

might by chance be picked up by the way. Accordingly every available pound of dog food at the fort was secured, and the last of our loads set off for White island on April 16 on long sleds, each carrying from nine hundred to one thousand pounds. For the most part the condition of the lake was fairly good for sled travel. The snow had now nearly all melted, leaving ponds of water on the lake, and in places the ice was already becoming 'candled,' making sore footing for both men and dogs. As we proceeded this became serious, and though it was thought a sufficient supply of moose skin dog shoes had been provided, they were cut through so quickly, that our stoes became exhausted before the distance up the lake was half covered.

Bags and every available material had to be manufactured into dog shoes in order to enable the poor brutes to keep their feet, for as we advanced the ice became in many places a veritable bed of sharp spikes.

Fortunately we were better provided ourselves with hob-nailed shoes, as nothing less will stand the wear for half a day. Our sleds were also designedly well shod with steel.

Without dwelling further upon the details of this sled journey of two hundred and fifty miles over the ice of Great Slave lake, suffice it to say that the last of our outfit was safely landed on 'Pike's Portage' at the extremity of the lake on May 9, by a lot of starving but faithful dogs. Some had played out altogether and dropped by the way, but the two long sleds drawn by four dogs only, made the latter part of the journey with fifteen hundred pounds each. Were it not for these sleds which were at first laughed at by the natives, we would never have been able to effect the transport of our outfit so great a distance with but the one base of supplies.

We were now at the point from which our surveys were to commence. Before us lay a twenty-five mile succession of portages to Artillery lake, and this I had hoped to be able to cross by the aid of the dogs. Such was now quite impossible for two very good reasons, viz., that the dogs were played out and we had nothing with which to feed them. Deer hunting parties were at once sent off in different directions, but no deer could be found. And again further transport by the dogs was out of the question, for the reason that the snow had all disappeared from the ground, leaving the portages quite bare. On the lakes the ice was still about seven feet thick, excepting at certain parts where exposed to influence of currents, which were rapidly cutting inroads, and thinning the ice at such places.

The assistance of our dogs thus being no further available they were sent back in charge of Mr. McKinley, to be cared for at Resolution until our return in the autumn.

Mr. Fairchild, accompanied by Acres, made a reconnaissance of the portage route to Artillery lake, and marked out the trail for the packers, whilst I proceeded forthwith to make a survey of the most easterly bay of Great Slave lake—named by me 'Charlton harbour.'

CHARLTON HARBOUR.

This harbour extends in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction, and is about sixteen miles in length by from two to five miles in width. It is connected with McLeod's bay by a narrow but deep channel, less than a mile in width, where the water seldom, if ever, freezes over, there being considerable current. North-east and south-west of the channel, two long and high points of dolomitic limestone stretch out towards each other from the main shores and thus separate the harbour from the outer bay. A convenient way of approach for sleds or small boats from the lake to Old Fort Reliance—which is situated at the head of the harbour close to the mouth of the Lockhart river—is by means of a 700-yard portage, near the base of the north-easterly point, to which I have attached the name of my assistant, 'Fairchild.' Fairchild point, which is about ten miles in length is well wooded with white spruce from six to twelve inches in diameter, and is notable as being the best source of timber in that locality.