

PADDLING YOUR OWN CANOE

A Combination of the Indian's Quick, Choppy Stroke and the White Man's Long Pull Makes Easy Going With the Least Work For the Pleasure Paddler--Champions and Aborigine Have Ideas Worth While--Hints For the Wanderer Thru Northern Wilds.

By Duncan Armstrong.
EVERYONE not afraid of the water paddles a canoe in these parts. Toronto can tell the world the last word in paddling. Still, there are many who, this summer, will essay the fine science of canoeing for the first time, and there are others who can manipulate the stealthy craft, but who are not quite certain they know all the niceties of stroking it into gentle submission. To these, perhaps, the specially posed for The Sunday World pictures of how the biggest Indian chief in this province paddles his canoe will be enlightening and interesting. Men who have won laurels and cups on the championship courses, and men who have won black fly bites on the wild lakes of the north country can also contribute a few words of advice to the ardent novice or novitiate; and they do.

The art of paddling is not mastered in a single afternoon; nor is there any royal water-course to learning. Because of the great variety of conditions, and of canoes, practice and experience are the two things necessary, after the different strokes have been learned. A knowledge of the simpler strokes may be gotten by an hour's paddle; but this is just enough to be dangerous. Let a man think, for instance, that he has mastered the "critter" one day, and a week later try it again under different conditions. If he don't upset before he gets away from shore, his course will be as wonderful and as mystifying as that of Capt. Kidd among the pirate isles.

The Two Classes of Canoes Defined

To be able to load a canoe, paddle or sail across open water, overcome the difficulties of a heart-breaking portage, run down or pole up a rapids, pick a safe course among treacherous rocks, make a shelter of a canoe, and do all these in all kinds of weather, is the highest test of canoeism. There are a great many different types of canoes built nowadays; but nearly all can be roughly divided into two classes. The flat bottoms, those built wide of beam with the "tumble-home" or inward curve at the thwart is one class. These models draw less water, but paddle harder than those of the curved bottoms. They are suited for travel with heavy loads on shallow waters, and are safer and better adapted to all-round use. The curved bottom class vary from the Indian birch bark to the exaggerated racing types. They paddle easier, but require more skill in handling. One with a slightly curved bottom, just off the flat, is an ideal craft, as it has speed as well as being reasonably safe. There are two distinct styles of paddlers: The Indian with his quick choppy stroke, which shoves the canoe along steadily, and the white man with his long, swing-

ing stroke and drawn-out finish, which makes the canoe travel in little jerks. Between the two styles there is a great contrast. It is as natural for the Indian to use the short quick stroke as it is to toe in when he walks, and there are very few white men who can manipulate a paddle in that manner and get the speed out of it that the redman does. There is a happy medium between the two styles, or rather a combination of the two styles, which has the advantages of both without their weak points. It is a white man's stroke with an Indian finish.

Stroke Should Be Rhythmic and Graceful

The stroke should be a rhythmical motion. When traveling at a four-mile-an-hour clip, the paddle should never hesitate at the finish of a stroke, but should slip gracefully out of the water and swing around to begin another. This is where a great many paddlers lack in the finer art. While they let the paddle swing too far past them, and are holding the long drawn-out twist to bring the bow back to its course, the canoe loses in momentum, which causes it to travel unsteadily. The Indian, on the contrary, takes a short circular stroke, which never hesitates at the finish, but is one continuous motion, propelling the canoe along steadily.

The paddle should be of the proper length; that is to say it should reach the vicinity of the mouth when measured by the height of the user. Paddles vary a great deal in width of blade and quality of material. Extremely wide blades cannot be used to advantage, except as steering paddles. Some of the best are made from white ash, white cedar, butternut, and maple. Those made of maple are tough, but apt to be heavy and are liable to become bent, and also to lose their resiliency if not turned frequently while paddling.

How to Enter a Canoe And Stay There

When entering a canoe the foot should be placed in the centre, parallel to the sides. Kneel directly in front of the centre thwart, spreading the knees well apart, and resting on the thwart a little to the side you are paddling on. It is imperative when traveling in rough water that you should be well-braced



CLOTHES WHICH ALLOW FREEDOM SHOULD BE WORN, SAYS THE CHIEF.

—so that you feel a part of the canoe itself. To a beginner the ribs of the canoe will feel a trifle hard; but only something very small should be used as a cushion. If the knees are continually slipping about it may mean a spill. The finish of the stroke is the most important part of it. The lower hand should grasp the paddle just above the shoulder of the blade.

