

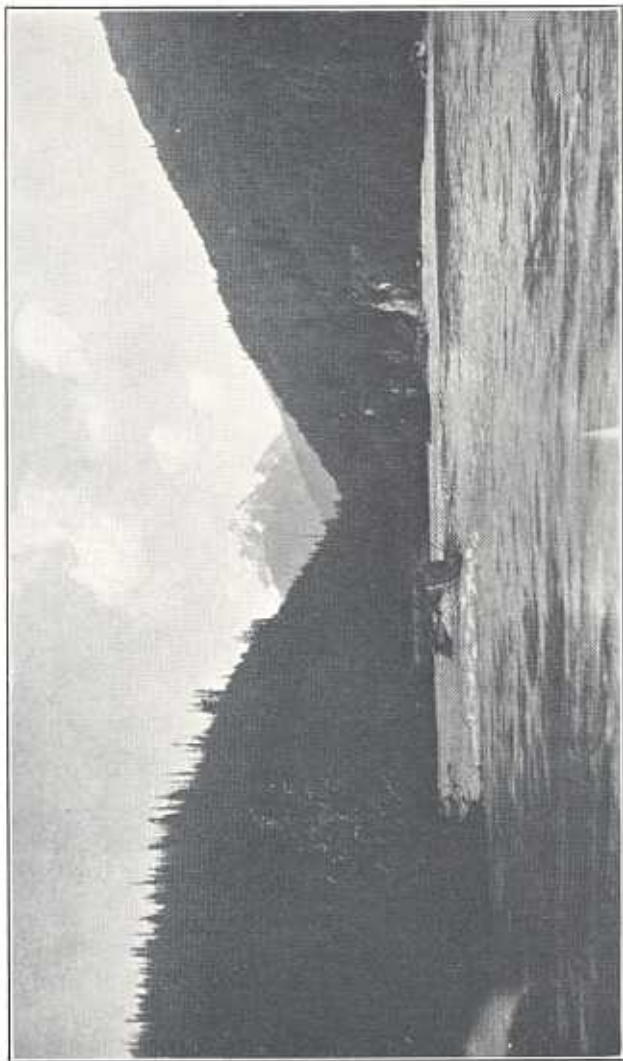
## CHAPTER XII

### FROM BEAVERMOUTH TO KINBASKET LAKE

Beavermouth is a small place, where the locomotives are kept that are used as "helpers" to get trains up the steep grade to the summit of the Selkirks, to the westward by way of Beaver River. The railroad then descends by way of Illecillewaet River to Revelstoke, also on the Columbia River, but on the opposite side of the Big Bend from Beavermouth, where the Big Bend commences.

Beaver River joins the Columbia, on the left, about a mile below the railroad station. The hamlet, if it can be so called, is a scattered place, on both sides of Quartz Creek, and is on a low flat about a quarter of a mile wide, extending south from Beaver River about a mile and a half. The depot is on the north side of Quartz Creek. The place consists of the usual side track, the station house, a four-stall engine house, a few dwellings for housing the few employees, a makeshift store and post office, and two farm houses over against the foot of the mountains, on the west. It was here that Mackenzie and Mann, noted Canadians, laid the foundation of their fortune at the time the Canadian Pacific Railway was being constructed, and the ruins that are on the flat, near my camp, are what remain of the sawmill that they used at the time.

At the time of its construction, in the eighties, the Canadian Pacific Railway was made to climb west-



LOOKING UP BEAVER RIVER

ward to Rogers Pass, and then descend toward Revelstoke, by means of a series of surface loops, and with many snowsheds. At a cost of \$12,000,000, the summit section has since been replaced with a double track tunnel south of Rogers Pass, and under Mount Macdonald. The tunnel is just five miles long, three-fourths of a mile longer than any other tunnel in America. The new line lowers the summit elevation 539 feet, cuts out several loops and about four miles of snowsheds, eliminates much curvature, and shortens the line about four and one-half miles. The tunnel itself is on a tangent. The maximum gradient across the Selkirks is 2.2 per cent, compensated for curvature.

The section of the Selkirks westward of Mount Macdonald has a scenic reputation almost equal to that of the Rockies, and is called the "Canadian Alps." The principal tourist station is Glacier, near the head of the Illecilliwaet River.

