

**Friday, 7 November 2003**

The temperature is at 19 degrees (Fahrenheit) this noon. We have about six inches of snow. The River is starting to freeze up. The choppers are flying. Island drivers are adjusting.

Flu shots are being given today at The Hospital.

Bobby was airlifted to Kingston earlier this week and operated on immediately. Right now, things are looking good.

George Luste called me the night before last with the suggestion I speak at a conference in Toronto this coming January. Evidently some of the issues I surfaced in my Eastmain Journal are still issues even today. In one sense of the word, I am the worst person ever to speak about issues and The North. I'm the quintessential outsider, and I've been away for thirty years. So, I'll need to get more focused on the conference before I would know what I'd be good for there. But Toronto in January could be interesting. I'd be ready for a break then -- after Christmas. (In fact, I'm ready for a break now -- after my bout with THE COLD.)

The 'JUNIOR' ACW (Anglican Church Women -- the 50 year-olds) have determined that they will use my kitchen for a pizza-party fund-raiser next week. When I inquired as to what brand of beer they preferred, their meeting came apart. More on that one, later.

I spent my monthly hour with Lawrence last Tuesday. Lawrence, who is in his seventies, I think, and I are developing a plan of action whereby to fix Treaty #9. This Island should be grateful for the work we are doing together. When we are done, mending the affairs of The Island, we celebrate the eucharist. Yesterday I spent time with Patrick, age 91, who filled me in on some of the intricacies of The Harricanaw River. It's a day's paddle from The Harricanaw to Moose Factory Island, if you play the tides right. It's a two day walk from here to The Harricanaw -- if you're thirty -- 60 miles. By dog sled, it's a one day journey -- if you feed the dogs well.

**Sunday, 9 November 2003**

The River is starting to clog up with ice. The process, this year, is running about two weeks ahead of last year. Some have warned me, however, that we could easily see a thaw between now and January. And that would only prolong the process. Last year we didn't get the heavy trucks on to the ice until about January 10.

**Wednesday, 11 November 2003**

Yesterday was Remembrance Day. I was at the Ministick (elementary) School while Iris was at the Church. Both observances were at about the same time. Naturally 'O Canada' is sung in Cree.

OO CA NA DA  
 KE TAS KE ME NA NAW  
 KIS TAYL TAY TAW  
 AY TAS KA NAY SE YAK  
 KE HE TAY HE NAK, MASK KA  
 WAYL TAY TAW  
 KAY CHEE WE CHE TA YAK  
 NE PO WE TOW, OO CA NA DA  
 SOO KE TAY AY WE NEIK  
 OO CA NA DA NE KE OO TA  
 OO CA NA DA ME LO NA KO TA TAOW  
 OO CA NA DA WE ME CHE MIN TAY TA WO

The Cree sing at about half the tempo that we New Englanders are used to. The singing is a mixture of solemnity and joy. Everybody sings. The kids sat on the gym floor relaxed and silent for an hour. During the prayers you could hear a pin drop. (The Cree have prayer in School.)

During the Observance we saw a ten minute video. The video was a TV journal, of sorts, on the James Bay Veterans who fought in WWI and WWII. Several interviews were recorded with men now gone. Some were 16 years old when they fought. There was a mixture of pride and pain. They served Canada well, but.... One saw his brother for the last time -- while moving to the front line as the brother was just coming back from the front line. One remarked that, after the war, their social status was again questioned. They were just 'Indians'.

In the entry hallway of the school there was an exhibit of old photos and other memorabilia from the families of the veterans. Several photos had lists next to them: of grand children and great-grandchildren presently enrolled in the school.

Last night the choir practiced at The Little Church -- in the same building as the Rectory. After practice we enjoyed some freshly brewed Earl Gray Tea -- and proper Pilot Biscuits.

And then, because I couldn't sleep, I scanned another roll of film -- from The

Attawapiskat, 1974.

