

TOUR DU

CANADA

1988

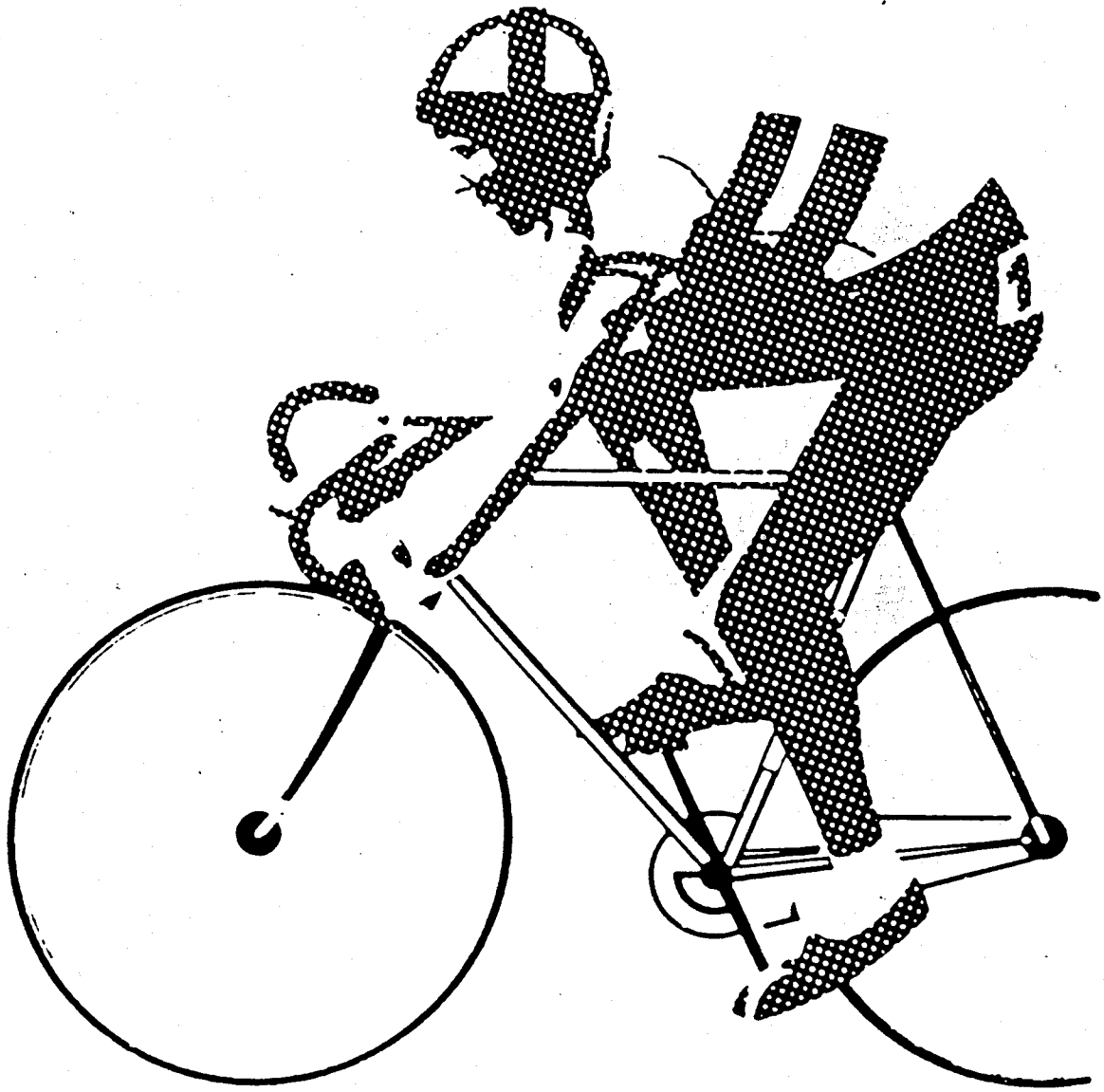
DON & FLO

LEATHAM

PARTICIPANTS

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------------|------|
| • Larry | Beaton | Agincourt, | Ont |
| • Greg | Bennett | Toronto, | Ont |
| • Roy | Bourke | Willowdale, | Ont |
| • Sylvia | Bourke | Willowdale, | Ont |
| • Mary | Boyd | North York, | Ont |
| • Peter | Brohm | Mississauga, | Ont |
| • David | Conway | Downsview, | Ont |
| • Bill | Dixon | Putney, Vermont | Ont |
| • Mark | Gledhill | Don Mills, | Ont |
| • Margaret | Higgins | Kanata, | Ont |
| • Judy | Jackson | N. Vancouver, B.C. | Ont |
| • Ron | Jacques | Bracebridge, | Ont |
| • Bud | Jorgensen | Toronto, | Ont |
| • Sharon | Kastak | Delta, | B.C. |
| • Florence | Leatham | Walkerton, | Ont |
| • Don | Leatham | Walkerton, | Ont |
| • Donald | Lee | Scarborough, | Ont |
| • Ron | MacDonald | London, | Ont |
| • Vincent | Maguire | Downsview, | Ont |
| • Angie | Maharaj | Burnaby, | B.C. |
| • Gerard | Martineau | Toronto, | Ont |
| • Aaron | Nelson | Mississauga, | Ont |
| • Andrew | Nisbet | Longueuil, | Que. |
| • Rose | Parker | West Montrose, | Ont |
| • Connie | Renaud | Nepean, | Ont |
| • John | Shelbourn | Nanaimo, | B.C. |
| • Gaston | Thompson | Orleans, | Ont |
| • Bob | Unsworth | Don Mills, | Ont |
| • Keith | Venables | Don Mills, | Ont |
| • Barbara | Vogt | Victoria, | B.C. |
| • Paul | Way | London, | Ont |
| • Charles | Winder | Toronto, | Ont |
| • Sean | Winter | Cumberland, | Ont |

• CYCLED FURTHER DISTANCE



To the tune of "this land is your land"

That face of Do-on's, as he neared St. Jo-ohn's,
Revealed for certain some parts were hurtin',
And all about him muscles were shoutin',
"This pain belongs to you and me."

No word of boastin', our Flo was coastin',
'Gainst blowin' bre-eeze, she rode with e-ease,
And not one tendon was in need of mendin',
This gal was born to cycle free.

