

as I did, and find that the dogs had swallowed the grub pile, is no joke. The only thing one can do till he gets to the next Indian house is to 'tighten his belt.' I am now resting up after that trip. I was to go down to Fort Simpson, but there was no food there for the dogs, so I had to give it up. There is no fish for the dogs down the Mackenzie, as many of the nets were lost."

It may be said that the trip from Hay river to Fort Chipewyan is considerably over three hundred miles with but two posts en route, Forts Resolution and Smith. So that the loss of one's provisions in the terrible cold of last winter, would be indeed, as Mr. Bowring puts it, "no joke".

In a letter to Dr. Kindle, dated April 26, 1918, Inspector Anderson, of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, at Fort Smith, tells of a patrol which he made from the latter place to Fort Simpson. He says: "I had a very hard trip on account of the very cold and stormy weather and the unusual depth of snow. I escaped with a few frost-bites, a common occurrence in this country. It is not such a picnic travelling in winter time here. I have had some tough trips in my time in the police force, but this last one takes the cake. Snow has been very deep and over 60° below zero on my patrol. I camped at Jackfish Point at the outlet of Great Slave lake without enough wood to keep the fire going all night we had to let it go out; no tent, no stove; it was what you may call cold.

"The caribou have moved away from here. One thousand head in a bunch were seen crossing Great Slave lake in March, going toward the Barren Grounds, all females. The males will follow later. Male stragglers only are left near here, about three or four days out (i.e., days' journey from Fort Smith). If it had not been for the caribou considerable hardship would have been experienced

among the natives. The snow is gradually going away, and we look to the opening of Slave river about the fifteenth of May."

At the approach of spring, there comes an interval, when the ice is breaking up, and the snow is melting, when travel either by winter sledging or summer canoeing becomes impossible. This period varies in different places. As noted above, Slave river breaks up about the middle of May. In 1917, there was considerable ice in Great Slave lake on June 28th, preventing the supply boats of the trading companies from proceeding beyond Fort Resolution, but by July 1, none was to be seen. The ice on that portion of the Mackenzie above Fort Simpson breaks up about the beginning of June, but below that point, assisted by the earlier break up of the Liard, the river commences to clear about the middle of May. Farther down the Mackenzie, its tributary, Great Bear river, opens about the first week in June. Great Bear lake however, the other great lake of the north, is not free of ice until the middle of July, according to a memorandum received by Dr. Kindle from Inspector Anderson. The difference in latitude is amply reflected in the dates of opening of Great Bear and Great Slave lakes.

In the winter of 1917-1918 we in Ottawa complained of the bitterly cold weather experienced, though the maximum of our discomfort was a short ride in a cold street car, and a rather constant worry as to fuel. Our experience with sledging was limited to short hauls of a couple of bags of coal on a toboggan. But, as the above letters show, our troubles are rather insignificant, as compared with those constantly encountered by these people of the north, who labor whole-heartedly, summer and winter, in these isolated regions.

