

fathomable 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 as being 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 North-west Company sent thither a Canadian, Joseph Frobisher, who founded the first trading-post. The Hudson's Bay Company soon followed the example of its rival, so that here, as in many other places, these two commercial bodies found themselves in competition at an early date. Nevertheless, the discoveries of Hearne, of Peter Pond in 1779, and even of Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1789, however authentic and scientific, were apparently anticipated by the far-reaching tracks of the *Courreurs de Bois*; for when Pond reached the Great Slave Lake, the half-breed Canadian family of Beaulien had already settled on the Salt River—one of them, named Jacques, indeed acted as interpreter for this trading officer, just as at a later date his nephew François was Sir John Franklin's hunter and interpreter.

In 1820, and again in 1829, Sir John Franklin, accompanied by Lieutenant Back and Dr. Richardson, visited Athabasca on their way to the Arctic Ocean, when commencing their explorations for the famous North-West passage. The portrait drawn by these travellers of the Chipewyan Tinney (whom they also call, though wrongly, Athabascans) is anything but a flattering one, and shows the recent change for the better in the character and disposition of these Indians. I can myself speak of as great an alteration in the Beaver Indians, who are now as gentle and inoffensive as they were thievish, shifty, and faithless twenty-five years ago. This is the natural effect of the commercial relations and religious habits acquired since that date by those child-like tribes.