In making the stroke, swing the blade around and sink it in the wa-

ter with as little splash as possible, drawing steadily backward, so the lower hand is just above the water, while the upper hand presses downward. This motion is continued until the lower hand is at the side, when the paddle is given a quick twist—the edge of the blade nearest the canoe turning backward and outward—the upper hand doing the twisting and pressing downward, while the lower hand pulls up. This offsets the effect of the straight pull, and swings the bow back to its course.

Don't "Break" the Water

Get the paddle in the water as cleanly as possible without breaking the solidity of it. By so doing you pull against a solid wall of water, getting more power for the energy expended than by pulling thru broken water filled with bubbles. It counts in a long day's paddle.

Scraping the paddle on the gunwale of the canoe is a bad habit for a beginner to get into. If persisted in it may spoil many a day's sport in approaching game and also plays hob with a paddle. It might be excused when pulling against a side wind, or when fagged out after a long day's run. It isn't a bad idea to keep your thumb of the lower hand on the same side of the paddle as the fingers. It will save a bruised thumb-knuckle.

Practice Is the Big Thing

It is difficult to describe the many finer strokes with any degree of clearness, because of the complexity of motion. It is largely a matter of practice and experience. If wishing to turn around, reverse the stroke, reaching well back when beginning it. At the finish of two such rushing strokes, swing the blade over to the other side and pull in the usual manner. This will swing the canoe around neatly and quickly.

In approaching a landing is where an inexperienced paddler usually shows his class, either by stopping



THE COURSE IS KEPT STRAIGHT BY BRINGING THE PADDLE CLOSE TO THE SIDE OF THE CANOE AT THE COMPLETION OF A STROKE.

too far off, or else by grasping into it. It is better to let the stern paddler bring the canoe in to the landing. Here is a method practical as well as artistic. Approach the landing straight on, keeping up a good speed until the bow is three feet or more from it; then reverse the stroke quickly and firmly. The bow will swing to right or left according to the side you are paddling on, and the speed will bring you alongside without bumping. A friend who attempted this trick, while yet only on an upsetting acquaintance with a canoe, misjudged the acceleration of his craft, failed to clap one the brakes quick enough, and succeeded in demolishing the flimsy deck—and great was the precipitation thereof.

How to Reverse

To make the canoe travel sideways or backwards, the paddle can be manipulated in a figure-eight



ELIJAH YELLOWHEAD OF RAMA, ONT., CHIEF OF THE OBJECTIONS AND A FAMOUS CANOEIST, WHO POSED SPECIALLY FOR THIS SERIES OF PICTORIAL LESSONS IN CANOEING.

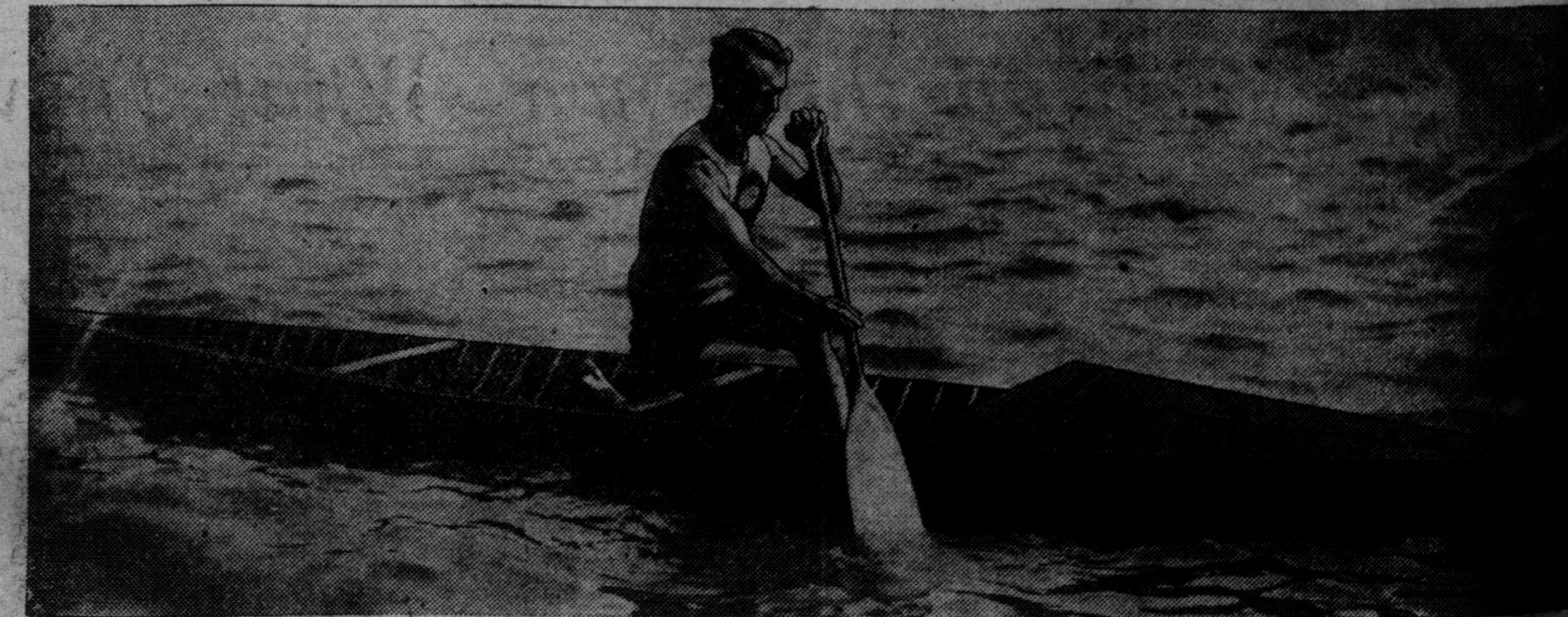
motion, pressing downward and inward with the lower hand, while keeping the blade flat against the water.

