

homeward journey. In spite of the utmost caution, however, Morrison, who was in advance, was unfortunate enough to break through the ice and had a narrow escape from drowning. By lying down on the ice and reaching a snowshoe to him, Parker and I succeeded with some difficulty in pulling him out.

On the way I made a rough survey of the channels and Lake Mammewa, which will enable me to lay them down on our maps more correctly than has heretofore been done.

Although I had left the two Peterboro' canoes, which had seen such good service, and also some baggage, at Chipewyan, in order to reach Fort McMurray I was obliged to take three dog teams with me as far as Point Brulé on the Athabasca River, from which place I sent one of them back.

The dogs are great eaters, and the chief inconvenience of this mode of travel is in the amount of dog fish which has to be carried. At starting, the sleds were so heavily loaded that they could barely creep along, but as they were lightened by dogs and men at the rate of about fifty pounds a day, it was not long before the load was sufficiently reduced to be carried by two teams.

Fish are numerous in the Mackenzie. The principal species is that known as the "inconnu." Those caught in the lower river are very good eating, much resembling salmon in taste, being also firm and juicy. The flesh is a light pink in color, but as they ascend the river and become poor, this tint turns white and the flesh gets soft and unpalatable. They average ten or twelve pounds in weight, but have often been caught weighing thirty or forty. They ascend as far as the rapids on Great Slave River, where they are taken in the fall in great numbers for dog feed, being then so thin that they are considered unfit for human food. This fish is not fed to working dogs, unless scarcity of other fish compels it. There is a small fish locally known

as the "herring," somewhat resembling the "inconnu" in appearance, and which does not grow larger than a pound or two in weight. The staple fish of the district, and, for that matter, of the whole north-west, is the whitefish. It abounds in many parts of the river but especially in all the lakes discharging into it, and it forms the principal article of diet during the greater part of the year, as very little food is brought into the country. This fish is caught in large numbers everywhere. At Fort Chipewyan the Hudson's Bay Company required a winter supply of thirty-six thousand for the use of the post; the Roman Catholic Mission, twelve thousand; and the rest of the population at least thirty thousand more. Most of these were caught while I was there. Sometimes they are numerous in one place, and sometimes in another, so that long journeys are often necessary from the place where they are caught to where they are to be used. This necessitates a large number of dogs to haul them home, which is a very poor method, though the only one in use. To overcome this inconvenience, Mr. McDougall, at Chipewyan, has built an ice-boat, but has, so far, met with indifferent success, the ice having been unusually rough during both of the preceding two falls.

Our daily programme during this last section of our long journey was as follows: We would turn out at three o'clock, have breakfast, break camp and be ready to start at four. The sun rose at about nine o'clock and set at about three in the afternoon. Dinner was eaten at sunrise, then we pushed ahead till sunset or as long after as there was twilight enough to see to pitch our camp.

In the morning, after leaving Fort Chipewyan, while running down a steep hill in the woods in the dark, I was unfortunate enough to strike my boot against a sharp stump partly covered by snow, and burst the nail completely from my great toe so that