**Sunday, 16 November 2003**

Iris was in Moosonee today. I held the fort -- with Raymond and Ronnie -- today at The Old Church. This is our last Sunday in The Old Church -- except for Christmas Eve -- until the weather warms again in the Spring. We'll use the Little Church from now on.

I cleaned up the St. Thomas' pages at the web site -- and finally got them looking like something I could live with. I'm learning, slowly; but I've figured out what 'Contribute2' can and cannot do. The canoeing pages come next.

You might be wondering why a cleric spends this kind of time getting facile with the web. Remember the distances -- up here, and between here and the States. It takes weeks (and money) to get letters and parcels back and forth between the interested parties. I've found the easy way to share the materials. Quick and cheap.

There's not a large number of people reading this stuff, but the different groups are important to me.

One group consists of my own family and friends -- in the States and abroad -- who constantly ask: 'What are you doing? And what is going on up there -- or over there?'

Another group consists of fellow laborers here in The North. Many of them are interested in what an old Yankee sees as he works his way into the life and culture of Moose Factory and The Bay. Some think I'm right on the money sometimes. Others may think I'm a raving lunatic. Being Canadian, they're too polite to say so, of course.

A third group -- the paddler crowd -- is interested in the old routes and the old trips. They are people up here -- and up the coast -- as well as people who also paddled those routes years ago -- or who seek to preserve the memory of them for people years after we're gone. They (and often their children) enjoy the old pictures. The pictures bring back memories or shed light on the routes. (Or they show something of what Daddy was doing centuries ago.)

Finally, there are the locals up here -- mostly parishioners -- who are starting to find the site and may well be wondering what that damn Yankee will say next. Their insights are especially important to me. It is amongst

these people that I live and move and try to have my being. I am blessed (or burdened) with a mind that keeps trying to probe. Their patience and forbearance, as well as their honesty, nurture me.

It's all grist for the mill and will help me to grow. It also is a conversation (albeit in my mind) relevant to others, I think.

One set of issues relates to a white and somewhat urbanized American (me) trying to understand a world for which he has deep respect. But he does not really know that world. And he knows enough to know that. So, he uses whatever tools he has to try to understand that world. Some of what he says -- or how he says it -- doesn't fit right, perhaps, with the Native mind. And, very possibly, what I think, or how I think, may be offensive to some. But I have learned that I don't learn until or unless I am honest and forthright about what I think and how I think. Only then can the conversation begin, where I am confronted by another's perspective and sensibility. Without that conversation, I am less likely to change and to grow.

The other set of issues relates to the liquidity of consensus amongst the peoples of this region (and I mean ALL of the peoples) in the context of massive cultural change. What really is happening? Who are we -- who am I -- really? Where is this going? What kind of life will my children or grandchildren have? What do they -- and I -- have to look forward to? These are questions for any people, any time. But here they have a special urgency. Change that has come is profound. Change that is coming may be unimaginable.

I realize that it's my privilege to be here now: to observe and to wonder, to learn and to grow.

### **Sunday, 23 November 2003**

It's cold again. We DID have that thaw everyone was worrying about. Even the barge was operating last week for a day or so. Some of the taxis were running, as well.

Today it's back to 23 degrees (Fahrenheit). This Sunday we all meet in The Little Church. Only on Christmas Eve will we return to The Old Church -- and only for those two Services. People still are hoping for the Expressway to be open by Christmas. That would be two weeks earlier than last year's opening. I'm not optimistic.

I'm writing this at eight in the morning, and some of us are scrambling to get

things from The Old Church to The Little Church. Bertha was here for six hours yesterday, cleaning and fixing The Little Church so that it would be presentable. I ran off a ton of paper through the copy machine -- hopefully to catch everybody up on what their Select Vestry has been up to so far this fall.

**Friday, 28 November 2003**

I cooked the Turkey today -- didn't have time yesterday to get near it. This morning, however, it was about to fester and wanted to be cooked.

**Sunday, 30 November 2003**

Still a little open water today on The River. Freeze-up, when it comes, will come after Christmas.