The Columbia River was very high when I reached Beavermouth, and as the camp ground was good, and besides I wanted to see J. F. Nattress, Fire Warden for the district ending at Surprise Rapids with headquarters at Beavermouth, but who was away in the Selkirks attending to his duties, Beavermouth seemed a good place to kill a little more time.

After waiting four days I learned that Nattress was back, and called on him at his camp, a boat-house on the bank of the River. He gave me a good deal of useful information and showed no tendency towards exaggeration. He had run the rapids of the Big Bend a number of times, and promised to

go down the River with me to Surprise Rapids after returning from a visit to his home at Golden.

In the meantime I had no way of keeping occupied and as I had lost a pair of spectacles on the Blackwater trip and thought they could possibly be found; and as there would be also an opportunity to again do some fishing, probably with better success than before, I conceived the plan of going once more to Blackwater Lake, but this time by a different route.

Blackwater Lake is almost directly east of Beaver-mouth, beyond the mountain spur that ends at the head of Redgrave Cañon. My plan was to row across the River, tie up the boat and leave her, climb up over the mountain and down the other side and intersect the Tete Jaune trail, and then follow that to the lake. Making up a light pack, as before, and without blankets, I followed the route outlined, reached the lake before dark, and went into camp in the old trapper's cabin at its lower end. I spent two nights at the cabin, caught eleven trout, but did not find the spectacles. Instead of returning the way I had come it seemed wiser to keep on the trail, back to Donald, and then follow the railway to Beavermouth. On my way across the mountain I had had a tough time getting through the brush and windfalls, and did not want to repeat the experience.

My supply of "grub" had given out, but fortunately, I shot a grouse with the carbine, cooked it for lunch, and by dark reached Redgrave, literally exhausted and sore in every joint, having walked 28 miles, much of the distance over brush and log

encumbered trails, with the mosquitoes devouring me at every step. The section foreman took me in for the night, and in the morning, refreshed, I continued down the railroad track to Beavermouth; visiting on the way August Berlin at Calamity Curve, who told me he had returned to his cabin the night of the day I had left. He is a whole-souled, friendly Hollander, and when he reached Golden, after being so long alone in his cabin, he simply had to have a good time.

Up to the time when I reached Beavermouth, no one had seen my boat, COLUMBIA, except a few persons at Invermere, Athalmer, and Redgrave, and Knudson at Waitabit Creek, and these made no comment about her, but at Beavermouth she was much criticized—many thought her too small to withstand the rapids. But I was satisfied with her, knowing how a boat of her type would act in rough water, and also considering her heavy enough for one man to handle, especially if he had to make portages alone. The fact that the COLUMBIA reached Astoria without a mishap, and in good condition justified my confidence in her.

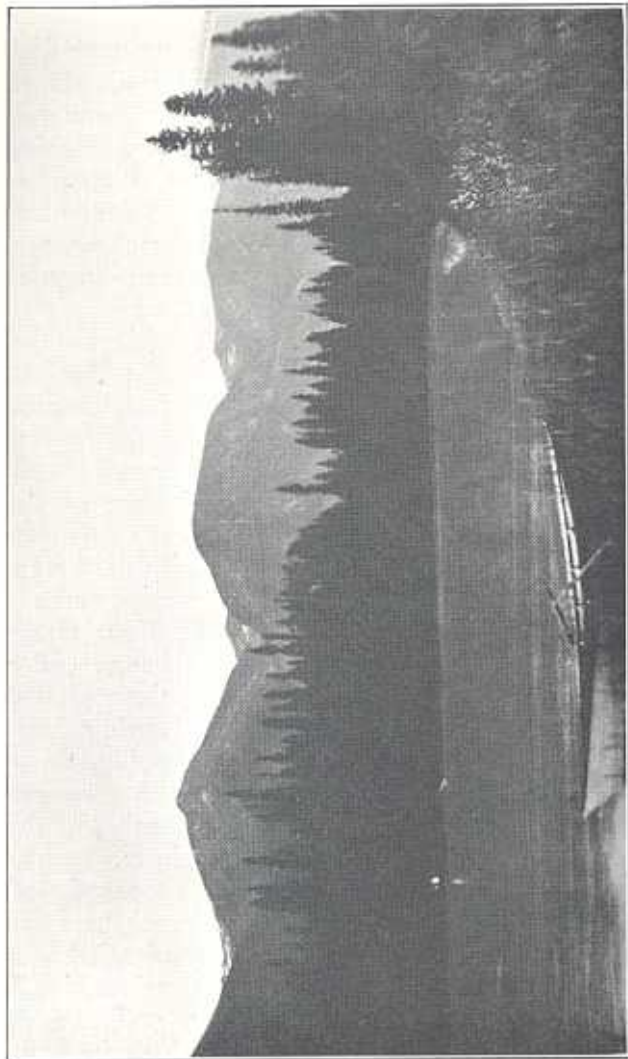
The early voyagers in British Columbia used either a batteau (a large, heavy, double-ended boat), or an Indian canoe made of split cedar boards, or dug out of a log. Today, the favorite water-craft is the Peterborough canoe, made at Peterborough, Canada. These are beautifully built on graceful lines, with high, curved bows and sterns, and are very expensive. They are of different sizes, but the size commonly used is 20 feet long, 4 feet beam, and weighs 250 pounds.



