

SECTION 'A' LOG 1973 by Ted Nye

The Eastmain River Trip beginning at calm majestic Lake Mistassini, then down the North Branch of The Rupert River, across a height of land via an Edmonds special crossover, then down the Eastmain. All in the glorious Province of Quebec.

Last year's Section 'A' heard the cry 'Go West young men!' and they traveled to the far north western part of Ontario, and came east to The Bay via the Otoskwin and Attawapiskat Rivers. This year in the typical, unpredictable Rev. Edmonds fashion, Section 'A' heard the cry 'Go East young man!' Off we went to the far northeast of Quebec, and then came west down the spectacular Rupert and Eastmain Rivers!

Before I begin, our stay here in camp was so short at the beginning of the summer, let's meet the members of Section 'A', not a dirty dozen, but a sleeker 10 man team. Leader and headstaff, sometimes called the 10th wonder of the world for his moves in rapids (as well as in Pete Clark's and Dick Lewis' stores), the Reverend John 'Tonka' Edmonds. The tea inhaling chaplain from Pomfret School in Connecticut returns for his 16th year at Wabun with the knowledge and skills surpassed by few. His loyal, tent-pitching servant Ted Nye assists him in his leadership. Fresh from the Florida sun, Ted turned in his water skis for a paddle and a canoe, and his ninth year of consecutive Wabun tripping.

Four members from last year's section 'B' returned for some big river thrills:

"Juicy Bruce" Egdall,

"Spaceball" Essig, whose ever amazing intelligent comments, movements, thoughts, and cool shall always be remembered.

Don "Graucho" Breen, who with Bert Rogers in his bow, successfully shot down a rapid while paddling up, and they are still wondering where they went wrong!

Finally, "The General", Tom Stiverson whose General Patton oratories will long be remembered for inspiration and nobility, along with his famous cry: "It's only for football!" which could be heard across many a portage!

From last year's Section 'C', two more brave souls return to enlist under the Reverend's rule:

"Squeaky Wheel" Doug Harvey, whose mouth will only be surpassed by Egdall's, still wonders where all the game went.

And "The Creeper" Rob Slattery, famous for his entrances and exits via sides of tents -- never through the door! We also thank him for a Rest Day pancake recipe of perfection.

Our remaining two members returned to the Wabun line-up after several years off:

Bert Rogers, lovingly called "Wort" for lack of anything better to call him, is still scratching his head and wondering.

And, finally, John Monroe, "Moloney" who, after a two year recuperation period, braved the trip with the Edmonds-Nye team again, only to realize they hadn't changed; and Tonka was still human when it came to rapids and losing hats!

JUNE 28 TH xx LV Wabun; ARR Mistassini

Some of you may remember, those of you who got up, Section 'A' left Garden Isle with the sound of reveille, and a blast from the cannon at 7:05 the morning of June 28. After a relaxing boat ride to The Mine Road via Dick Lewis, Vagn, and Pete, we packed our loads on trailers and jumped into Stoky's and Pete's cars. Now began the first 500 miles of our journey by car to Mistassini Post. The road is not an easy one to travel -- the last 200 miles of which are dirt and loose gravel. But after an earlier scouting trip by Tonka and Ted, who had taken 1,000 pounds of food and a canoe up a week earlier, we were reassured of an easy trip. Some highlights of our journey were two trailer flat tires, a lot of dust in Stokey's car, Pet's Italian at a passing trucker, a scenic drive through the family PG rated town of Chibougamau, a fantastic meal box prepared by the kitchen, a broken windshield for Stokey, and finally a slow drive past a narrow part in the road three miles short of Mistassini where, a week before, Tonka's shooting ability proved less successful on land than in the water. A final 'Have a good trip men!' was wished at 10:30 that night, and Section 'A' managed to get a couple hours sleep under the Bay Post's warehouse as the campsite across the Lake was taken.

JUNE 29 FR 1 Abatagush Bay -- 1/2 Day

4:30 came early, but all of us were anxious to move down The Lake. After final assignments and packing were completed during a cold breakfast, we were on the water by 7 AM, loaded to the gunnels with well over a ton of food for 43 days! Two wannigans, two babies, packs, tent/fly, life jackets, bowman, stern-man -- where were you going to sit in your own canoe? After an hour, people began to get into the swing of things, but so did the wind, and by 10:00 AM Bruce and Sty, as well as the rest of the Section, learned a critical lesson concerning heavily loaded canoes and strong tail winds. As two and three foot rollers smashed against our sterns, we bushed our first campsite, and an early dinner was served at 4:00. Everyone was in their tents asleep by 6:30; and Bruce's coffee cake was the only high point of the day.

