

## HIGHWAY OF THE "VOYAGEURS"

Before the coming of the railways, a 3,000-mile canoe route known as the "voyageurs" highway carried vital traffic from Montreal to Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska. Spur lines and extensions linked it with Hudson Bay and the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. Today this historic route is virtually unchanged along most of its length, much of which parallels the Trans-Canada Highway.

Signs, provided by the National Parks Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, are now being erected at roadside points along the old traders' route. In Ontario, 37 of these are being put up for the Federal Government by the provincial highways department. Measuring 48 by 18 inches, they show a black northern canoe bearing the words "Historic Trans-Canada Canoe Route" in white letters.

The "voyageurs" highway, which was the life-line of the old North West Company, remained important even after Confederation. Until the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885, it was still the fastest way to cross Canada.

Some 150 years ago, in the heyday of the Montreal fur trade, "brigades" of heavy Montreal canoes set out from Lachine, P.Q. about the beginning of May. Eight weeks later, the Eastern "voyageurs" rendezvoused at the head of Lake Superior with parties from Lake Athabaska and other inland points who arrived in the lighter northern canoes. (The Montreal "canot de maitre", which carried up to three tons of cargo, was paddled by ten or more husky voyageurs. The high-ended northern canoe, with half the capacity, was manned by five or six.)

### ROUTE WEST TO LAKEHEAD

From Lachine, at the junction of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers, the Montreal brigades ascended

the Ottawa as far as Mattawa. They followed the Mattawa River to its source in Trout Lake, portaged to Lake Nipissing and descended the rocky French River to Georgian Bay.

Skirting the north shore of Georgian Bay, they passed through the North Channel above Manitoulin Island and paddled up the St. Mary's River to Sault Ste. Marie. Then, after a portage past the rapids, they pushed on to Lake Superior, hugging its treacherous north shore for 450 miles until they reached Fort William.

Here they met the canoes from the interior, receiving furs in exchange for other goods. Earlier, their rendezvous depot was at Grand Portage, ten miles south of the present international boundary along the Pigeon River; this was shifted to Fort William in 1803 after Grand Portage was ceded to the United States.

### ROUTE EAST

From Fort Chipewyan, the western traders paddled 200 miles up the Athabaska River, leaving it at Fort McMurray to ascend the Clearwater River another 80 miles. Then they crossed the 13-mile Methy or LaLoche Portage in Saskatchewan to the headwaters of the Churchill River.

They followed the Churchill some 400 miles to Frog Portage north of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, and crossed to the hazardous Sturgeon-Weir River. This took them down to the Saskatchewan River, which they descended to storm-tossed Lake Winnipeg.

From Lake Winnipeg they journeyed up the Winnipeg River to the Lake of the Woods, up the Rainy River to Rainy Lake, then over the divide to the Kaministiquia River and Fort William, where they met the traders from Montreal.

## METAL-WORK VOCATION BOOKLET

A new vocational-guidance booklet, "Metal-Working Occupations", No. 8 in the CANADIAN OCCUPATIONS series, has been released by the Department of Labour. The 76-page illustrated booklet deals with a broad range of occupations in forging, welding, foundries, machining, sheet-metal working and iron and steel making. It replaces information previously available only in separate booklets, under the titles "Sheet-Metal Worker," "Machinists and Machine Operators (Metal)," "Foundry Workers," "Forge Shop Occupations," "Tool and Die Maker," and "Welder", which are now out of date.

Brief, simple descriptions of the various industrial processes used in metal working help to depict the role and duties of each worker. Consideration is given to working conditions. A full-page chart outlines the avenues of entry and advancement. Other sections deal with preparation and training,

organizations, employment outlook and seeking employment.

### SERIES AS A WHOLE

This is the tenth occupational booklet to appear in the new format of the CANADIAN OCCUPATIONS series, which now contains the following titles: "Metal Working Occupations" (1964); "Printing Trades" (1964); "Mining Occupations" (1963); "Careers in Engineering" (1964); "Technicians in Science and Engineering" (1962); "Electrical and Electronic Occupations" (1962); "Careers in Drafting" (1962); "Office Occupations" (1964); "Careers in Library Service" (1962); "Careers in Natural Science" (1961). These booklets are prepared by the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour in co-operation with provincial government agencies, including departments of education and labour, and are published primarily with the needs of secondary-school students, their teachers and their parents in mind.