

almost equal to some of them ; which became of great use to me : The North West Company¹ of Furr Traders, from their Depot in Lake Superior sent off Brigades of Canoes loaded with about three Tons weight of Merchandise, Provisions and Baggage ; those for the most distant trading Posts are sent off first ; with an allowance of two days time between each Brigade to prevent incumbrances on the Carrying Places ; I was in my first year in the third Brigade of six Canoes each and having nothing to do but sketch off my survey and make Observations, I was noticing how far we gained, or lost ground on the Brigade before us, by the fires they made, and other marks, as we were equally manned with five men to each canoe : In order to prevent the winter coming on us, before we reached our distant winter quarters the Men had to work very hard from daylight to sunset, or later, and at night slept on the ground, constantly worried by Musketoos ; and had no time to look about them ; I found we gained very little on them ; at the end of fifteen days we had to arrive at Lake Winipeg, (that is the Sea Lake from it's size) and for more than two days it had been blowing

¹ The North-West Company was first formed in 1783, when a number of English fur-traders trading from Montreal, realizing that competition was proving ruinous to them and to the Canadian fur-trade, united their forces. The chief figures in the new company were Peter Pond, Peter Pangman, Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, and Simon McTavish. Those traders who were not included in this company formed a rival organization under the name of Gregory, McLeod, and Company. After three or four years of competition, these two companies were amalgamated in 1787 under the title of the North-West Company. The amalgamated company operated throughout the west until 1798, when several of the partners, among them Alexander Mackenzie, broke away from their former associates, and formed an independent company, officially styled Forsyth, Richardson, and Company, but popularly known as the X Y Company. For the next six years these two companies, composed of men who had been old associates, and who had been trained in the same school, waged a severe commercial war with each other ; but in 1804 they decided to reunite their interests in one company, which retained the name of the North-West Company. In 1821 the North-West Company was merged in the Hudson's Bay Company.