July 6/88

Couple to bike across Canada

WALKERTON—A couple from Walkerton have begun a journey which will take them across Canada by bicycle from Vancouver, British Columbia to St. John's, Newfoundland.

Don and Florence Leatham, of 17 Bill St., Walkerton, left last Thursday, June 30, to fly during the night to Vancouver. Their trip began the next day with a picnic in Stanley Park, where they met the 32 fellow cyclists who are taking the trip. Then the group got on their bikes and travelled 60 km to Maple Ridge, B.C.

During the next nine weeks, the group, which calls itself the "Tour Du Canada," will average 100 km a day in the mountains and 150 km a day on more level ground. The highest distance they will cover in one session is 185 km.

"The hardest parts of the trip will probably be the climb over the mountains and the route around the north of Lake Superior," said Don.

The people they will be riding with range in age from 18 to 59 and come from locations from Vancouver to Montreal. There is a mix of personalities and professions as well. One member, a photojournalist, is creating a photo essay about the journey.

The tour will stay in university residences and private and provincial parks, where reservations have been made to ensure accommodations for the large group. A van, carrying only one laundry basket of clothes and camping gear for each person (including tent), precedes the cyclists to each of their overnight stops.

"The possibility of the tour first came to my attention in November or December of 1986, through the newsletter of the Toronto Bicycling Network," Florence said. She pointed out she and her husband didn't decide for certain they would go until last October.

TRIP A CHALLENGE

"I thought it would be a challenge, and provide an opportunity to see the country."

"When you're travelling in a car you don't observe as carefully as you can on a bicycle. Biking gives you a chance to talk to people and smell the flowers," Don added.

The couple doesn't expect riding with such a large group to be a problem, as they have had seven or eight years of touring experience. Last summer they travelled



ALMOST READY TO GO -- Don Leatham, of Walkerton, checks the chain on one of the bikes he and his wife Florence will be riding across Canada.

around Prince Edward Island for ten days.

However, they have never biked quite such long distances for so many days before. They wanted to be sure they would be ready for the weeks ahead. Both exercised regularly over the past winter, and since April they have been out on their bikes virtually every day. They also had fitness testing done, to ensure their bodies could support the effort necessary to scale the Rockies.

Weekend jaunts during the spring for Don and Flo ranged from Cargill to Stratford. On the May 24 weekend, they got together with some of the tour members to cycle 400 km in two days, around Oshawa and Peterborough.

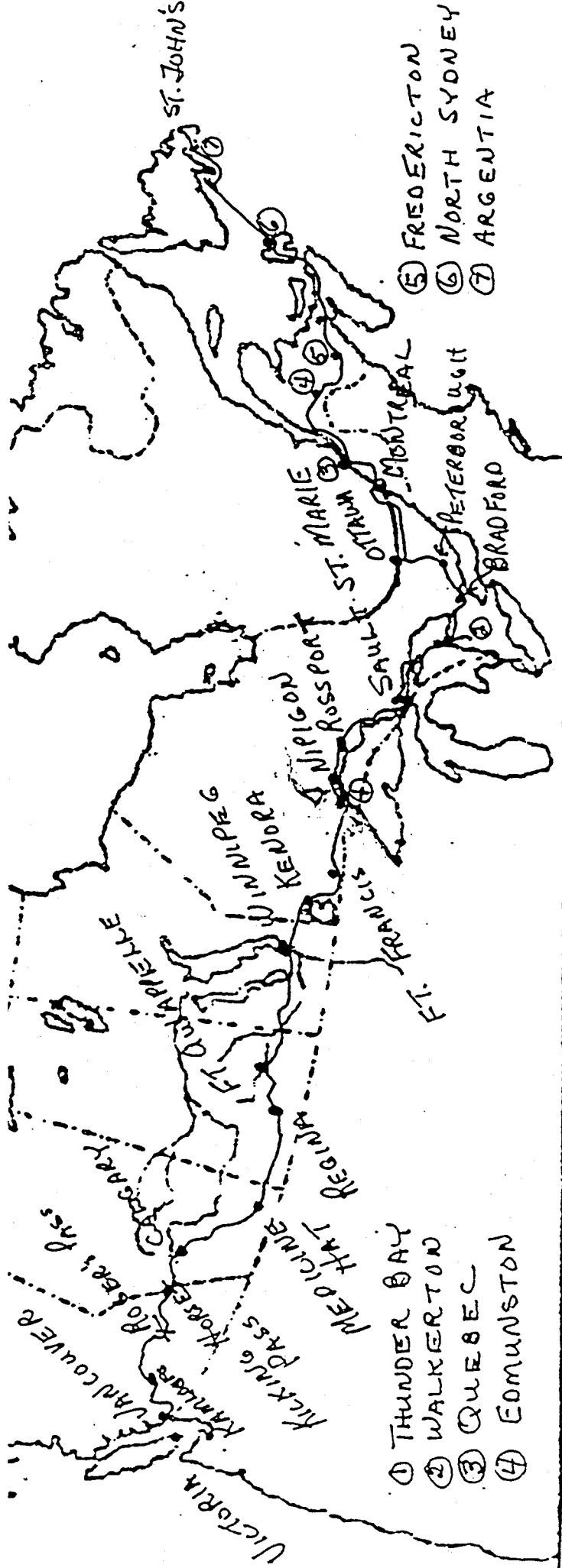
Cycling on the same roads used by huge eighteen-wheel tractor trailers doesn't really worry the Leathams.