JUNE 30 SA 2 Before the Big Crossing -- 1/2 Day

A three o'clock morning rise by the staff meant a flash light departure at 4:30 to beat the wind -- which already was coming up! A 3 1/2 hour non-stop paddle was the order with Edmonds in the lead. Covering 15 miles in heavily loaded canoes was not easy, and it brought out the best in everyone. Rounding an island, though, the sight that lay before us left everyone speechless. We had reached the Lake Mistassini 'Big Crossing'. It is only a six mile crossing, a little shorter than from Garden Island to Keewaydin. But what is so impressive and dangerous is that to your left is 70 miles of open water; and to the right is 50 miles of open water. If you think the wind on Granny Bay can get rough, you ain't seen nothing! It was 8 AM in the morning, the wind was already blowing, 15 miles already covered -- why not? Camp was made, and everyone back to bed. Our decision was a smart one, as rain showers and wind hit for the third day. We hoped this would not be the case for the whole summer. Tonka's first lunch bannock was a great cracker, and we all retired early once again, as a flashlight rise to make The Crossing awaited us the next day!

JULY 1 SU 3 Rupert Bay

Another 3:00 AM rise. Was this to become a habit? A cold pre-cooked bannock got us off the site by 4:15. The six mile crossing was glass, but there also was a thick fog peacefully over the water. Tonka turned on his running lights, grabbed his Silva Ranger compass, and headed off into the fog muttering "Which way do we go? Which way do we go?" "Shades of Dick Lewis III", said Ted. And soon we found ourselves paddling silently through gray thick fantasy land. In an hour and a half tranquility set in, broken only by the sounds of paddles and canoes slicing into the motionless still water. There was a brief disturbance as a large flock of wild ducks flew

directly over us, and disappeared as suddenly as they had come. "Land Ho!" came a cry. And through a misty sheet we could see a faint line of trees on shore. There was a quiet sigh of satisfaction from the Section, and for the first time we noticed that the cold morning mist had gracefully landed on everyone and their loads, giving our five canoes a surprising wintery icy glazed appearance. Deciding to wait till lunch for a hot meal, we paddled 20 miles up into Rupert Bay, and off of Lake Mistassini.

A short afternoon paddle, and an early camp was made in time to beat our fourth day of rain! Well waterproofed tents and fly are definitely nice!!! Heading for bed, we all chuckled as we remembered seeing a sign that afternoon reminding us that traveling and fishing beyond that point on Lake Mistassini was prohibited. Good luck!!

JULY 2 MO 4 Rapid before Capichinatun: Esker Portage

The rain delayed the staff a little in awakening, but another day found us on the water by 7:30 AM heading to take our first portage and rapids. Don and Bert learned it was wise to follow the canoe in front of them as they ran up on several rocks in dead-waters -- a costly mistake with heavily loaded canoes. The whole day was an interesting one as we shot small rapids and shot rapids through wilderness unfamiliar to us. The land and the banks of the North Rupert are largely eskers, yes, they do exist -- an esker being formations of land remaining from glaciers' movements many, many years ago. Here, occasional spruce and jack-pine trees protrude from the thickly laden moss and lichen covered banks. Just truly indescribable in their beauty. Lunch found Section 'A' between two rapids in a large jack-pine stand, eating under a newly built covered picnic table!!! Don't ask us where it came from, but as a heavy shower hit, we thanked whoever put it there. The afternoon cleared, and was as enjoyable traveling as the morning. We came to rest at an old Indian site at the bottom of a large churning falls and cascade. Bruce, Bert, and Eric tried fishing; but the high water has dampened the fishes' appetites. The roar of the white water foaming down the cascade put us to sleep quickly.

JULY 3 TU 5 Point in Woollet

The sun comes up early in Quebec, and so does Section 'A', as 4:30 rises were now fully established, much to the complaints of the campers. To solve the rebellion, the staff set their watches ahead an hour, and indeed 5:30 rises were much more reasonable. Greeting us was a picture-postcard morning, as the sun slowly burned the morning mist off the bubbling rapids. The countryside again has taken another change as we find The River widening, and creating several large lakes. Also our close esker river banks have moved out to gently rolling high hills that still possess the deep reindeer moss lichen; but now an occasional clump of familiar white birch can be spotted. Still, we have yet to see any poplar trees, so common in Ontario. The scenery never stopped, as lunch was eaten below a spectacular 25 foot falls that was split in the middle by a small island. The hazy sun created brightly colored small rainbows, as the spray shot off from the two powerful chutes. To keep its record going, an afternoon shower occurred, but quickly left, leaving crystal clear skies, and a sharp wind which forced us to bush out a site on a small island which did have a small one-ten Indian site containing several beaver skulls traditionally hung on the trees to worship the gods. Still attempting to finish the damp rice and quickly ripening ham, we dined on our fifth straight ham and rice glop by Rob. Everyone quickly retired to their tents with slightly more slanted eyes and an oink of satisfaction.

JULY 4 WE 6 Rapid after Woollett Lake

Independence Day I guess, but no holiday for Section 'A'. The day was clear and sunny, and everyone now was beginning to get back in shape as rapids and river work are difficult when you hit them the third day out. By lunch we decided the beauty was too much, and a half day was called. Once again the rain showers moved in, but this time for the evening. Thunder crashed all evening as dinner was cooked under a nice dry fly. As the strong wind blew in the tree tops, and the rapids roared beside our campsite, bone-dry tents were welcomed, and a peaceful night's sleep was had by all.

