

ing into three channels, is subdivided into two great median arms, of which the eastern one is called Jean's River, a corruption of the Chipewyan name "Dzan-des-tehé," literally Mud-river end, or Muddy mouth. Up to this point standing trees are found in the delta, but they are no longer coniferous, thus showing that the islands are of later formation. As the channels subdivide vegetation decreases with them; aspens, poplars, and alders have disappeared, and only small willows, six to eight feet high, are found. Still lower down, nothing is found but reeds, bulrushes and at last only mare's-tail (*Equisetum*), an exclusively aquatic growth, entirely covered during floods.

Such are the products of the last sedimentary formations, which are not yet consolidated. Between them and the lake extends a moving bog, fluctuating with the waters, which cover it for a few inches. Any unfortunate boat running into this mud will infallibly become as firmly imbedded as the innumerable tree-trunks whose roots are horizontally exposed above its surface. Some years hence these unsolid and unfathomable banks will, become firm, and, aided by the accumulations and drying effects of frosts in winter, will form new islands, more and more encroaching on the Slave Lake.

During the 240 miles of the course of the Slave River, it only receives two affluents, one on each bank, viz., the Dogs and the Salt rivers, the first of which is above and the second below the Rapids, interrupting its navigation.

The maps of Lake Athabasca give indeed its southern affluents, but two of these, the Unknown and Beaver rivers, are not represented to be of large dimensions, nor are the lakes from which they spring shown as being within so comparatively short a distance of the lacustrine enlargement of the Churchill known as Lake Lacrosse, that passage from the latter to the tributaries of Lake Athabasca could be made by the head-waters of the Caribou river. I have thought it right to rename these two great rivers and the lakes from which they spring after Messrs. C. P. Gaudet and R. McFarlane, as a mark of my respect and gratitude.

III.

The first person entitled to honour as the explorer of Lake Athabasca, was Samuel Hearne. He discovered it in 1771, and named it "Lake of the Hills." Seven years afterwards, the