

By the river it is about twenty-five or thirty miles from Beaver lake to Sturgeon Landing. The water is nearly all swift and when low the rapids are dangerous. Now the water was high and travelling better. Leaving the next morning at nine o'clock and striking into the middle of the current we ran all rapids without mishap and covered the distance in four and a half hours. The scene that greeted us at Sturgeon Landing was a busy one compared with the more isolated posts. This is the head of navigation for the steamboats operating from The Pas, and the distributing point to the mining district of northern Manitoba. Freighters, prospectors and miners were hurrying about on various errands. Copper ore from the Mandy mine to the extent of about nine thousand tons had been hauled out during the preceding winter and piled at the water's edge. A barge was now being loaded from this pile. A boarding house, a pool room and a number of log cabins and stables constituted this frontier metropolis, yet the spirit of ambitious mining enterprise permeates the air owing to the proximity of the discoveries.

At seven o'clock in the evening Capt. Ross arrived with his steamboat *Nipawin* and a barge. A number of prospectors were on board and with feverish haste gathered together their canoes, baggage and supplies and, though night was fast closing in, started off for the interior. It was a stampede of small proportions but nevertheless sufficient to cause a thrill of excitement and recall similar scenes I had witnessed on a larger scale in the Yukon. Our Indians waited to take a long look at the steamboat, then turned their back on civilization and melted away in the direction of their own homes.

Next day we took passage on the good stern-wheel river steamboat *Nipawin* to complete our journey to The Pas with all the ease available. We were now across Saskatchewan, Sturgeon Landing being located on the border between this province and Manitoba. It is not, however, until one reaches a point on the Saskatchewan river about half way between Cumberland lake and The Pas that the waterways of this province are finally left. With a barge load of one hundred tons of ore we left on the evening of the 26th after a storm had abated, and crossing Sturgeon lake tied up for the night in the muddy waters of Cumberland lake. I had travelled by canoe from Beaver lake right through to The Pas two years ago and was therefore glad to avail myself of this opportunity of taking the steamer. Cumberland lake and the Saskatchewan river are very muddy at this time of the year, the banks are low and wet, mosquitoes are exceedingly bad and canoeing is anything but enjoyable on these waters. Historic Cumberland House was left behind early next morning. The Hudson's Bay post established by Samuel Hearne in 1773 is still carrying on, while Revillon's are located here also. These rival establishments are in charge of two Cotter brothers, both Hudson's Bay men till one left to join the French company and give his brother a friendly race for supremacy. A church and a number of log houses complete its showing and one cannot but marvel at the mystery of things when he considers that this was an important trading post before Fort Garry was established to pave the way for the great city of Winnipeg.

Soon the great Saskatchewan was reached and its muddy waters, low banks of clay and uniformly strong current stood out in bold contrast to the crystal waters, rocky shores, lake expanses and contractions of rapids and falls of the Churchill. Skillfully the little steamer nosed her heavy barge around the horse-shoe bends of the river's erratic course and hurried it homeward. Two sister boats were met puffing their way up stream with empty scows to receive fresh loads of the precious ore that made business so brisk on these waters after many years of stagnation. Seated in the pilot house with the captain I listened to tales of early days when he navigated the waters of this great Saskatchewan from Grand Rapids at Lake Winnipeg to the forks of the north and south branches and alternately up these to Prince Albert or Medicine Hat. His had been the pioneer transportation service that heralded an agricultural invasion. Now he was pioneering the transportation of a mighty mining industry.