

found waiting for us 16 Canadian *voyageurs*, forming the crews of two canoes provided by Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories. Our route lay through Lakes Ontario, Erie, St. Claire and Huron to Sault St. Marie, where we were detained some days waiting for the breaking up of the ice on Lake Superior. When the lake opened we resumed our voyage to Fort William, and from thence to Rainy Lake, the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg, where we were again stopped for some days by the ice, but having at length succeeded in breaking our way through, we entered the Saskatchewan River on the 9th of June, and on the 15th reached Cumberland House. Here we learned that Mr. Bell had set out a fortnight previously, but had been detained by ice in Beaver Lake for four days. We followed him with diligence through Beaver Lake, Churchill River, Isle à la Crosse, Buffalo and Methy Lakes to Methy Portage, where we overtook him on the 20th of June 1848.

With the assistance of the *voyageurs* from Montreal, the boats and stores were transported, on the men's shoulders, across the Portage in eight days; this laborious proceeding having been rendered necessary by the death of the whole of the horses usually employed there. The two canoes, with their crews, were sent back to Canada.

On the 15th of July, having reached the last portage on Slave River, three boats were arranged for the sea voyage, with full loads of pemmican and able crews, consisting in the aggregate of 18 men. Mr. Rae and I embarked in them, to proceed with all speed to the mouth of the Mackenzie, leaving Mr. Bell with the remainder of the party and two boats containing the stores for winter use, with directions to make the best of his way to Great Bear Lake, to establish a fishery at its west end, near the site of Fort Franklin, for the convenience of the sea party, in the event of its having to return up the Mackenzie; and lastly, having traversed the lake to its northern extremity, to erect dwelling-houses and store-houses near the influx of Dease River, and to carry on fisheries at such suitable places as he should discover in the neighbourhood. He was also instructed to despatch James Hope (a Cree Indian belonging to his party, who had been formerly employed in the Expedition, under Messrs. Dease and Simpson, and knew the country well), together with a native hunter of the district, to the banks of the Coppermine in the beginning of September, there to hunt till the 20th of the month, and look out diligently for the arrival of the boats.

On my way to the sea I landed three bags of pemmican at Fort Good Hope, the lowest of the Company's posts on the Mackenzie, for the use of any party from Sir James Ross's ships, or from the "Plover," which might reach that establishment, and I likewise deposited one case of the same article, with several memoranda and letters at Point Separation, which forms the apex of the delta of the Mackenzie, marking the locality in the manner agreed upon.

We reached the sea on the 4th of August, and had an interview with about 300 Esquimaux, who were collected to meet us, having been apprised of our coming by signal fires lighted by their hunting parties on the hills skirting the river. The distance from Point Encounter, where we met this party, to the mouth of the Coppermine River, including the larger inflections of the coast line, is upwards of 800 miles; and as we had almost constantly head winds, we rowed along, near the shore, landing at least twice a day to cook, occasionally to hunt, for the most part at night to sleep on shore, and often to look out from the high capes. Our communications with parties of Esquimaux assembled on the headlands to hunt whales, or scattered in parties of two or three along the coast in pursuit of reindeer and waterfowl, were frequent. They came off to us with confidence, and through the medium of our excellent Esquimaux Albert, who spoke good English, we were able to converse with them readily. They invariably told us that no ships had passed, and were rejoiced to learn by our inquiries that there was a prospect of their seeing more white men on their shores. Up to Cape Bathurst, or for about one-third of the distance between the Mackenzie and Coppermine, the Esquimaux informed us that for six weeks of summer, or as they expressed it, for the greater part of two moons, during which they were chiefly occupied in the pursuit of whales, they never saw any ice.

We found an Esquimaux family encamped on the extremity of Cape Bathurst, but as near to that place as we could effect a landing without observation, we erected a signal post, and buried a case of pemmican; and we made a similar deposit, marked by a pile of painted stones, on the extremity of Cape Parry.

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