JULY 5 TH 7 End of Lake Bellinger

The heavy rains stopped, but the cold dark clouds remained as we began to shoot a set of three rapids after breakfast. Bruce learned the real importance of shooting Indian style in rapids as he didn't fully follow the man in front of him, sending the canoes behind him over less popular water. Our cold dark cloud put it all together; and, for the first time, we got soaked while paddling in a torrential cold rain. The shower was short, though, and as the sun came out we decided on another half day at an interesting old Indian, goose hunting campsite. After a thrilling pep talk on how not to give up the fight by The General, the rest of the afternoon was spent swimming, fishing (with no luck) exploring the large Indian site, and watching the rain showers come down the lake between large clumps of radiant sunshine. All in all, a very strange afternoon.

JULY 6 FR 8 CS on Ledge: Top of Ile du Nord Ouest

The next day brought more Rupert River rapids -- some big, some little, but all extremely enjoyable despite the fine scotch mist that fell that morning. One small one held another important lesson for Section 'A' on eddies. Slowly and carefully, Tonka pulled into a small eddy in the middle of a horse-race. The eddy was indeed a bit stronger than planned, and Tonka spun around. Well, along came Robbie -- then came Bruce -- all spinning around in the same small eddy. By the time poor Don arrived, the Chinese fire drill was in full swing. The eddy was full of canoes going everywhere but out. Figuring he better turn around, Don did so, but not in the eddy. He and Bert began to paddle madly UP The River. After a while, still [paddling UP, they began to go DOWN the horse-race. Handling the whole situation most gracefully, they went the whole way backwards -- wondering where they went wrong. Meanwhile Ted came down, saw the mess, shot the main tiny V simply, but broke his paddle in the process. All in all, an interesting horse-race! We made a late half day on our once point campsite that now was an island in the middle of a rapid! Fishing was again tried, and this time with a little more success, as Tonka pulled a nice 27 inch 8 lb pike and a 3 inch trout. But alas he was outdone by Bert, who hooked a better than 30 inch, 10 lb Great Northern; and all hopes of Fish & River improved! Our travel these days is still in gentle rolling hills; but they are greatly scarred by a severe forest fire from five or so years ago. Still, the patches of green mingled among the burned grays and browns, created a new awesome beauty of its own.

JULY 7 SA 9 CS & R: Ile de l'Ouest

The morning found rain on the staff tent, but still we moved despite nine days with rain. A large fish breakfast was digested while shooting some more big rapids, and traveling through more burned area in a fine light mist. A slow wet lunch eaten, then a straight three hour paddle to our campsite, which must have had all the black flies in Canada on it. The high water has made the bugs heavy so far this trip, but here they flew around in large clouds; and not even "Old Woodsmans" fly dope was effective. Needless to say, a quick dinner and KP were handled, and off to bed.

JULY 8 SU 10 End of Rapids at Cree CS

The bugs were just as hungry in the morning as they had been in the evening, despite our early departure. We then began down a series of immensely powerful rapids that reminded Tonka and Ted of The Otokwin River from last year. The high water has created rapids so fast and large that they were unshootable. Gingerly we let down the right side of the first and found our cross-over to the portage around the second and third impossible to paddle. The current shot by as if it were being shot out of a huge fire hose. With no other choice, we bushed two portages on the right side, both around 400 yards through burns -- which made things a little easier. The hardest part of the whole maneuver was the 300 yards of River between the portages. The eddy into which our first portage ended was so strong that it created a small rapid coming back -- UP RIVER -- with almost a foot drop. ...So there we were on the right hand shore, going down The River, and having to pull up at the same time! Believe us, it was not easy, and there were no margins for mistakes. With the morning spent on these rapids, we decided to bush camp at the end, and enjoy a strong wind which left our site bug-less for the first time all trip. Peoples' necks and ears were so swollen from all our bites, and the chance to wash and air out was nice! A Breen, Essig Italian Dinner was a fitting end as spectacular double rainbows danced through the campsite amid our never ending friendly showers!

JULY 9 MO 11 Before Portage out of Short Cut Bay at Cree CS

Alas, the time came to leave our bug-less site and fight the wind that had brought us such pleasure. It seems you can't win here. Yesterday, we had to pull up a rapid while going down River. Now the wind is so strong we are being blown back up a River with a five mile per hour current going down it! At mid-morning, we said good-bye to the Rupert River, and headed for Tonka's short-cut to the Eastmain River. But memories and thoughts of The River will always remain with us. A quiet windless cove was our harbor for lunch, and then on to find a well used, large Indian site where we set up camp. The route we are now following must be a well-travelled one between The Rupert and Eastmain Rivers -- as several old hand carved sleds and other Indian artifacts filled the area. There also are signs that several families may live and work their trap lines from here in the winter, trapping still being the major source of income to many old Indian families. As a cold damp rain set in over the balsam and jack-pine surrounding us, The Cat River from last year's trip was again associated to here by Tonka and Ted. Warm dry tents were nice as August weather hung drearily over us. Eleven days with rain!

