

January, 1956]

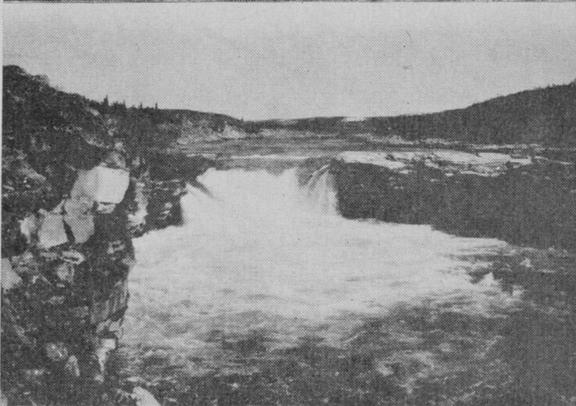
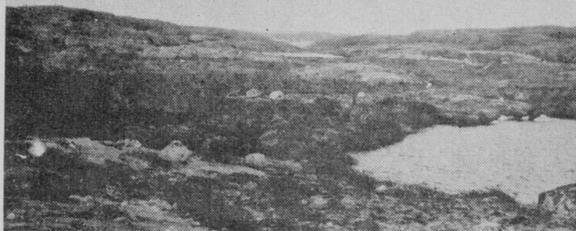
. . . which makes great mixture with flour”.

For the rest of the month and into March the three men were still existing on hare, ptarmigan, fox and any small game they could snare along with pounded bones and scraped hide. On March 15, young Christian reported they were all feeling “as weak and feeble as anything”, but there is always the optimistic note, such as, “caribou should be here in a week” or that it was only a “matter of patience really, but very trying mentally and physically”.

In April they were digging up “fish scraps and bones from bait pile” but for some time Hornby had been suffering great pain in one of his legs. It was apparent that it was the tough veteran who was cracking under the strain first. And there was a reason. He was the leader and by word and action he had to set the pace. By April 9 he could “hardly move from his bed” and two days later he told young Christian that he thought he couldn’t last more than another two days. Through April 12, 13, 14 and 15 the weakened Hornby suffered severe pain, while young Christian rubbed his aching limbs and kept cold water bandages on them. Still there was no improvement in their diet and they were now convinced that their systems were polluted with crushed bones and hair from the hides they had eaten.

At 6.45 p.m., April 16, John Hornby, “Hermit of the Barrens” died. Worn out from long hours at the dying man’s bedside young Christian confessed that he went to pieces. “Harold, good pal, was a marvel in helping me” he wrote. Next day he reported “we are both very weak but more cheery, and determined to pull through and go out to let the world know of the last days of the finest man I have ever known”. Two days later Adlard was ill and “the strain on one’s mind is terrific”.

On April 20, Edgar wrote that conditions were going from bad to worse. Harold’s condition was deteriorating.



Three scenes typical of country through which RCMP patrol passed to reach Hornby’s cabin.

*Top*—Pike’s Portage route just before Artillery Lake.

*Centre*—Helen’s Falls, Hanbury River.

*Bottom*—Thelon River, about 15 miles above Hornby’s cabin.

Their food was now chiefly boiled hides, augmented by scraps from a refuse pile outside. Next day he dug up some boiled meat that had been thrown away in the fall and busied himself getting wood and water, as well as caring for the sick man. Day followed day in the same pattern. Adlard got steadily worse and the youngster’s chief concern was that Harold was not getting enough care. On May 4 there is the pathetic entry “dear