyon, or one of the several variants of the Grand Portage route. La Vérendrye makes no mention in any of his letters or memoirs of the explorations of De Noyon or La Noüe, and it seems clear that he knew nothing of them. Indeed, in studying this period of western discovery, one is struck by the fact that each of the French explorers worked independently, without availing himself of the results of previous explorations, if indeed they had ever come to his knowledge.

Here, at any rate, we have two fairly well-defined routes from Lake Superior to Rainy lake: one by way of the Kaministikwia river and its connecting waterways, and the other over Grand Portage and through a series of small lakes and streams lying along what is now the International boundary.

It is not known when the first English traders entered the North-West from Lake Superior, but there is evidence that it was before 1767, and that they went in by way of the Grand Portage. In the Journal of Matthew Cocking, of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1772-73, it is mentioned that one, Mr. Finley, of Montreal, occupied a trading post on the Saskatchewan river five years before, that is, in 1767. Cocking also mentions a Mr. Curry, who was trading on the Saskatchewan in 1772, and probably for some years earlier. These were, no doubt, the James Finley and Thomas Curry referred to in Alexander Mackenzie's 'General History of the Fur Trade,' as the pioneer English traders from Canada in the North-West. Both Mackenzie's 'History' and Carver's 'Travels' make it clear that these early traders followed the Grand Portage route. Carver, who visited Grand Portage in July, 1767, says: "Here those who go to the north-west trade, to the Lakes De Piuye (Rainy lake), Dubois (Lake of the Woods), etc., carry over their canoes and baggage about 9 miles, till they come to a number of small lakes, the waters of some of which descend into Lake Superior, and others into the river Bourbon."

The first detailed description of the Grand Portage Route is that of Alexander Henry, in his 'Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, 1760-76.' Henry reached the Grand Portage in June, 1775, and found the rival traders there in a state of "extreme reciprocal hostility." When he tells us that the transportation of the trading goods over the Grand Portage, which was merely the first of a long series of carrying-places, was a work of seven days of severe and dangerous exertion, we can understand why La Vérendrye's men demanded such heavy wages for their work.

This Grand Portage route continued to be used by the independent traders from Montreal, and afterward by the North-West Company, until the end of the eighteenth century, when it was abandoned for the Kaministikwia route. The history of the re-opening of the original route discovered by De Noyon is somewhat curious. Toward the end of the century, it having been found that Grand Portage, up to this time the principal establishment of the North-West Company, was on American territory, a determined effort was made to discover another route farther north. Edward Umfreville was sent to explore the country west of Lake Nipigon, in 1784, and actually found a practicable route, which will be referred to presently. In 1798, however, Roderick McKenzie, returning to Grand Portage from the west, accidentally learned from a party of Indians of a water communication leading from Lake St. Croix to the mouth of the Kaministikwia. He followed it to Lake Superior, and, as a result, the North-West Company moved its establishment from Grand Portage to the mouth of the Kaministikwia, where Fort William

was built, in 1801. Up to the time of Roderick McKenzie's discovery, or re-discovery, of the Kaministiquia route, it seems to have been unknown to the North-West Company. And yet Roderick McKenzie's famous cousin, Alexander McKenzie, clearly describes it in his 'General History of the Fur Trade,' in speaking of Lake La Croix. "Into the East bay," he says, "is a road which was frequented by the French, and followed through lakes and rivers until they came to Lake Superior, by the river Caministiquia, 30 miles east of the Grande Portage." The Kaministiquia route is also clearly shown on the manuscript map of Peter Pond (1789), in the Dominion archives. An explanation of the apparent ignorance of the North-West Company may perhaps be found in the fact that both Alexander McKenzie and Peter Pond were members of the rival X Y Company, which was not absorbed by the North-West Company until 1804.

Having briefly described the history of the Kaministiquia and Grand Portage routes, it remains to say a few words about the third route, by way of Lake Nipigon, discovered by Umfreville in 1784. Umfreville left Pays Plat, at the eastern end of Nipigon bay, on June 16, and entered Nipigon river the same evening. He had with him a small party of men, in a light canoe, and was able to make good time. On the 19th they entered Nipigon lake, by way of Flat Rock portage, crossed Three Mountain bay, and the head of McIntyre bay, and by way of Boggy portage came to Ingall point. From here they went west around Caribou island to the west shore of the lake, where, in lat. 49° 42', as Umfreville made it, they found traces of the old French forts, perhaps built by Dulhut in the previous century, or where La Vérendrye may have been stationed when he learned from the Indian Ochagach of the road that led to the "Western sea."