It is nearly always easier for one man to carry a canoe across a



A BACK VIEW OF THE PADDLER'S FIRST SMOOTH PLUNGE.

portage than for two, unless it is a short lift. Two men can work to better advantage by changing about from time to time; one carrying the canoe and the other the packs. If carried right-side up on the shoulders it is continually slipping off, sometimes taking the skin with it, which is unpleasant to say the least. There is an air-cushion made which fits over the shoulders, having creases in which the paddles rest for carrying a canoe. I have used one of these for many seasons, and found it a great preventive of sore



A. M. MACKENZIE, WHO HAS SHOWN HIMSELF IN MANY RACES TO BE EASILY THE BEST PADDLER IN CANADA TODAY. THE PHOTO SHOWS HIS SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE ATTITUDE IN A CANOE.



SWINGING ROUND TO COMMENCE THE STROKE

a canoe makes a convenient seat. This is about the surest and easiest method of destroying it other than going at it with an axe. Other favorite methods of increasing the canoe making business are getting in a canoe while one end is still fast on the rocks, or dragging it over rocks with a load in it.

Canvas-covered canoes require special care when there are sharp rocks to be encountered. Every patch on a canoe adds extra weight to it, besides lessening the speed materially, and making it more of a burden on the portage.



BEGINNING A STROKE

A canoe should be kept in the shade when not in the water. When pulled up on shore and overturned,

Plenty of Training Essential in Racing

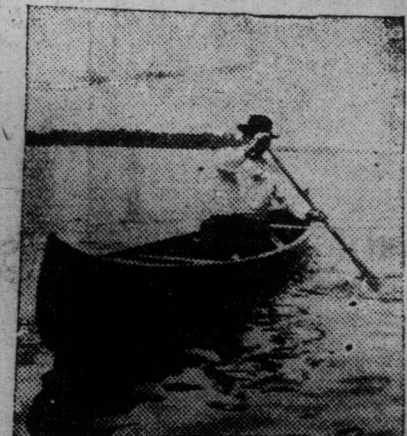
By LOU SKUCE

(Winner of 7 Canadian Championships.)

A RACING canoe is a tricky craft. To those who have never paddled one the feat almost looks impossible, something like trying to hang on to a plank while going over the breakers. The canoeist who has had experience will tell you that the main point about paddling or racing is the knack of being able to keep your balance properly. At first it is almost like learning to ride a bicycle. When it boils from side to side you should hold your upright position and keep on with your strokes as if you were in a flat bottom punt. With a little practice you will gradually get proper control and be able to keep the canoe steadied down.

There are really no fixed rules as to the proper position you should occupy in a racing craft. Your position in the canoe should depend entirely on the best way you can get the most speed with the least energy. The common practice is to kneel on one knee while some canoeists are known to prefer both knees. With regard to the use of the paddle the long pull with the quick recovery has been the favorite with most racing men. Of course, the light man can use a very fast arm stroke to good advantage.

By all odds the most essential thing in canoe racing is plenty of training. A canoeist must be in the pink of condition to do himself justice. He must have lots of heart, for it is no lady-like pastime.



HOW YOU SIT IN THE CANOE WHEN PADDLING ALONE