JULY 10 TU 12 Rest

The coldest morning so far, with a heavy rain falling -- So why not? On the 12th day we rested. No one moved until 10:30; and cries of snow and ice could be heard from several people. Tonka put on the perpetual tea pot. And the rest of the day was spent eating and trying to stay warm. Dinner was a gourmet delight, as Klix Loaf & Macaroni & Cheese were cooked by Sty and Bruce, pudding by Robbie, apple pies and cookies by Ted and Doug, and cinnamon rolls by Bruce.

JULY 11 WE 13 AS-CS-18

Leaving our Rest Day sight in a cold drizzle was hard, and Eric was sure the white mist that lay over the surrounding hills snow! Tonka's short cut paid off, as a small creek was passable and two short portages put us on our planned route, three days ahead of schedule! Our journey now is up a quiet little river which crosses over a height of land to The Eastmain. Small bubbly little rapids, and quiet little springs are everywhere; and despite the cold, the warmth of the beauty around us kept everyone's spirits high. A late half day was the order, and immediately

the fishing rods were in action. Ted was the first to score with the first speckled trout of the year. From there it was up hill as Bruce got four, Tonka four, Bert one, all ranging from 1-2 lbs. A fresh trout breakfast assured we were satisfied!

JULY 12 TH 14 CS before Falls & 3 CH Portage -- before AS-CS-20
JULY 13 FR 15 AS-CS-20 ... Misticawassee Lake
JULY 14 SA 16 REST -- rain
JULY 15 SU 17 Below Neoskweskau

For the next four days we travelled in country that, as always, never stopped changing and amazing us. The ever COLD sun managed to peek its head out off and on, mostly off, but when it was out it unveiled a Canada which changed every ten miles. We passed through a section of rolling high hills containing spruce, balsam, jack-pine, and reindeer moss all mingled together. Then a turn in The River put us in a barren wasteland left by a huge forest fire from several years back. The grey of the remaining chicos against the green light covering of moss and brown sand stretched from hill to hill, as far as one could see. Awesome and sad. The burn then gave way to high rock cliffs, which created a Norwegian Fjord effect as small water falls and springs spurted and plummeted to the water. Here we disturbed a family of large white owls among the cliffs. Upset, they flew majestically into the sky, and then moved on to quieter quarters to sleep. We then climbed our final height of land and crossed over to a small grey muddy creek, which led us into The Eastmain . At last we had come to our major destination. Wearily we pitched camp as the 17th day with rain and showers occurred. The tea pot hit the fire, though, and all were instantly revived to take on The River.

JULY 16 MO 18 Nasacauso

Day One, and the sun came. We hoped it was a good sign; but we have all given up forecasting the weather. We looked at the sun carefully, because it was only the fourth time we had seen it in 18 days. Slowly covering ten miles of dead-water against a hard headwind, we now realized that the rest of our trip will be spent heading due west. This is against the prevailing wind. And we hoped it would not be so strongly prevailing all the time. The paddle was not all bad though, as the first geese of the year were seen; but they merrily flew away before we could get too close. A needed half day was called to enjoy the sun and the beauty which lay off the grassy sand banks of The Eastmain . A Bruce/Sty Klix Loaf and Doug's Beans were a welcomed change from our freeze-dried glop routine. And our first warm sunset was enjoyed by all.

JULY 17 TU 19 Prosper Split

An early start to beat the wind found the staff realizing they weren't the only ones who had got up before the sun, as mosquitoes infested the site in a huge cloud. It had to be the quickest breakfast of the whole trip. We soon crossed over the immortal 52nd parallel, where Tonka had to have special papers to travel any further north of it. There were no red ribbons to cut, so on we went to the mile portage around Ross Gorge. Our newly packed wannigans now weighed close to 125 lbs because of our attempt to cut out babies. And indeed these proved to make a few bodies groan! Not helping the situation was the portage that went straight up a large hill for the first 1/2 mile, and then back down the very same hill the last 1/2 mile. Despite sore calves and knees, and another portage, we pushed to our planned site for lunch and collapsed. Deciding a rest day was in order, everyone relaxed that evening, and, of course, it clouded up and rained.

JULY 18 WE 20 REST

A cloudy rest day was still enjoyed as everyone washed clothes at the halfway point of our trip. Pies, a huge stack of cinnamon rolls, and apple tarts took up most of the afternoon, and mother nature kept her record going as our 20th day with rain was recorded.

JULY 19 TH 21 Portage back to River -- by-pass route -- 1/2 Day

JULY 20 FR 22 Bauerman Falls

Our next two days were spent on an alternate route around Prosper Gorge. Because of the high water, Tonka felt it safer and faster to go, and besides, the extra day we would pick up would be nice to add to our slush fund! The days were never lacking in interesting happenings as Tonka managed to navigate a real tricky creek (without getting lost). It rained some more off and on. We had a 30 minute discussion of whether or not to eat lunch one day, then decided we had spent all our lunch time up, and moved on! We got close to our first geese of the summer, and were able to catch two baby ones. We were careful not to hurt them, they were fascinating to look at close, as they were still very young and lacking in feathers and coloring. Their mother avoided our fire! And the first frost of the year was upon us, and here in July! Watch out for August. Our day ended at Bauerman falls, which was one of the most beautiful sites on The River. The portage was beautiful also, as one had to let down literally to the lip of the falls before unloading! The Indian doesn't like to walk any further than he has to. Again, our campsite and the area surrounding it is predominately burned, but the incredible beauty of The River still overpowers it. The falls were really impressive. Not really a falls in the true sense, but a long cascade with a 20 foot drop. More thrilling though was to see the entire Eastmain River shoved through a 200 foot wide rock gap such as here. The white water churned, bubbled, and fell with immense power. We all just stared with amazement. Tonka and Ted tried fishing the nice eddies, and only Tonka caught a small trout; but the day was a successful one anyway.

