

Green Lake. And until the era of steam navigation on the Mackenzie river system, this was the route by which all the company's freight was brought in for their trade clear through to the Arctic circle.

Some affirm, and among them Mr. Finlayson, an old resident of Prince Albert and once long ago an employee of the H. B. Co., that one need only to go by wagons to Big River, some seventy miles but from Prince Albert, before taking to boats. Mr. Finlayson states that he has passed by boat down Big river, Crooked lake and river, where one meets the route by Green lake, and that large boats loaded with freight could pass down that way. Mr. Wm. Spencer, who has many times travelled to the north by the Green lake trail, states that he crossed Big river in the season of low water and that then large sized boats would travel on it. However the most usual route is to continue the journey by wagon to Green Lake, where there is a settlement and H. B. post. It is quite likely that the necessity of reaching this post caused the wagon trail to the lake to be used and the route by Big River passed by. Freightling the whole way to Green Lake costs a maximum of \$1.25 per cwt, and the Prince Albert Board of Trade is prepared to guarantee that it shall not be more.

At Green Lake the voyageur must for the first time take to his boat or canoe, and he may have brought it with him or he can arrange to have a first-class boat of most suitable style built and ready for him at the lake. On this more anon. Down Green Lake and Beaver river to Isle a la Croix, there is no obstruction whatever. Arrived here one finds another H. B. post, a Roman Catholic mission and a considerable settlement. Across this lake and down Deep river the route continues and across Clear lake and Buffalo lake with no difficulties to encounter. There are two more H. B. posts on these lakes and here and there all along are settlements smaller or larger, of natives and Indians. As this watercourse is the Churchill river system, from Clear lake the drainage is east to the Hudson's Bay, but after crossing Buffalo lake the voyageur is going north and entering the short Melthys river goes up stream to Melthys lake, crossing which he reaches the long portage—Portage la Loche, 12 miles across. At the last named lake is still another H. B. post and considerable settlement. Here plenty of force in the shape of draft oxen is available to transport boat and supplies across the portage to Clearwater river, down which there is a short run of 80 miles to Fort McMurray on the Athabasca river. Two or three small rapids occur on the

Clearwater, but only one portage required. The run from Green Lake to Portage la Loche is 220 miles, making a total distance of 420 or 425 miles from Prince Albert to Fort McMurray. Should a party wish to put in through to Portage la Loche before the winter breaks up and there busy themselves building a boat, there is a good sleigh road on which heavy double sleighs with teams can travel the whole way from Prince Albert. When I was at Prince Albert a string of pony sleighs arrived from Isle a la Croix which is more than two-thirds of the distance, and I saw a string of pony sleighs set out for the same point with loads of flour, etc., in the sleighs, for the H. B. post there and further. The lakes and streams on the part of the route described, open about the end of April—from April 28 to May 12, H. J. Moberly, late H. B. Co. factor, states. This is much

The captain's diary reads:
 "We left Athabasca Landing on the 15th August with two sturgeon head boats and five barges and about 30 men. We met with no trouble at the Pelican and other rapids, and arrived at Grand rapids on the 18th. Those rapids have a fall of 95 feet in thirty chains, and are partly avoided by a portage of three-quarters of a mile across an island. It took us ten days to make this portage, and we left on the 28th August. On the 29th we descended three rapids, one of which the boats were let down by ropes. On the 30th, ran the Burnt rapids, Sunday. On the 31st we ran one boat down Joe rapid and below the Thompson rapid. This was a trial trip. This was the rapid where Robert Thompson, of Prince Albert, lost his whole trading outfit of about \$3,000 worth of stuff, and barely escaping with his life, and had to walk about thirty miles to Fort McMurray with bare feet and barely enough clothes to cover him. On the same day 31st, two experienced steersmen with twelve men got into a barge with with ten tons of freight and at-



THE TOWN HALL, PRINCE ALBERT

Photo by W. J. James, Prince Albert

earlier than on some of the other routes.

It is to be particularly noted that all the way from Prince Albert to Fort McMurray there are no serious difficulties to face and nothing that could by any stretch of imagination be called dangerous. The Athabasca river with its 87 miles of rapids between Grand Rapids and McMurray, one avoids entirely by this route. The difficulties and dangers of that part of the river are best described by taking a leaf from the

DIARY OF CAPT. SMITH.

for the year 1885, at which time he was in the service of the Hudson's Bay company. He was instructed to proceed by boat from Athabasca Landing, 96 miles north of Edmonton, to Fort McMurray, taking with him men and supplies for the purpose of building a steamer to run on the Mackenzie river.

"tempted to descend the rapid, but were wrecked on a rock and everything in the boat was lost with the exception of the men, who were miraculously saved by Mr. Camself, chief factor, myself and a boat's crew, who happened to be at the foot of the rapids and had the use of the first boat to save their lives. The ten tons of freight was entirely lost.

"The 1st of September was spent in repairing boats and barges, some of which required attention, and in getting some of the other boats down the rapid. On the 2nd we succeeded in getting all the remainder of the boats to the foot of Thompson rapid.

"On the 3rd Capt. Favell and ten men arrived from Fort McMurray to assist us, and with their assistance we ran all the boats down the Middle rapids and two boats down the Long rapid. This is the place where Mr. Surveyor Ogilvie had one of his men drowned the year previous. On the 4th one of our boats ran on a rock and stove her side in,