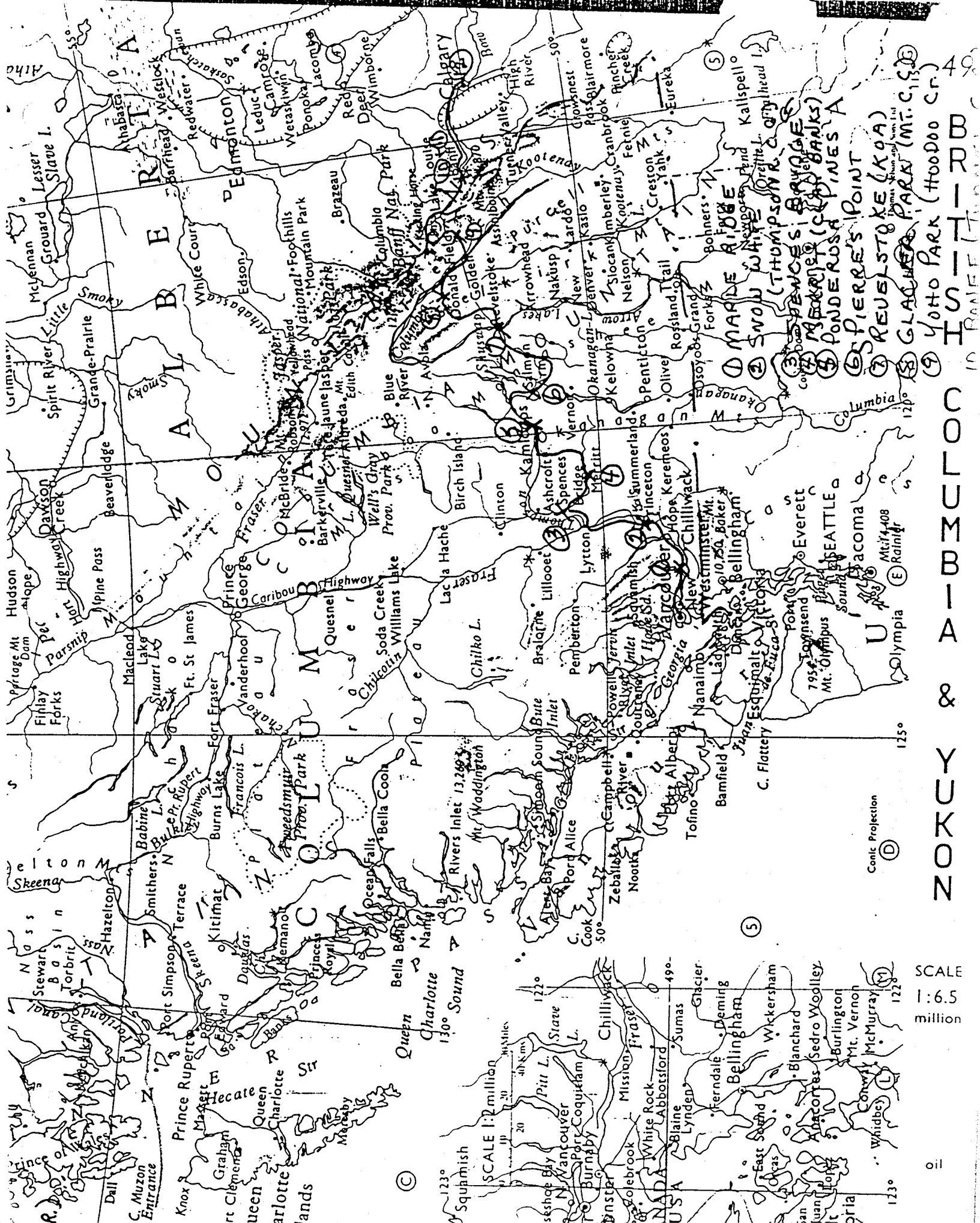
"Most motorists are considerate when passing cyclists, although a few still don't realize the Highway Traffic Act gives cyclists the right to a full lane," Don said. It's not just a question of rights either.

"A cyclist forced off the road at 20 km an hour onto a gravel road shoulder can easily lose control of his or her bike."

Support from family and friends has been positive, although it generally came with some incredulity at the distances involved. Florence, a nurse in the County of Bruce General hospital maternity ward, was especially grateful for the leave of absence she was granted, which she combined with holidays to arrange enough time for the tour.

Although the Tour du Canada's route does not pass specifically through the Walkerton area, Don and Flo will detour home on August 7, while the rest of the tour traces the coast of southern Georgian Bay. Then they'll meet the group again at Bradford, and travel on to St. John's. They return home on September 4.





SCALE 1:2 million
 0 20 40 Miles
 0 20 40 Kilometers

SCALE
 1:6.5
 million

- ① MARDE RIDGE
- ② SNOW WAIVE (THOMPSON R. off head 12)
- ③ SPENCES BAY (OFF)
- ④ MERRITT (CUT BANKS)
- ⑤ PONDEROSA PINES A
- ⑥ SPIERRE'S POINT
- ⑦ REVELSTOKE (KOA)
- ⑧ GLACIER PARK (MT. C. 113)
- ⑨ YOTO PARK (HOODOO CR.)

NOKUY & A-B-M-U-G-I-O-N I-S-I-T-H-R-O-D
 49

oil

TOUR DU CANADA

PROLOGUE

In the winter of '86 Florence heard about a possible cross country bike tour to be held in the summer of 1988. We briefly discussed it but said nothing more until the fall of '87 when the topic came up again. An advertisement asked for \$20.00 deposits and apparently 120 answers came, some from as far away as New Zealand. Bub Jorgensen, Toronto Bicycle Network sent out a proposed itinerary and thirty-three people answered with a \$300.00 deposit. Meetings were arranged for those in the Toronto area. Committees were struck; menus planned; a final route set; and campsites booked.

A series of training runs were arranged for early spring. Florence and I made only the Peterborough one. We did, however, manage a few local runs as well as a ride to Waterloo and one to Gadshill. We also made serious camping purchases and I had a bike built especially to fit my short legs by Julian Edwins in Owen Sound.

The departure time arrived very quickly and with hearts in our mouths we headed for Toronto.

FLIGHT OUT

Good trip to Toronto-terrible trip into the airport. Met Kevin on way into the Airport-he was to meet us there. Hurried check out-no time for supper- a little nervous about Mike getting out of airport. Good flight-no sleep. Arrived

at 2:30 a.m. our time, -11:30 Vancouver time. No van arrived for an hour and a half, apparently it was transporting early arrivals. Arrived at the University, after a ride in the back of van, feeling a slight bit discouraged. To bed about 3:00 a.m. and up at 7:00. Good breakfast—took pictures of the grounds and bay from our 12th floor room window.

75K July 1/88

Had our opening introductions in a room at the residence. Picked up our baskets (12X12X24) and packed them. Got our route maps and headed for Stanley Park in a light drizzle. Lunch in Stanley Park at the totem pole site. Quite a few well-wishers were on hand. Had a good look at the city and bay from there. Got lost going out of the park but at least saw the big trees! Took a picture of Lion's Gate Bridge. Spent about two hours getting out of Vancouver. Ride was through hobby farm country after passing sulphur storage and shipment area. Took slide of sulphur piles.