JULY 21 SA 23 End of portage towards Village Lakes -- 1/2 Day

The hopefully clearing skies never cleared, and a cold grey day greeted Section 'A' -- something new? We cooked our last chunk of bacon before it managed to walk away! It's amazing, though, how well it has kept for 24 days. More important is the bacon fat, which we have saved and used as grease. Our supply of 60 lbs of Domestic is still untouched -- to the dismay of its carriers. But we're saving it for future fish fries! The portage and several short rapids were done in style, through the ever-present scotch mist. Twenty four days with rain. To fight off the dampness, 15 miles were paddled in 3 1/2 hours to our departing point off The Eastmain to bypass Great Bend. Turning down an old dirty surveyors' camp, the choice to head up a small river to Village Lakes was made. Leaving the big current of The Eastmain, we paddled solemnly into a quiet bay, searching for our way up river. Rounding the point we were left spellbound. Before section 'A' was our small river entrance, but instead of a weedy small narrows, we were greeted with a six foot wide tumbling cascade, which gently climbed up a 200 foot hill. It was a gushing sheet of white which created a steady, mellow noise similar to a strong wind blowing in a leaf filled tree. Words cannot do it beauty. Despite hard efforts, we were unable to find a flat spot to bush out a site in view of our delight. We therefore settled to camp at the end of the short portage around it. Large pike once more found the hooks of Edmonds and Monroe; but the more sought after walleye eluded everyone who tried. Because of our customary three o'clock lunch, we dined late under clearing skies in hopes of a clear blue day.

JULY 22 SU 24 Lichteneger Lake -- INCO Survey Camp

Blue skies at night are nice. But the after effects are cold! cold! cold! A quick start for sure put us on Village Lakes in no time, and the sun felt good as it warmed the air quickly. A family of otters also enjoyed the sun as we caught them playing in a narrows between lakes. Then came our first signs of civilization! A freshly abandoned survey or mining camp was rooted in a large bay. A quick but interesting stop was made, but the filth and realization of the push-button world returned us quickly to the deep greens and pure blues of the forest. The final portage of the day looked to be a bear across another open burn. The sun was hot, no shade, and heavier loads! Straight up a hill, and straight down, 900 yards. As the first group began their walk back, mouths suddenly dropped as: "Hey, you guys! Want a coffee? Tea? Coke?" was heard across the bay.

Carefully looking through the trees, there it was! A tent, with humans other than us! Our first sightings in 24 days. Needless to say, the rest of the portage was quickly finished, except for a couple of tired individuals. We all went over to see these "crazy bush men!" Our short stop found cold Coke and Pepsi, fresh food, and bread awaiting. Our new friends were with the International Nickel Company (INCO). And they were checking out mineral deposits. Their hospitality was so overwhelming that their invitation to stay for dinner couldn't be refused; and besides, those Coleman stoves were just itching to cook a large group! Camp was set up, letters written home, and a huge spaghetti meal cooked with fresh hamburger meat. Our first day without rain was richly celebrated with a late cup of tea, and welcome new conversation. A good night's sleep was truly enjoyed.

JULY 23 MO 25 Clarkie Lake

A late night brought a half hour late rise, but Tonka and Ted found the Coleman stoves quick cookers. After a fresh egg breakfast, we sadly said good-bye to our generous new friends. With high spirits a quick pace was set up the lake to a small river, where 6 or 7 nice little Sturgeon-type River rapids were shot. Calm, beautiful lake Clarkie waited at the end of the last horse-race. So did one of the nicest campsites of the trip. As the heat once again became unbearable, tents were pitched under tall, shady, red pines in deep cool moss. The real highlight of the site, though, was the long sandy beach on the water's edge. Nicknamed Miami Beach, towels were immediately put down, cokes from last night opened, Ted's radio set up, and Section 'A' sunbathed in style. It got so warm Tonka even went for a swim as everyone cleaned clothes and relaxed. Night brought the music of Vivaldi and Brahms from the staff tent as WQXR was located by Ted. A brilliant display of northern lights was also enjoyed later as clear skies once more prevailed for our second day without rain!

JULY 24 TU 26 REST

A rest day followed as Tonka and Bruce tried their luck at fishing, but with no success. It was another hot one, and the beach was 'where the action was', as Section 'A' tried to keep cool. The only meal cooked all day was a late dinner, but it was big and topped off by Ted and Sty's 20 apple turnovers. As the sun sank in the west, a final cooling swim was enjoyed by all, as well as our third day without rain!