Umfreville had had trouble with his Indian guides, especially one whom he picked up at the foot of the lake, and who had promised to guide him to Portage de l'Isle. This man belonged to Sturgeon lake, and remembered seeing Umfreville at Fort Severn when the latter was in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. This did not prevent him, however, from a course of petty thievings, culminating in the robbery of a nine-gallon keg of liquor, which he secreted in the woods, but which was accidentally discovered. "I enticed him to the place," says Umfreville, "by telling him I had found the fresh track of a moose. He came very unsuspectingly, but great was his surprise when I showed him the keg of liquor. After upbraiding him with his perfidy, I obliged him to carry the keg back to camp." Umfreville would willingly have sent him off, but no one else knew anything of the route to be followed. "Nothing but absolute necessity," he writes feelingly in his journal, "would induce one to have anything to do with a man possessed of every bad quality, and whose mind is as black as his skin."

From the ruins of the old French fort, the party coasted north, crossing the entrance to Gull bay, which they mistook for a river, and over West bay to "a lofty peak of perpendicular rocks." They passed the site of another old French fort, and also "a remarkable round island of high land." This last was no doubt Jackfish island, with Mount Royal; and the old fort must have stood not far from the present Nipigon House of the H.B. Company. Crossing English bay, and rounding the point, they entered Wabinoash bay, landing on an island "very high and shaped like a barn," no doubt the same now known as Inner Barn island. At the bottom of Wabinoash bay they found the river they sought, which they had learned from the Indians would furnish a route to the west. After a couple of miles' paddling and dragging up this small stream, they entered Wabinoash lake, followed by a motley crowd of Indians with their families and baggage, picked up on the way across Lake Nipigon. Among these Umfreville sought diligently for a competent guide, but without success. He must still depend upon the thieving good-for-

nothing gentleman from Sturgeon lake, who fully realized that he controlled the situation. "This fellow," wails Umfreville, "possesses all the duplicity of the devil. One day he knows the way better than any Indian in the country. The next day he knows nothing about it. At one time he is ready to do us any service, and soon after will threaten our lives; but our situation is such we must accept of him or give up the journey." His increasing insolence, however, determined Umfreville to get rid of him at all costs, and to remain at Wabinoash lake until chance should send another guide. Fortune favoured him, for he learned from a passing trader of a guide who could at least take him as far as Sturgeon lake. This man was sent for, and a satisfactory agreement having been reached, the party once more set out on their exploration. Before leaving Wabinoash lake Umfreville made his position to be lat. $50^{\circ} 2'$.

As far as Obonga lake, Umfreville's course is clear, but beyond that it is more difficult to follow him. Later indications, however, make it practically certain that from Obonga lake his course was through what it is to-day an unexplored district, to Seseganaga lake, and thence to Sturgeon lake, which he reached July 10. From here two routes were available to Lac Seul, one leading out of the upper, and the other out of the lower, end of Sturgeon lake. The guide had promised to lead Umfreville to what he calls La Chemin Neuve, which was by way of Sturgeon river, but missed the entrance. The party therefore proceeded to the south-western end, where what was apparently the old route, led west and north-west to Minnitaki lake and Lac Seul. Umfreville reached Minnitaki, or Monataggé, as he has it, July 13, and Lac Seul two days later. Near the entrance he passed a rock in the lake called Roche du Diable, which he says was revered by the Indians, who had "deposited several things as presents to the Old Gentleman." He also passed an old establishment made by a Mr. Lyons some years before, where a considerable trade had been carried on with the Indians. The guide told him that from this lake it was not more than three days' paddling to Henley house, and five to Albany fort, on Hudson bay.

A day was lost on the lake, trading with a party of Indians for provisions, but the worst part of the journey was now over, and it was comparatively easy going from Lac Seul to Winnipeg river. Umfreville found the position of his camp, near the western end of Lac Seul, to be lat. $50^{\circ} 22'$. The following morning when he embarked, he found to his disgust that the wife of the guide was drunk, and would not enter the canoe. The consequent loss of a fine day's travelling leads him to some interesting reflections on the folly of carrying spirits on a voyage of exploration. "An Indian," he remarks, "may be as meek as a lamb when sober, and the same man when drunk a mere devil." All his troubles by the way he attributes to "this infernal stimulator." He adds, however, with charming *naïveté*, "were we on a trading voyage, I own the necessity of it."

After an uneventful journey down the English river, Umfreville reached Winnipeg river, and his destination, Portage de l'Isle, July 23, having been thirty-eight days on the way. The narrative of his journey is preserved in the archives of McGill University.

Umfreville had demonstrated the existence of a practicable route by way of Lake Nipigon, but the North-West Company hesitated to adopt such a roundabout road, except as a last resort, and when Roderick McKenzie found the Kaministiquia waterway, all thought of utilizing that by way of Lake Nipigon was abandoned. The Kaministiquia route was used thereafter as the thoroughfare from Lake Superior to the west, until the waning fortunes of the fur trade, and the building of roads and railways, made it no longer necessary.