I am not particularly impressed with the Peterborough, but prefer something of the type I had made. The faults I find with them, are, first, the bottom is too straight, longitudinally, and for that reason they do not quickly respond to oars or paddles, and, second, their thin, rounded sides will not stand much buffeting against the rocks, and are easily punctured. If I had attempted to line a Peterborough down Kinbasket Rapids, without assistance, as I did COLUMBIA, by the time the lower end was reached it would have been damaged beyond satisfactory repair.

I waited at Beavermouth until July 21, but Mr. Nattress did not return from Golden. I had been told that there was good fishing in two lakes at Bush River, twenty miles down stream, and I decided to go there alone, do some fishing in the lakes, and await Mr. Nattress' arrival, and I set out on another leg of my journey. The River had been contracted from the head of Redgrave Cañon to Beavermouth, but now widened rapidly, had a swift current, but no obstructions, and in a short time I was at Bush River and made camp on its bank just above the mouth. Bush River is a good sized stream heading at Bush Peak, in the Rockies; at its lower end it traverses a considerable valley, and is about 400 feet wide where it enters the Columbia. Two miles above its mouth are two lakes connected with the river by a winding channel about two miles long.

I spent the balance of the day in the vicinity of my camp, trying to catch fish in Succour Creek which joins the Columbia immediately above Bush



MOUTH OF BUSH RIVER

River, but had no success. The next morning, with an empty boat, I rowed the two miles up Bush River against a rather stiff current, and then wound my way up the crooked outlet of the lakes. Fishing all day, without even getting a nibble, I returned in disgust to my camp. The place was a hotbed of mosquitoes, and in the morning I broke camp, and with four miles of good going reached Surprise Rapids.

Just above Surprise Rapids the Columbia doubles its width and has little current. At the head of the rapids the channel narrows to a few hundred feet in width and is against the left shore. The water slides gently over the crest with little noise—although a short distance below the violence of the breakers makes a roar that can be heard a half-mile through the timber. It is the peculiarity of the approach to Surprise Rapids, and the unexpectedness of the sudden drop-off after the calm river above that caused it to acquire the name it bears. It is the roughest and longest continuous piece of bad water on the whole Columbia River. Rowing down to near the crest, where there is a tumbled-down cabin on the left bank, I "sized up" the situation, and then returned, upstream, a quarter-mile, to the head of the portage on the right-hand shore.

After the tent was up and lunch prepared and eaten I walked down a good trail to where some civil engineers were stationed a mile and a half below the head of the portage. Here I found two large log cabins, an office and bunkhouse, and a cook house, and met Mr. H. E. Smith, the engineer in charge and his assistant Mr. Mackenzie. They had



been stationed here for some time, gauging the flow of the Columbia, and gathering other useful engineering information. A short distance above their camp a wire cable is stretched across the cañon, carrying a suspended car running on grooved wheels and operated by man power; and used by the engineers for reaching the other shore. It is high above the madly rushing water beneath.