Saw a long-horned hereford (2,000 lb., Babe, The Red Ox) in a corner field. Arrived at Maple Ridge campground in the sunshine. Boys had a fire going; no van to be seen;—bad omen! Van finally arrived; set up tents as the rain started. Made supper in the picnic shelter while half of the group went down the road for showers. The clean-up completed by dusk. Our first night—rain all night. Rooster woke us up at 5:05. Crows joined in at 5:11. Took slides of campground as we prepared to head out.

124.9 k.

July 2/88

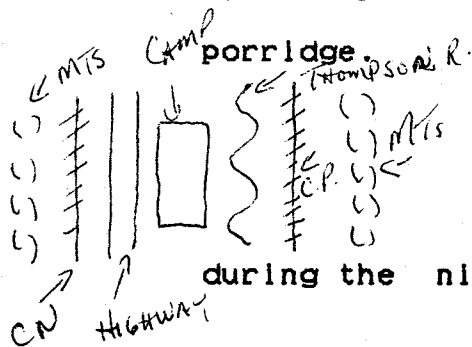
Wet ride for the morning. Cleared at noon. We found a nice campsite for lunch. Christian motorcycle gang convention at the park. The leader said as we entered, "Oh!, Oh! here come those cyclists!" (funny line) Saw a log boom at Harriston River (slide). First official rest stop-restaurant. Had good French fries and herbal tea. Connie, Rose, Ron, Flo and I heard Rose's story about the use of meat "timbits" to keep away the dogs. First true snow caps near Hope. Ride which was to be 80 k turned out to be 124 k. Rose and I changed a flat. Couldn't get the damn valve in-forgot to take off the inside nut! Flo finally came back to supervise. Stayed at Snow White Campground -nice but a great many black slugs (2"-4"). As the late arrivers, we negotiated for separate campsites. Rain after supper but we had a little picnic shelter for cover. Camp office had good coffee and ice cream. Area still heavily timbered.

116.6 k

July 3/88

Nice day and run to start. First crack at tunnels, near Boston Bar at the start of Fraser Canyon. One was over 1000 m in length. Noise in the tunnel often extreme-one idiot roared a Hollywood muffler right beside me. First really hard climb before Hell's Gate and again at Jackass Mountain near Lyton. Trucks were crawling beside us at the top of the hill. Interesting contrast: started the day looking at the violent and muddy Fraser R. and then switched to the

beautiful azure green Thompson River near Lyton. We often could see heavy rain in the next valley while we cycled in sunshine. One shower finally found us. Spectacular ride all day. A lot of cement and wire abutments to prevent rock slide damage. Indentations on the highway and bent steel poles make the falling rock signs a little more realistic. Wall at gorge near Thompson River Campground allowed no escape to shoulder. Truck slowed down and followed me through the area—thank goodness. We watched kayakers on one of the violent bends of the Thompson. One novice took quite a beating and ended up getting out and carrying his kayak. By the time we reached our campground the terrain had changed to John Wayne Country: short, sparse evergreens, dry prairie grass, and tumbleweed. Passed a section of the old Cariboo Road. Camp was right on the shore of the Thompson. Nice campground with good facilities, but totally in the open. Up early to attack burnt pot so that we could cook



Train went through both sides of the tent.

We had both trains, C.P. and C.N. go through

during the night.

78.8k July 4

Breakfast over early, clear day. Followed the Thompson to Spence's Bridge. Took a slide of the C.N. Tunnel on the bank of the Thompson. Turned northeast at Spence's Bridge to follow the Nicola Valley. Pretty river but almost desert

country. Irrigation needed to grow winter hay. First ranch we passed had big hounds out in the kennels (Mountain Lions?). Our first taste of switch backs. Highway in pretty good shape, not heavily travelled. One trailer gave us a scare coming toward us. Passed a car. The shoulder was not bikeable. Held on and prayed! Signs along the way: 'Watch out for livestock'. (-maybe a Joke -for there was no vegetation visible to eat). Reached the town of Merritt at about 2:30. Several people informed us that we shouldn't walk our bikes on the sidewalk. Generally mucked around until 4:00 because Claybanks Park was just on the edge of town. Took a picture of the hotel-right out of Dodge City. Unfortunately a storm came over the surrounding hills and by the time we had the tent up about a 50 mph gale was blowing. The site was on gravel so a sledge was needed to drive in the spikes. Ridge pole of the tent bent but outside of a quick squall and heavy winds, most of the storm went around us. A few tents turned turtle (Greg, our driver, with him in it) but no major damage. Our cooking group headed up town for our first "real" meal while the rest sorted out their food in the slightly damp campsite. We ate thoroughly if not well at the Hotel restaurant and returned in time for Mary and Greg's birthday cake that Flo had ordered from Spence's Bridge. We noticed that the poplar trees in the camp were all topped at about 25'. We felt it was storm damage, but apparantly was done by hand as a precaution. Campsite was right beside a trailer park. About ten cars pulled up to the one house trailer in the space of 1 hour. We didn't inform the R.C.M.P.

147.1 K JULY 5

Tricky route out of town-followed the old highway to Kamloops, a little longer than the Quoquahalla route but a much prettier route. Roy and Sylvia followed the Quoquahalla and climbed for 8-10 k without a break. Our route wound along Lake Quilchena (Cohina). First time we ran with the pack of about fifteen bikes. Drafting raised our speed to 30 k/hr. I even led for a time. Larry (Sault Ste Marie) lost his chain in the pack and we almost piled up. Bikes went everywhere. Stopped at about 10:30 at a country store with a Ranch House Museum (Quilchena resort). Local Cattle Baron -pictures of cattle drives and famous cowhands all over the walls. John gave a brief concert on the grand piano.

Road went through rolling cattle country (2 slides at rest stop overlooking a small lake). Waterfowl abundant. Tough road, found another small lake and river system. An osprey took a large fish as we cycled past just before lunch. It was quite a struggle for the osprey to stay airborne and reach a nearby perch. Stopped for lunch at the head of the valley. I set my bike down and the mirror broke off. (*\$#@). Motorhome driver warned us of a major climb to come. He didn't lie. Tough climb 10% grade with several switchbacks, about 10k from Kamloops. When we finally reached the top a heavy wind blew up. Weather deteriorated; long downhill into Kamloops; headed for bike store and then an icecream parlour. Rose got a much needed new gear cluster. I got a mirror but it wasn't like my old one so very little good with no magnification. By the time we headed out to

Ponderosa Pine Camp rain had started. We were soaked by the time we reached camp. Roy and Sylvia had ^{hull} halt. Spent a fair portion of the time watching the rain from a small laundry room or the shower room. Showers were cold by the time we arrived; a regular penalty for late arrival which we often faced. Rain eased enough for a group supper and campfire. Flo got up early and dried her shoes in the drier.