JULY 25 WE 27 Top of Clearwater River

Bidding good-bye to Miami Beach, an early start to get a jump on the heat failed, as it must have been 90 degrees by eight o'clock. Everyone began to wish for the rains to return, or even a few clouds to hide the blazing sun. Our half-day campsite produced a freezing cold spring which immediately brought out the Gumperts drink with bannock for lunch, but that was all

anyone wanted because of the heat. A brief afternoon shower only added to the humidity, but our prayers were answered as mild, light showers returned all night to give everyone peaceful sleep.

JULY 26 TH 28 AS-CS-31 -- 1/2 Day

Despite the sounds of rain on the staff tent, we broke camp early, and were on our way. The light rain finally stopped, but the heavy dampness remained and out came the bugs. The warm humid weather brought them out as bad as earlier in the trip! The morning passes as we shot many small rapids, and took several portages; some a little longer than necessary! You couldn't win! With your rain suit on, you got wet inside from the work, and without it --- well, you got wet from the bushes. Squeaky Wheel kinked his neck, and a long half day finally arrived. John, Bert, Tonka, and Ted all tried their luck once more fishing, but low water left them fish-less. The sun did reappear to dry us out and lighten our spirits once more, but more important, it revived the deep greens and blues of the Clearwater River to us. Small waterfalls and gentle cascades are all around us, and no burned areas. The setting once more for an unforgettable sunset.

JULY 27 FR 29 GREAT BEND CS -- almost a full day: RAIN!!!

Up early, everyone had to be on the ball as a half mile horse-race from the campsite was handled gracefully. Then we began a small dead-water paddle with the tail wind no one liked! Why? Not because the wind was strong, but it was from the east! The wind NEVER blows from the east! We began to paddle and travel much quicker. Many little rapids were shot in style, the best being a two mile horse-race that really bubbled along! Still the sky got darker and darker as we neared our re-entry point to The Eastmain. A light mist began to fall, but it wasn't all that bad. This was fortunate for Eric, as it made a rock a little easier to hold when he and Tonka shot an INTERESTING rapid. Finally, we hit The Eastmain again, and the rains hit in full force. Our campsite lay half a mile up river, and the going was rough because of the strong current. Several people even got out pulled up, it was so bad. It was all worth it, though, as we portaged into the most beautiful and spectacular site of the trip. There we stood, right in the middle of a two mile stretch of half mile wide rapids at the end of Great Bend. Camp was made quickly in the rain, and Tonka offered to start his first fire! With the assistance of a partially opened 50 gallon drum of aviation fuel, the hot Reverend soon had the troops drying by a roaring bonfire. The afternoon was spent drying by the fire, which was fed with whole trees. A questioning beaver did walk right under the corner of the fly during dinner. Quite unsure what to say, he slowly left before Tonka could get his autograph! Rest day was called, and nothing else was said.

JULY 28 SA 30 REST: SHINE!

A cold morning greeted us, but the sun soon appeared, and everyone was up early to enjoy the incredible view and dry out. The rapids and falls sparkled in the sunlight. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that this was the most beautiful site of the trip. It would be hard to beat with its protected flat pine tent site, and large rock kitchen area jutting out in to the flowing rapids! After a pancake breakfast, Tonka, Moloney, and Robbie began to walk up River taking pictures and fishing along the way. Suddenly Tonka hooked a big one, which turned into a ten lb walleye. Then Moloney caught a trout, and Tonka a trout. Well, that started it, and before the afternoon was over Tonka had five fish and so did Moloney. Robbie and Bert had a couple, and so did Ted. The trip's first fish fry was had for dinner -- much to everyone's enjoyment. Especially bert, who had been carrying all the unused lard! Bruce and Robbie cooked 250 cinnamon rolls, a big pot of macaroni and cheese, and pudding. We were all left gasping for air, but satisfied. Bruce hooked some trout after dinner, and poor Eric was left fish-less once

again. All in all, though, a beautiful, unforgettable day!

JULY 29 SU 31 AS-CS-33 -- long day!

After a cold night, a big breakfast, and a mix up on tumps, we were off a little late, and said good by to the best site of the trip (and the now near empty can of aviation fuel.) It was once again apparent that we were on The Eastmain. The power and the width of The River is overpowering. Rapids and a few portages filled the morning, and quickly the gray skies returned for some light showers during lunch. These departed, and our afternoon was full of more of the same. We pulled in a little late, but 30 miles of river work is not a bad day's work. Camp and dinner were handled quickly as showers came and went showing signs that a cold front was heading in. There were only ten days left!

JULY 30 MO 32 12 Chain portage

The showers remained all night, but as we left the campsite in a cold gray fog, patches of rich blue are spotted, and it began to clear! As the sun broke through, everything around us glistened in the early dew. It was beautiful! A typical morning of river work produced a campsite at 11:00, and, because it was such a nice day, we stopped. Fishing and admiring our surroundings were the afternoon's activities, but Sty and Ted also managed three apple pies, and a bunch of cinnamon rolls. Donnie and Bert put dinner together, and found a way to make Gumperts mashed potatoes edible by making them into potato pancakes. The powerful sounds of the gentle cascade beside our site helped put everyone to sleep.

