



Fleet of the Royal Kennebecasis Yacht Club, at the Mouth of the St. John, at the end of the Fourteenth Annual Cruise.

Cruise of the R.K.Y.C.

THE Royal Kennebecasis Yacht Club have just got back from their fourteenth annual summer outing; this time up the St. John River. This is a feature of yacht club life by no means common in Canada. The gatherings at various points along the route resembled camp meetings; most remarkable of all in popular and religious interest being the closing assemblage at Rocky Point on a Sunday when twelve hundred people gathered to join in the singing of hymns led by an orchestra of twenty-six pieces, and to listen to a sermon preached by Rev. Dr. G. M. Campbell. Evidently the club had a remarkably good time on the St. John, judging by the remarks of Commo-



All Ashore in a Woodland Cove up the St. John.

dore Robert Thompson, who said at the close of the service:

"The fourteenth annual cruise of the R. K. Y. C. has drawn to a close and soon will be a thing of memory, in company with those of many happy days gone before. Each year brings many changes in our little company—some new members have joined us, taking the places of those who have been called to their rest.

"The boys who composed the crews on this annual cruise will agree with me that this has been a very enjoyable one. We have had no accidents; certainly there has been no monotony in the weather, thunder storms, rain, sunshine, head winds and fair winds; the river has never looked more lovely and we have been received in a most friendly way by the residents."

MY FIRST PRAIRIE FIRE

By E. DODSWORTH

THROUGHOUT the day the fire had been imminent, but after all there were many chances in our favour. To begin with, the fire was some miles away, but what are miles to a prairie fire with a wind behind it? But during the afternoon, anxiety was visible upon the faces of the people of Pine Lake, and as the day progressed, their activities justified their thoughts. "I guess," said one man, as he watched the cloud of smoke in the south-east, "we might as well get those two loads of hay in." And, as the sun went down, the loads were safely stored in the loft.

When I arrived, I saw a man sitting on the steps of the store which stands at the south end of the lake. I was weary, stiff, eager for a meal and an evening of quiet, uneventful peace.

"There will be no sleep for us to-night," he said, filling his pipe again, as if a prairie fire was a thing that belonged to some distant place, and in which he had, or could have, neither part nor lot.

The eagerness of inexperience possessed me. I foresaw an experience. I anticipated a new sensation—and I got it.

"Good," I said.

"Are you coming?" asked the man, slightly apprehensive of a refusal.

"Certainly," I replied. "I wouldn't miss it for worlds."

"You'll have a stomach full before you're through." And he smiled pleasantly at my enthusiasm.

Already a line of fire was visible at the south end of the lake. A long, jumping, flickering stretch of flame. Borne by the wind it advanced rapidly, seeming to bear within itself the very essence of power. There was something impish, semi-devilish, in the greedy way in which it swept onward.

"When it comes to the lake, that will be the end

of it," I said.

The man shook his head.

"Of that part of it, yes. But look there."

The cloud of smoke in the east had changed to a red glare. The dulness of the evening sky gave back the reflection. Two men came galloping down the opposite slope. One was breathless, perturbed, a living mass of trouble. The second, Scotch, and moreover, not an owner of land, preserved a stolid demeanour.

"We shall have to turn out," shouted the first man. "It's sweeping over here for all it's worth—the wind is in its favour—one stack's gone—where's H—?—is B— here? What about A—? I'll go and get L—."

The words poured out in a disconnected mass. "Right O," answered the philosopher with the pipe. Getting up, he went into the house. A few moments afterwards he came out, looking like a newly cleansed coal-heaver.

"Take those," he said, throwing a pair of overalls at me.

"To wear?" I asked.

"No, to work with."

And we set off up the hill.

On the crest we found a small group of men. To each man tattered garments, to each a pair of overalls, and on the face of each a pained expression of determination.

By this time the darkness was thick. But all around, the lines of fire showed up. In circles, in lines, in broken patches, in isolated flares, in every conceivable shape and form they stood out. A glorious flare and a sudden flash told of the destruction of a haystack.

"That's B's," said somebody.

"Let's get," said the philosopher.

So we got. Some on horses, some running, some

staggering over the uneven, scrub-covered ground. On, over trail and prairie, through brush and blue-joint, through bluff and willow. And the lines and the rings of the fire mocked us. The fierce heat swung down the wind and licked our faces; a faint forecast of what was to come.

We were at it now. The line formed up. The dull sound of beating broke into the crackling, gleeful uproar of the fire.

Bang! Biff! Biff! Flop!

As a patch of fire smouldered and went out, the wind, catching the sparkling embers, threw them into our faces. The thick, suffocating smoke wrapped us round. The choking, insistent heat drove us back.

Flip! Flip! Flop! Flop!

A long line of fresh ashes told of progress. Away in the distance another patch of darkness amid the sea of flame, showed where our comrades were working.

Flip! Flop! Smoke and cinders in our throats, our hair, our eyes, our clothes, and within us a maddening, raging thirst.

"A slough, a slough! My kingdom for a slough!"

A faint shout came down the wind.

"W-a-t-e-r!"

As one man we rushed, ran, scrambled and tumbled through the coarse grass. In a moment, seven men lay flat upon their stomachs, sucking up the slimy water, bathing their faces in it, their hands, their heads, their very selves.

"Beats champagne," gurgled one.

"You bet," said a second man, struggling to his feet.

Then, back again to the hot, crackling mass. Sullenly, silently, doggedly, we worked on. Each man took his appointed place and fought. In even time the thick mass of wet cloth came down. With each fall the fire succumbed. Mile after mile we covered. From point to point we moved on.

Slowly the blackness of the night regained its sway. One by one the zones of fire went out. Mid-

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