58.5k July 6

During breakfast - weather still catchy. Tents went down wet. Flo and I swept but it was our first short day, 58K. Stopped at a trading post turned craft shop. Owner made us tea. The post, near Chase was a stop over for the trail herds on the Oregon Trail heading for the Cariboo from Texas. Fur exchange point for coastal shipping of the Hudson Bay Company. Had a gold scale. It was on the Adam's River - a major spawning area for Coho. River and nearby Shuswap Lakes black with bears during the spawning runs. Terrain starting to get more challenging again. Next range of mountains and forest also re-appeared. Had lunch overlooking Shuswap Lakes. Estate office lady's husband originally from Ontario. Had a long chat.

Couple of interesting climbs on a cool day before we reached Salmon Arm. Camped at Pierre's Point. (Slides of site.) Train ran beside as usual. All tents etc. up to dry. Thunderstorm came up. Small river soon ran right through Bob's tent. Had a little council of war on the condition of

the van; general travelling procedure;-seemed to clear the air. We tried to remind everyone that we had survived six days, each of which had had rain for a portion of the day-so things weren't all bad. Still working with individual cooking groups. Hard to find enough cooking utensils ; a lot of waste food. Sleep disturbed at 4:00 a.m. by loud group of drunken fishermen.

121.4 k July 7

Early start. Tough climb out of Salmon Arm , but a pleasant ride until noon; much of it on high-overlooking lakes (Adam's Lake). Bud, Connie, Rose, Ron, Flo and I stopped at a fruit stand before Craiglach-great strawberries, cider and cherries! Four lane stretch disappeared before Craiglach (Last Spike,Slide). Highway narrow, shoulder unrideable, tough stretch to Revelstoke. Snow peaks re-appeared. Picture of the Crazy Creek waterfall. Stopped at a rest area around 3:30,which looked over a little lake onto two huge mountain faces. Started our final section for the day, with rock gouges evident in the pavement under the cliffs. This was a little unnerving. Legs began giving out. Rose and I by ourselves- the rest disappeared. Took a picture of logging outfit in a valley outside Revelstoke. Long climb to Revelstoke KOA.

Truck not there when we arrived, but tents at least available. No clothes to change or showers which was more than a little disconcerting. Base of camp looked out onto 3 Snow Peaks (one was Mt. Revelstoke). Greg finally arrived. Supper hastily built and consumed. Gratefully hit the sack.

Great pancake breakfast in the morning served by K.O.A. staff. On the road by 7:00

90.2 July 8 ROGER'S PASS 1337 m

Started a little apprehensively. Early run along the Illicilliwet R., a branch of the Columbia, up and down but the wind in our back and not too hot. Stopped at a lovely rest area called "Skunk Cabbage," perhaps the best rest area in B.C. Sat on the bridge overlooking a little glacial stream feeding into the ⁽³⁾ ILICILIWET Columbia and ate Gorp, (raisin-nut mixture) Glacial streams and waterfalls every 200 yards of varying sizes. Very narrow valley with mountain peaks on both sides. Birds and wildlife visible (first bear sighting) all along the route. Encountered our first snow sheds (longest still had a pile of black snow along side). Stopped at a little gas station just before the pass and were warned of our up-coming doom. Tremendous glacial gravel wash around a C.N. snow shed just at the base of the Pass. A real live prospector, loaded with gear, was hiking the highway just as we began our climb. The pass turned out to be anti-climactic—about 4 k but with some flat areas to catch our breath (much needed). Greg took our pictures as we reached the summit. Had our first ice cream cone to celebrate. Headed for Glacier Park (Mountain Creek Provincial Park) 1000 m snow shed, dark, with gravel and debris along the edge, more than a little scary. Descent for 12 miles with no levelling out areas. Forearms seized. Stopped at two viewing areas to rest. Bud free-wheeled and

reached 55 mph-not for me! Thankful we were going West to East. Horrors of Roger's Pass all told by easterners going West. We felt sorry for two young French Canadian lads who had met us at the KOA Revelstoke. They had just finished the climb, fully loaded. Wilderness Park nice but no showers. Sing song after supper. Now changed to five cooking groups. Responsible for supper and breakfast every 5 days which is a much better arrangement. Flo got a picture of a bear on the way into camp. Mary and Paul missed the campground sign and went on for another 15 k before they realized their mistake.

97.6 k July 9

Park ranger warned us of a long climb out. He didn't lie! Although the grade wasn't too bad, we climbed steadily for 11 k. Travelled the High Country for about 30 k, before stopping at a rest area. Rose attempted to tighten the bottom bracket on her bicycle-wrong tools. Mary wanted to see Ron's tool when he arrived but being a man of sound principles, he refused. Ziggy's name (Rose's bike salesperson in Kitchener) was taken in vain. Bob finally managed to tighten nut somewhat and Roy finished the job at a later stop near Golden. Had lunch at a little rest area outside of Golden and then went into town to find a post office and drug store. Bad idea, as we could see the climb out from Main Street. It was just as bad as it looked, narrow and steep, but provided a spectacular view of the gorge. Kicking Horse River feeds into the Columbia system.

Road still the toughest of that mountain route and it perches on the edge of a cliff, 1000 ft up-1000 feet down, 12" on the side to deal with trucks and motor homes along the sides of the gorge. Long climb out of the end of the valley. Watched kayaks at rest area and rafters from the summit. The road shoulders were eroded at the summit. Repair would be needed at that point or the highway will be in the valley by next year. Reached Hoodoo Creek Campground by about 4:30.(Yoho Park) I directed two of Judy's friends who stopped to ask her whereabouts, about 20 k farther on. Thank goodness they came back! Camp again primitive but nice. Some of the group hiked to see the Hoodoo rock formations. Flo and I were satisfied to hike to our campsite which was about 50 m from the main site. Camp floor like a cedar bog, spongy to walk on.