It is proposed to erect a dam 150 feet high at the lower end of Surprise Rapids for the purpose of developing hydro-electric energy. With an available working head of 130 feet it is estimated that 36,000 horse-power will be obtained. This power is to be mainly used to take trains over the steep grades in the Selkirks between Beavermouth and Revelstoke; and will mean the abandonment of the use of the present helper locomotives, and a consequent diminution of what little activity now exists at Beavermouth, but should have little effect upon Revelstoke.

The place where the engineers had established their camp is on a bench above the River, in the midst of heavy timber, and with a spring nearby. My camp at the head of the portage was exposed to the glaring rays of the July sun, and unbearably hot. The only water available was from the turgid Columbia. I decided to move to the more favorable location, near the engineers, and with the aid of a pack-bag, which Mr. Smith loaned me, the outfit was carried down the trail and the tent reset near the cabins. The COLUMBIA was left behind for future transfer.

The contracted, rock-strewn channel, and great

breakers of Surprise Rapids have about as evil a reputation as has Death Rapids. It is about as dangerous to navigate and is much longer, having a total length of three miles. The roughest section is the first mile and a half, and is generally portaged, although a crew of men, working together, can line it—something that would be exceedingly risky for one man to do. However, Alphonse Emond, whom I met later, told me that he had run the whole rapids at a low stage of water, in a specially built, wide boat, in which he took down a piano. The boat filled with water three times but did not upset, and got safely through. Jerry Nagle, whom I met at Revelstoke, claimed that he attempted to run an empty batteau down Surprise Rapids unaided, and got along well until a large submerged rock was reached, when the surge of the water threw the batteau across the rock and as she fell, on the lower side, she collapsed with a report like a cannon, and closed up like an empty pea pod. Shallow water below the rock was all that saved him, into which he jumped and held the boat until his companions, who were carrying the load on shore, came to his assistance. The batteau was repaired and they were able to continue their journey.

Just below the engineers' camp a log jam juts out about 200 feet from a point on the right bank. This deflects the current to the left and it turns around the end of the jam in terrific shape with great, rolling breakers. Below the jam, for a mile and a half, to the foot of the rapids, there is an exceedingly swift current with high, long, rolling billows (the greatest on the River), but no breakers.

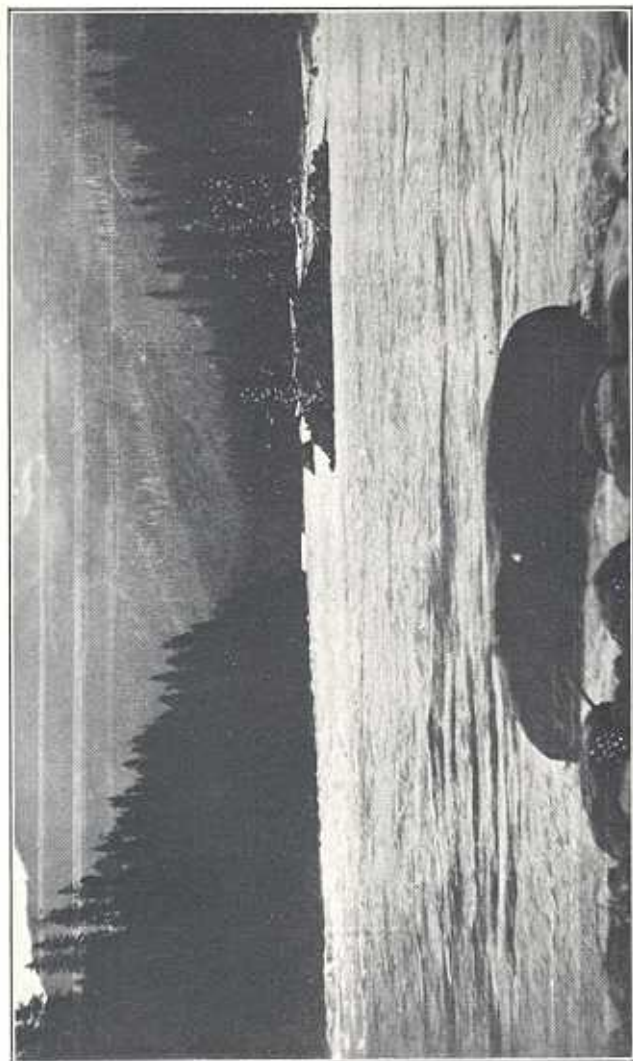
Mr. Nattress had not yet made his appearance, and Mr. Smith had told me that Alphonse Emond, Fire Warden for the district as far down as Canoe River, was down the River and would soon be back. I wanted to see him and also wanted to have my boat portaged to the log jam, as I was advised that the rapids below could be run. I met Mr. Emond on July 27. In the meantime Nattress had arrived, with his son Howard and Lewellyn Humphreys, a boy friend. Going to where the COLUMBIA had been left, we rigged up a "gee-pole" at her stern; and with Emond, Nattress, and the boys hauling on the tow line, and with myself at the stern, guiding with the gee-pole, in an hour's time we dragged the boat over the trail, and launched her just above the log jam.