JULY 31 TU 33 Third Chute -- Before Conglomerate Gorge

The last day of July found an icy glaze in the water pots, and on our canoes. Tonka helped everyone realize the importance of moving quickly to stay warm by undoing half the tents, and throwing them over the ridge poles. The desire to get off our shady site and into the sun was amazing! A 20 mile morning way handled, despite several stops to look for Indian sod houses and old prospector sites. A small family of otters were also spotted playing in a small bay. A long afternoon paddle left us a few miles short of Conglomerate Gorge, and exhausted. We have begun to see more signs of civilization, as freshly abandoned survey sites dotted the shoreline all afternoon. We all wondered if the bridge we had heard about from the INCO men was being built at Conglomerate. We would find out tomorrow.

AUGUST 1 WE 34 Portage around Conglomerate Gorge -- CS in middle

There was a crack at midnight, but August First dawned no colder than the day before, and we headed down river to the 4 1/2 mile Conglomerate Gorge portage. The trail was a little hard to find, but it was soon located going straight up a steep muddy bank into a fresh burn. We all began, hoping to reach our campsite 2 1/4 miles into the portage for lunch. It was hard work, as the trail crossed bogs and fresh burns from the spring. One minute you were walking on sponges, and the next on cement! The biggest problem, however, was man-made! Right in the middle of nowhere, right in the middle of the trail, a bull dozer had come in and dug a 50 foot long deep hole. No signs of anything else, just a big hole! Very interesting! Everyone finally made it to the site and the ice cold spring which was our only water supply in the middle of the portage. We were now a good mile or so away from the Gorge, and we still had another two miles of portage to go. After a cold lunch, Tonka, Ted, Molony, and Robbie left to clear the rest of the portage. The trail was pretty clean, but more bulldozer holes were spotted off the trail. Their questions were answered as they came over a small hill. There, a hundred feet down, was the bottom of the powerful rushing gorge. Just below it, was a construction site that made the Sherman Mine operation in Temagami look small! Yes, here is where the road to James Bay

was being built, and here was where the road would cross the mighty Eastmain River. Spellbound the four bush-men proceeded down the hill to The River. Hot, dirty, and with axes in hand they moved up a small bank into a dirt road. Men, trucks, bulldozers, and materials were everywhere. It was unbelievable. Carefully dodging trucks and strange looks from the workers, we headed to the main office, and were relatively warmly greeted. After arrangements were made for a meal and showers, they headed back to camp. The workmen were sure they were nuts as they left the road and walked off into the woods! Where were they going?

The Gorge itself was one piece of power! cascades, white water, falls, and force all rolled into one. Tonka, Ted, John, and Rob shall always remember it. The plan was talked over with the rest of the Section, and an early bedtime was welcome.

AUGUST 2 TH 35 Before Clouston Gorge -- Abandoned Survey Site

We were up at the usual time, and with a hot dinner and showers waiting, camp was broken in record time! We did shoot a VERY TRICKY crossover, which some handled better than others, and it was real work. We had to head up River into a small bay full of quickly changing whirlpools. Then, bang, right into the strong current at the bottom of The Gorge. You had to madly paddle to make the crossover before being swept into the next rapid. All the workers stopped and watched in amazement at the crazy Americans in red canoes. Everyone made it, finally, and from the other side. It was not the rapid that was tricky, but the falling rocks from above that a steam shovel was dumping into The River! A few French words were spoken, and we soon made it into the camp. Showers, use of the store, a hot meal, looking at equipment, and conversation with a helicopter pilot from the U.S. took up the next few hours. But we were on our way as a strange clear east wind blew, and we didn't want to push the camp's generosity! A short paddle turned into a 20 mile sun bath, and we made camp at an old surveyor's camp. It has been sunny and HOT now for the past few days. The wind also has been from the east. VERY STRANGE.

AUGUST 3 FR 36 Portage on Clouston Gorge -- 1/2 Day

Off early to beat the warmth, and despite a strong east wind the day was another clear, hot one. We reached Clouston Gorge by 8:30 in the morning, but it took us 2 1/2 hours to find the trail and campsite, as surveyors had really messed up the area. With the sun now high, and the heat on full, we decided not to portage the canoes until after dinner. It was unbearably hot all afternoon, but we finally began the 2 1/2 mile walk at 7 PM. With bowmen carrying axes and cameras, we began. The first mile was across a black, beaver swamp that went for miles to either side of us. It was like crossing a desert, as the reindeer moss and low scrubs were all you could see to the tree line a mile in front of us. From this soft sponge trail we then hit hard dirt walking through another very recent burn. On and on it went, lost trails, dead falls, and hills. Finally, an hour and twenty minutes later, the end was located, and we were rewarded by a spectacular view of the falls. Upon returning, we all looked as if we were chimney sweeps! Soot and dirt covered everyone! The heat was still strong as we bedded down, but ruins made a few people feel better.