120.4 July 10

Pretty run from Yoho to Field, the entry to Kicking Horse Pass (1637 m). Much tougher 9 k climb than Roger's Pass, first 4-7-8% grade. Stopped at a viewpoint halfway up(Just made it) to watch the train enter and exit the spiral tunnels. A long train's engine emerges above its own caboose. Engineering miracle for 1870's or even today.Kicking Horse River flowed beside us, gurgling and bubbling right to the top. Pass Restuarant looks over a little lake and six major peaks, three with glaciers. We headed for Lake Louise over old Highway 1, less traffic but not very well kept; steep and rough. Made the trip uphill

into Tourist Heaven, Lake Louise. Despite the tourist crush, a magnificent setting. Several of the early arrivals had lunch in the hotel. Four kilometer descent out of Lake Louise. Rose met her daughter at one of the downtown resorts. Colony of prairie dogs on lawn. Cute little devils if it isn't your lawn. Our original site was to be at Castle Meadow but we went on to Tunnel ~Mountain Campground" in Banff which was an extra 26 k. Dodged rainstorm, almost. Stopped briefly at a rest area, but found it to be one of the first places loaded with mosquitos. Banff Park was bad too. Ran into a cattle gate, entry to the main highway. Judy went down. One at Banff also with no warning. Round pipe 2" space called a Texas gate. At supper at Joe Biffsticks (Little Abner) Giovanni from next door came in and made us move our bikes across the street. Ron thought we should come back and do a 'fly-in-the-soup' routine at his place. Joe's food great-muffins superb. Managed to get a much needed laundry done after we reached camp. Hardest part was finding the group site, searched about 600 sites before we found it.! Mentioned that a note at the gate would have helped. Nice area, tents in gravel, not in grass, tough on tent pegs., Three bus loads of Americans 12-16 years old with support vehicles camped in the same area. One group headed for Alaska from Seattle, another crossing the continent, headed for Los Angeles. All pretty well-behaved and in tents by 9:30.

July 11 REST DAY, FINALLY !!

Cyclists make it through Rockies

It's all downhill from here

by Don Leatham

(Editor's note: Don and Florence Leatham, of Walkerton, are bicycling across Canada. During the coming weeks they will be submitting a "postcard" at intervals to the Herald-Times to share their sights and experiences on the "Tour du Canada".)

In general, spectacular 1034 km ride through snowcapped mountains by cascading mountain streams and waterfalls. Except for Fraser River, streams are a beautiful glacial green. Route has followed parts of all three major river systems: Fraser, Thompson and Columbia, with Kicking Horse River thrown in for good measure.

All 32 members of tour group still mobile (some with sore knees). Tour leader unfortunately had to return to Toronto on business; hopes to rejoin group at Winnipeg. Executive committee in charge until he returns.

Here are some highlights of trip so far:

First sight of snowcaps, near Hope, B.C. Climb up Hellsgate and Jackass mountains; sense of satisfaction, also amazement at audacity of early railway and road con-

struction crews.

Trip along green and raging Thompson River. Early explorers canoed both Fraser and Thompson rivers; looks impossible even today.

Survived three wet camp set-ups and four out of five rainy days. Last five days weather has been great; glorious sunshine through both Rodger's Pass and Kicking Horse Pass.

Climate varies almost from valley to valley. Can see heavy rainstorm one valley over, yet still be cycling in sunshine. Travelled through heavily-timbered coastal range to arid Thompson and Nicola valleys (where irrigation is needed to grow hay for winter cattle feed), and back into lush forests of interior region, near towns of Golden and Field.

Cycling through tunnels in Fraser Valley (one almost 1000m long) and avalanche-protection sheds for roads of Rodger's Pass. Both challenging and a little frightening; in darkness, any debris on road can send cyclist for a loop.

Most challenging section was Canyon Road from Golden to Yoho National Park. First 20 km built on canyon wall: two feet on edge of highway to share with trucks. On

either side: 1000 feet up, 2000 feet down.

Now enjoying day off in tourist heaven. Banff, Alberta. Camp is away from hustle and bustle, on Tunnel Mountain. On the way to the washroom, met a coyote. Mountain on all sides; town 1000 feet below.

Personal highlights:

Exhilarating 24 mile run along Kochin Valley, where averaged 30 kmh with wind on our backs.

Seeing osprey catching a fish and labouring back up into the air with its breakfast on its perch.