Mr. Emond was on his way to Revelstoke to bring over a new canoe—he had left his regular canoe at the foot of the rapids when he came upstream. He posted me about the River all the way to Canoe River, but advised me to wait until his return and said he would go down with me as far as Kinbasket Lake. He also advised me to carry my outfit and move camp to the mouth of Foster Creek, a small stream one and one-half miles below, as it would be safer to run the remainder of Surprise Rapids with an empty boat. Putting this advice into effect I carried everything down a good trail to Foster Creek and encamped there. On my last trip I stirred up some mountain grouse on the trail, but had no gun with me. Reaching the camp I got the shotgun, returned to where the grouse were seen, found them still there and got three of them.

These were the first grouse I had killed since shooting the one on Blackwater trail, and that evening I had a nice "mulligan" for supper.

For three days I walked back each morning to Smith's camp, to see if Emond had returned, but he did not come, and getting impatient, as usual, made up my mind to run Surprise Rapids alone. At the log jam, below the engineers' camp the breakers were too violent to undertake rounding the point, although it could have been done if my boat had been launched farther up stream and a quick crossing made to the left side, steering clear of the point. As it was she had been dropped into the eddy just above the jam, not allowing enough distance in which to make a run for the other shore. The jam is about 12 feet high and 50 feet across, and just below the water is shallow and quiet. With the help of Mr. Smith the COLUMBIA was dragged over the logs and launched in the quiet pool below.

Parting from Mr. Smith, I again started on another leg of my journey. Getting out of the quiet pool and into the current, I found great sweeping waves, but as the channel was clear whitecapped breakers were absent. The current descends the middle of the River, with high crests and long sloping sides towards each shore. Running down backwards, and maintaining the boat on the right hand side of the waves by keeping her bow pointed diagonally upstream, towards the crest by constant movement of the oars, although she was tossed about like a cork, it seemed impossible to upset her, and I rode safely—it was the best test of the qualities of the COLUMBIA I had on the trip. In a



LOOKING UP SURPRISE RAPIDS AT LOG JAM



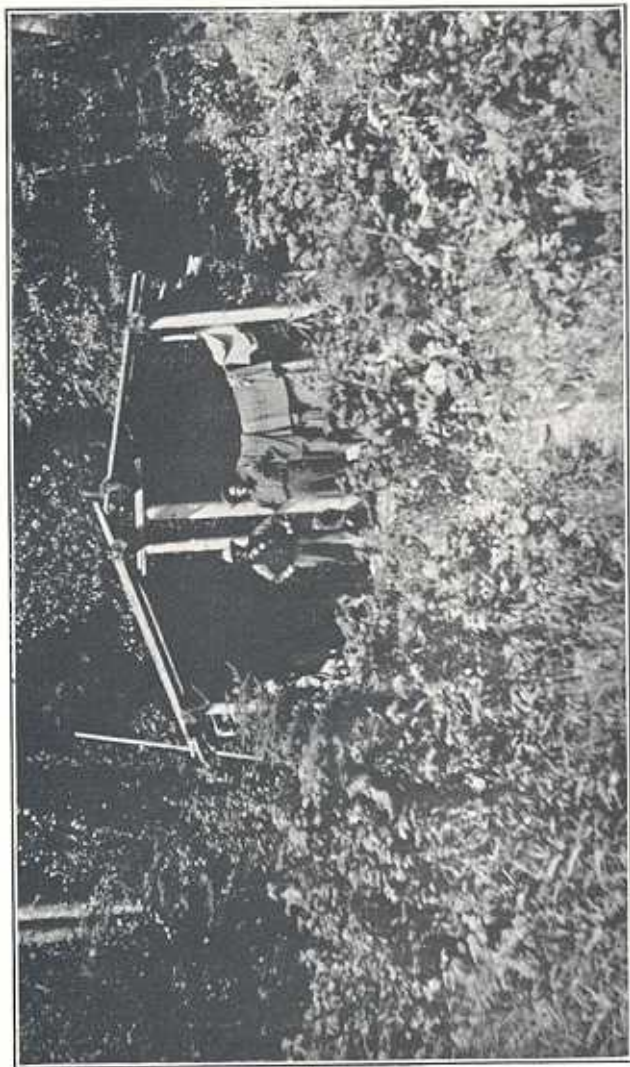
short distance, in rounding a point on the right, I came suddenly upon a slender shaft of rock about 70 feet high, directly in the middle of the River. I had been advised of this and told to keep the right hand channel, but the current drew so strongly to the left, and the column was so close when first seen, that although I tried I could not make it, and as the left channel was clear, I shot by the rock like an arrow, and it was soon out of sight. Nothing else occurred except that near the foot of the rapids a "suckhole," or miniature maelstrom formed under the boat just as the place was reached, but the speed with which we were traveling shot us clear across it, the only result being that the whirling place broke with an up-boil just as the middle of the boat reached its center, and about a gallon of water dashed aboard and gave my side a slight wetting. Soon we were at Foster Creek. I landed, got lunch, loaded the boat, and continued the journey.

