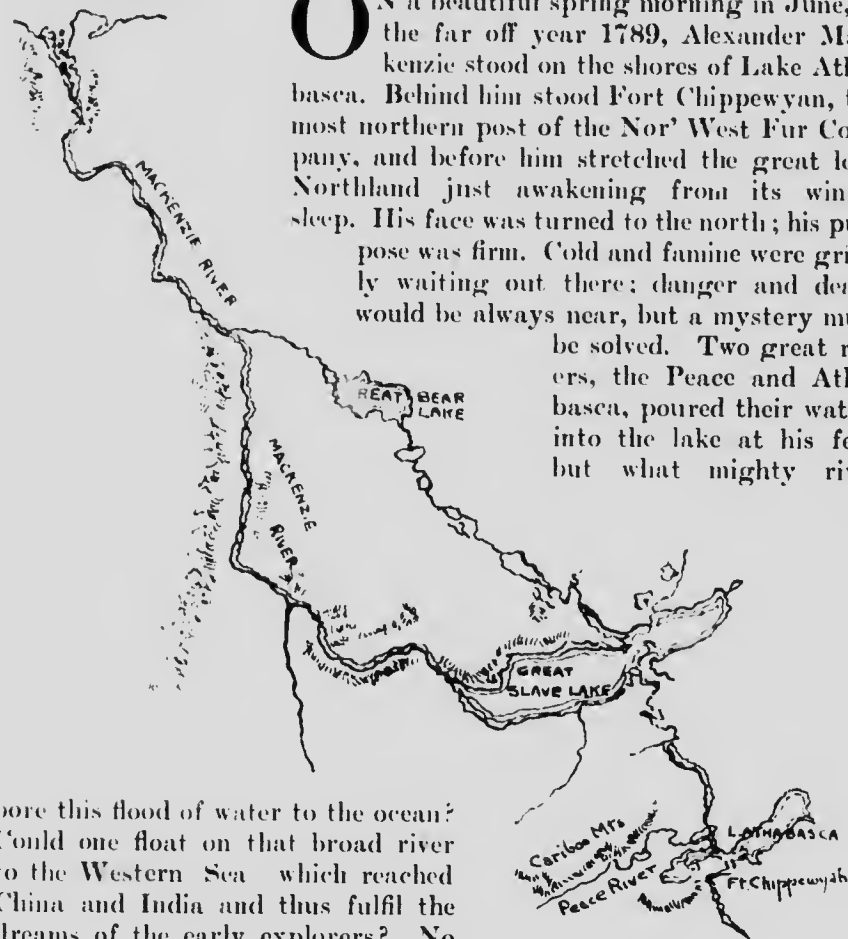


## ALEXANDER MACKENZIE TO THE ARCTIC

ARCTIC OCEAN



ON a beautiful spring morning in June, in the far off year 1789, Alexander Mackenzie stood on the shores of Lake Athabasca. Behind him stood Fort Chippewyan, the most northern post of the Nor' West Fur Company, and before him stretched the great lone Northland just awakening from its winter sleep. His face was turned to the north; his purpose was firm. Cold and famine were grimly waiting out there; danger and death would be always near, but a mystery must be solved. Two great rivers, the Peace and Athabasca, poured their waters into the lake at his feet, but what mighty river

bore this flood of water to the ocean? Could one float on that broad river to the Western Sea which reached China and India and thus fulfil the dreams of the early explorers? No one knew, but the question was soon to be answered.

There are a few heroic souls who scorn ease and search for adventures, dangerous and difficult. Such a man was Alexander Mackenzie who came to Canada from Scotland at the age of sixteen to become a fur trader in the wild Northland. So well had he done his work in the counting house at Montreal that at the age of twenty-one he was made a partner in the North West Fur Company, and later was sent to Lake Athabasca to extend the fur trade. He replaced the famous Peter Pond who quarreled with his friends and killed his rival, the Hudson's Bay factor. Pond is remembered by his map of the land between Hudson Bay and Lake Athabasca, on which he measured the distance by the units of time it took to smoke a pipe on the trail.