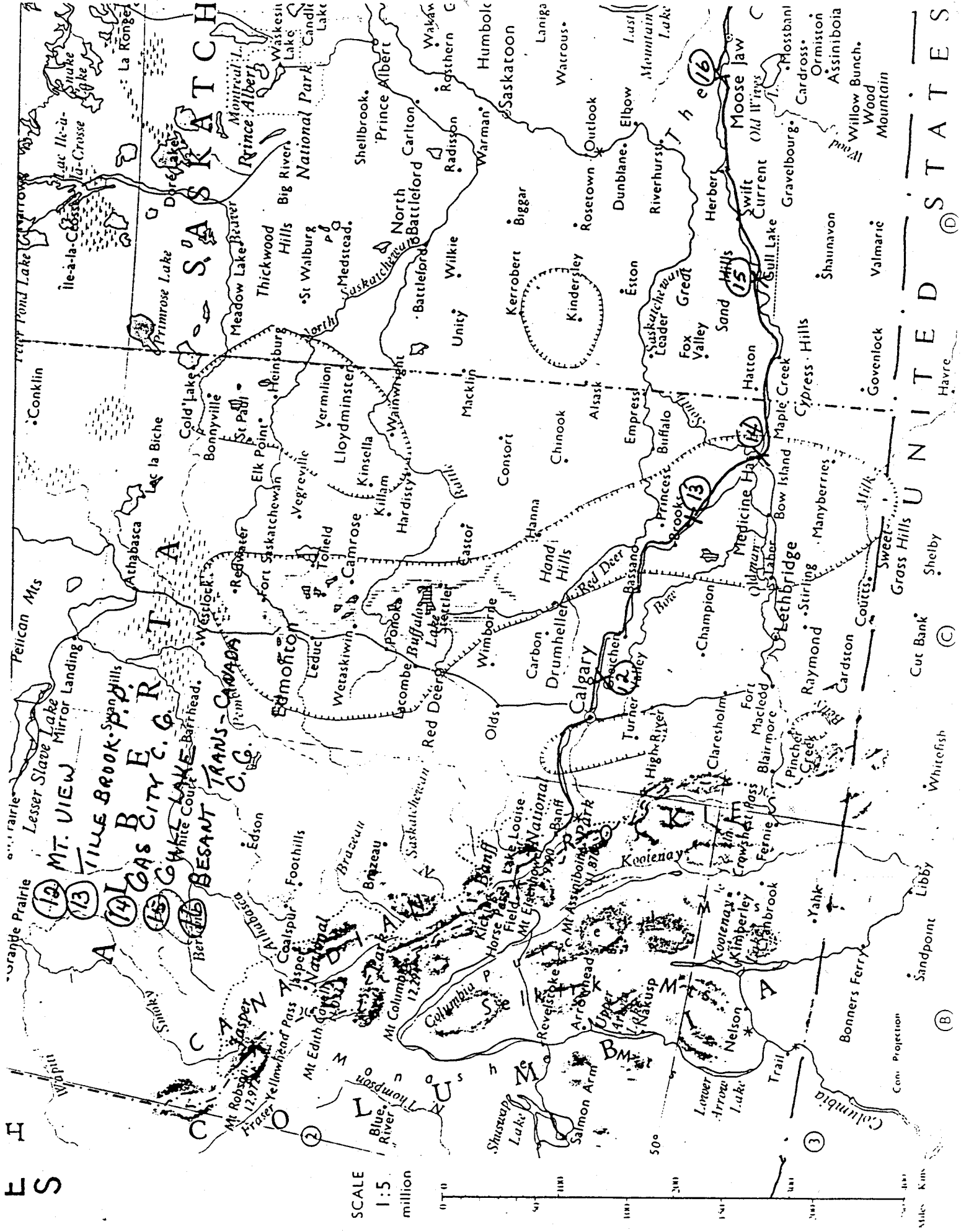
Run from Revelstoke to Rodger's Pass with snowcaps towering on both sides. Good wide road shoulders, and waterfalls from valley glaciers everywhere.

Stopover at handicraft shop at Shuswap near Salmon Arms. Proprietess made us tea and told us stories of the original trading post: furs sent out to Fort Vancouver, gold scale to weigh miners' nuggets, herds of cattle coming up from Texas to feed gold rush.

She also told us Adams' River, which runs nearby, is principal spawning ground for pacific salmon. Each fall it turns red with salmon and black with bears.

Tomorrow (July 12) we head for the prairies.

ES



SCALE
1:5
million

Cont. Projection

MILES KILOM.

UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES

UNITED STATES

Coyote crossed my path on the way to the washroom. Mentioned that I was crazy doing what I was doing to one of the American counsellors making breakfast and asked what was his excuse. He just grinned and handed me a 'Danish'. Spent the day in beautiful downtown Banff. Flo got a little backpack and we got a doctor to give her a prescription for nagging Achilles tendonitis. Two zillion people in Banff. Wild storm blew in about 4:00. Rain horizontal, looked like snow as it approached. We were sure that the tents would all be blown off the mountain. Fortunately they were sheltered from brunt of storm and no damage occurred. While we waited for the group to gather at the railway station for supper, an elk strolled down a side street. Tourist was heard to exclaim, "Oh, now I can say I've seen a moose". After a good meal at a Hungarian restuarant, we walked to camp just out distancing an on-coming storm. It rained heavily at night.

142.74 July 12

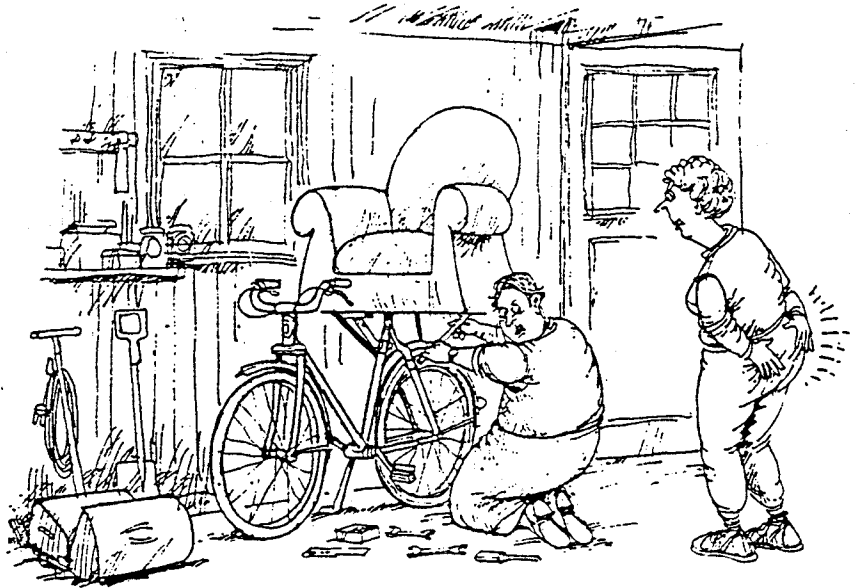
Morning wet and cold. Tents went down wet. Storm clouds come over the mountains with little or no warning. Fortunately, shelter available for breakfast. Wore several layers of clothes including winter gloves. We were able to go straight to the highway from the camp. Originally, thought we would face a severe cross wind but once we got going it turned into a trememdous tail wind 40-50 mph. At times we were cycling in our highest gear and losing the pedal (142.7 k in 4.6 h=30.9 km/h). Road was good with gradual descent to Calgary. Left the mountains behind and

moved into the foothill country (3 slides) Mostly cattle ranges. Ron was able to go uphill using his rain shell as a sail. Stopped for the first break at 54 k. While we were in the restaurant, poor souls going west fully loaded passed by. Their flags were bent double and we were almost embarrassed to watch their slow progress. Had lunch at a little picnic area out of the wind near Calgary. Passed the Winter Olympic site. Eddie, the Eagle stock raised dramatically when we saw how high the ski jump was. Trip through Calgary a little hectic. Arrived at Mountain View Farm Campground around 2:00. Gerard had his sweater catch in the front wheel on his way into camp and he ended up on the ground, badly scraped. Wind across the plains just keeps blowing. Tents instantly dried. Showers etc. reasonable, small laundromat. Tried to contact Dave Ferguson, former student, but just got his answering service.