AUGUST 4 SA 37 Island Rapids

AUGUST 5 SU 38 REST -- sickness

AUGUST 6 MO 39 Top of Basil Gorge

The next three days is a part of the trip I think most of us would wish to forget. Somewhere along the line a bug was caught by someone, and it quickly went through the Section. Along

with the heat and the long walks, the next three days proved to be the hardest physical days of the trip. Despite unsettled stomachs and cramps, the Section stayed and worked as a Section should. Everyone helped everyone else. Some people walked portages three and four times, while others carried double loads one and two miles at a time. For some, it was just hard walking the trail, but in the long run everyone came out even, and we reached our last walk around Basil Gorge. The three days were full of a few niceties, and interesting occurrences. We travelled at an easy pace. Many large DC3 planes kept flying overhead. The portages were indeed bush, but dry. Tonka learned that Talking Falls has an introduction before the main act. Molony and Ted can paddle fast when they need to. And Basil's 2 1/2 mile trail could prove to be an interesting bowman's portage.

AUGUST 7 TU 40 Bottom of Basil Gorge

After a hard night's sleep at the top of Basil, our next day plan was only to reach the bottom of Basil, and we were a little late in starting. All the bowmen were anxious to go, but the trail soon proved to be more than they could chew. But Eric 'Spaceball' Essig was not to be outclassed in the eyes of his stern-man, Tonka, so on and on he went -- to be the only bowman to carry the canoe the entire 2 1/2 miles. An award was given. Everyone eventually made it, some sooner than others, and the afternoon was again spent in finding cool spots in amazingly hot weather. As the sun sank, and the evening cooled, everyone began to look back on the trip. This would be pour last night in the bush. It had been a quick summer. The tall jack-pines swayed above us as a breeze began to blow. The nature of the land has changed so much this trip, it's strange. Mostly spruce, balsam, and jack-pine filled our many sites, as well as eskers and low scrubs. There were very few birch or poplar trees as in the Temagami area; and our sites were rarely rocky. The weather, also, has been confusing. First, cold rains, then blistering heat -- and an EAST wind! All unusual, all confusing, but all typically Canada!

AUGUST 8 WE 41 Eastmain

It dawned another clear day, and there was a solemn quiet feeling among everyone as we began down the final stretch of the mighty River. With care and a sense of awe we shot down the final three rapids. From here it was wide flowing river paddling to the final destination. The sun again was hot, but it highlighted the greens and blues of the trees and sky. The paddle was enjoyable. Quick eyed Edmonds found a spring to have lunch by -- which was nice as the muddy low gray banks have clouded the water. A smoke began to float over The River, which led us to believe a fire was up north due to the dryness. (Our suspicions were later found to be true, as LG2 -- the large dam project on the Fort George River -- had to be evacuated because of a large fire. Their entire gas supply, 100,000 gallons, went up in smoke! Too bad!!) Our final strokes soon arrived as we pulled in to the Bay Post dock. The usual welcomes were made back and forth, and we were given permission to use an old Hydro shack instead of pitching camp. There was no electricity in the shack, and 5 rooms to sleep, so everyone was comfortable and just in time, as finally bad weather set in. Ted located an old Coleman stove and five gallons of naphtha -- cooking then was no problem. Our trip was now ended, and only our journey back to Wabun remained.

AUGUST 9 TH 42 Eastmain

AUGUST 10 FR 43 Eastmain (thunder showers)

For anyone to think the return to Wabun via the modern word is easy and quick, you are wrong. For three days we sat in the quiet 300 Cree reserve of Eastmain. We were made welcome; and the people were very friendly. The Cree ways of life were marvelled at by everyone, as this is one of the few villages left relatively unimpacted by white culture. Our communications with Austin Airways was not so friendly and warm. After many yes's and no's

we left Eastmain late on the third day on two Otters, leaving behind many memories.

AUGUST 11 SA 44 Moosonee (train strike)

AUGUST 12 SU 45 Moosonee

AUGUST 13 MO 46 Moosonee (!)

AUGUST 14 TU 47 Wabun -- train, trailers, barge: culture shock!

Our Moosonee arrival greeted us with rain, cold winds, no tent poles, and a train strike. For another three days, we sat drinking tea and attempting to keep our sanity. Our once quiet campsite turned into tent city -- with everything from Keewaydin's Section 'B', hippies from Montreal, Boy Scouts from Ottawa, to several families from everywhere, all with screaming children and 'cute' dogs. The only bright moment was the locating of 'Basil The Dog' by John Monroe. The tiny puppy was lying on the side of the road -- abandoned. He now has a home.

Frantic connections and communications were finally worked out and Section 'A' joyfully returned to garden Island -- not by PBY, as Tonka had so many times dreamed, but in stead given the Wabun cheer from the gate of the barge.

It was all over. Another year of Wabun has come to an end. Many good memories have remained, as well as some bad ones. Canada, this year, was at its finest. The water, the trees, the animals -- everything. One has to experience Section 'A' to understand the feelings behind it. We only hope that man will not destroy what was created to be experienced by everyone in the future, as well as the past.