About 15 miles below Foster Creek Sullivan River, a fair sized stream from the Rockies, was reached, and two miles farther I came to Kinbasket Lake, a mountain-locked body of water with steep, rocky shores. It is eight miles long and a mile and a half wide in the widest place. I rowed down the left hand shore until opposite Middle River—which, as its name indicates, enters the middle of the lake from the east—when a sudden storm of wind and rain arose, coming directly up the lake. It was impossible to make headway against it and I was forced to go ashore at the only available landing place, a small, rocky point under a steep bluff. Here I made the boat secure as well as I could against

the rolling surf the wind had caused, but she constantly chafed against the rocks on the shore, and fared badly. There was no shelter except the foliage of a small cottonwood tree, and under it, with the rain dripping on my back, I got what supper the conditions permitted.

After eating I looked around for a place to sleep, and glancing upward saw on the left side of the cliff, and not far above, a three foot shelf slanting uphill at an angle of about fifteen degrees. The cliff overhung it and it was dry and protected from the wind. Someone else had evidently used the shelf as a sleeping place, as there was a six inch log about sixteen feet long, and denuded of limbs, lying on it. The place was thickly covered with cottonwood leaves and looked attractive, as there was no possible place to set up a tent. Climbing up to the ledge I placed the log on the outside of it, against a tree at one end, against a rock at the other, to keep myself from rolling into the lake, twenty-five feet directly below. Scraping the leaves together to make them lie uniform, I uncovered the skin and skeleton of a porcupine which I cast into the lake. Having adjusted everything to my satisfaction I brought up the sleeping bag, crawled into it, had a dry bed and sheltered and fairly comfortable resting place; although the odor of the porcupine persisted throughout the night.

Arising early in the morning I found the rain had ceased but the wind was still blowing too strong to contend against. I waited until ten o'clock until it was calm enough for me to venture on the water, and then, in still high-running whitecapped waves I



EMOND AND KNUDSON AT KINASKET LAKE CABIN.

pulled across to the right hand shore, reaching it just below the mouth of Middle River. I had no sooner gotten across than the wind ceased entirely, and it was not long before Emond's headquarters, at the foot of the lake on the right hand side, was reached. I landed and took possession shortly before noon, August 3.

The cabin was a good sized one of logs, setting about 200 feet back from the shore, with one room containing two bunks, a good sheet iron stove, a table and chairs, and in one corner a large cedar box filled with provisions of all kinds. Cooking utensils, snowshoes, clothing, a 3A, folding camera, and a rifle were hung on the walls; and steel traps and tools of many kinds were under the bunks. Just south of the cabin a fine little stream of pure water came tumbling down the mountain side into a wooden trough leading to a tub formed from a half-barrel. Everything was neat and orderly, and here I intended to remain until Emond's arrival.