181.8 July 13.

Early breakfast. Cool 9 degrees C., clear. Hawks and kingbirds abundant. Long day with mostly cross and headwinds and more upgrade than we anticipated. Calgary area farmland looked good but as we got nearer to Brooks, irrigation became more necessary. Stopped at a point of interest that described the huge Garrison Irrigation project of Southern Alberta. Late lunch at Bassano. The continuous need to sit and pedal is creating havoc with our seats. We try to change positions every 100 m. Rose and I decided we would: a) try to fix a chair to our bikes with cord, for balance;

and that the saddle is comfortable.



If this doesn't work you'd better take up jogging.

b) set one of the benches between Ron and Flo's bike so we could sit comfortably in the middle.

THEY REFUSED!

Rose, when she went outside said, as she looked disdainfully at her bike, "I'm not getting on you". Ron tried to help by placing his banana peel on her bike seat so that it would be a Banana Seat. We had our first taste of Big Horizon country, a TV relay station that seemed only a few kilometres way took almost an hour to reach.

We had a brief but distinguished ceremony to mark our first century-160 km at about 4:30. Ron, Rose, Marg and I-with a slide of the participants and appropriate cairn-felt suitably proud. Outside of Brooks we passed a marsh with a 'Ducks Unlimited' improvement sign. Last few miles to the campground were tough into the wind. Flo had to shepherd me along. Camp in Telbrook P.P. was great, grass watered like a golf course. Showers were great. Picnic area-totally enclosed-including a gas range-hot water and double sink. Thanks, Mr. Lougheed.

112.2 July 14

Tremendous wind during the night. Had to get up and tie down the bike cover. Barb and Gaston's group made us McMuffins for breakfast. Steady south wind while we tried to go S.E. Our first taste of really dry, hot grass country. Barley fields 6" tall, sparse and already headed out. Grassland bone dry, a few cattle in sight. Huge irrigation project fed from a dam on the Bow River near

Brooks. Stopped for a drink at a windblown mobile home made into a restaurant and store at Suffield. (Good bran muffins). Slide of the short grass country between Suffield and Redcliff. First look at gas wells and pumps. Campground at Medicine Hat, gas city, A-1. Right on edge of town, a green oasis in a brown land. As usual when we arrived early the van was nowhere in sight. Put up our tent, went downtown (no misquote). Ron tried to turn into a parking lot and fell without getting out of his pedals, (lock-type-locked in) and bruised his hip. Flo got a much needed piece of sheepskin for Sylvia's bike seat. Sylvia claimed it saved her trip. Interesting store with a full-sized Pinto statue in the foyer. Medicine Hat is surrounded by red bluffs. Ron and I were looking at the sunset and a doe came up the ravine beside the camp. Some of the group on their way to do "the Hat" (slang for Medicine Hat) made enough noise to cause her to turn and go back to the river.

172.1 July 15

Breakfast in the shelter which featured gas range and double sinks, away by 7:00. Nice morning. Picture of the Buttes outside Medicine Hat. Little traffic, warmed up quickly. Stopped at a nice rest area about 22 k out to put on oils and emulians. Flo, not too willing to stop, proceeded to run into me. No major damage except to our dignity. Flo had a scrape on her arm. Westerlies failed us. Cycled into a persistent headwind until 2:00 p.m. The area of

south-eastern Alberta and south-western Saskatchewan is dry rolling hills-quintessential cattle country. Most prevalent wildlife were the huge hawks. One big fellow continued to drink at a rare roadside puddle while we stopped on the other side of the highway. Judy saw a herd of pronghorn antelope and I saw a real live working cowboy. He appeared to be checking fences and he emerged from nowhere, got off his horse, opened the road gate, closed it and rode on his way. He had all the trappings that Tom Mix had from the long and short lariat to the bandana and chaps. I didn't notice any spurs.

At the 54 k mark we saw some bicycles at a garage and general store. Flo signalled and moved to the centre line after checking her rear view mirror. Unfortunately she failed to allow for prairie highway speed. A half-ton arrived at about 100 mph and she straightened her wheel enough for him just to get by. I was sure she would be hit. The little store had yogurt and muffins and we sat on the deck and ate and rested. Ron got date turnovers! We planned to stop around 85-90 k for lunch. However, the region was totally devoid of shelter. Some of the group lunched on the side of a railway overpass. We stopped there and watched the hawks play a game of Hop-Scotch on the telegraph poles. Only buildings, isolated ranches, often two miles back from the highway. Signs for the world's longest bicycle buoyed our hopes. However, when we finally got close enough to see, it was obviously deserted. A fire had cleaned out the business and all that was left was half

the sign and a cement go-cart track. Fortunately, there were some trees and Connie waved us in for a much needed rest.

Our next stop was at a campground near Piapot, a little place named after the first prairie chief to block the C.N.R. He camped his people on the track until he got sufficient government assurance of Treaty Rights. I talked to an old chap who ran the restaurant. The area was in a serious wwater shortage situation and the wife was a little leery about filling our bottles. The owner indicated that Piapot and other small prairie towns were facing extinction. Post Office was to be closed; the school was in another town. If the elevator closed there was not much excuse for the town. He also talked about the virgin buffalo grass of the area. (Slide of the Buffalo grass near Piapot) It was once a huge ranch, bulls wintered each year behind his property. Claimed that the fools down the road had planted Alfalfa during a wetter period and had great production records. However, the last few years of drought had not only done in the alfalfa but the topsoil as well. He claimed the Buffalo grass should never have been touched. At the 120 k mark we stopped at a motel and got an ice cream cone. Fortunately, since we were starting to lag, we hit a new stretch of highway and a wind change. Flo, Connie, Ron and I rode for about 30 k at about 28 kph.

We arrived at Gull Lake around 7:00 after a long day's ride. The boys had our tents up which was much appreciated. Camp was on the edge of town. Facilities adequate-shower felt

good. Cooking group built a Mexican supper topped off with a little hooch (tequilla). Flo and I walked downtown to mail some cards. Well kept town with a large Indian Reserve on the outskirts. Sleep hampered first by 'dueling dogs' someone had left unattended, and later by dragsters on the street beside the camp.

P.S. Gull Lake has now no lake.

197K July 16

Up and gone by 6:00. (Daylight about 5:00) Ate a little cereal from the truck. Bob also up. Breakfast at Swift Current down the road 56 k. Flo and I had a little discussion about the wisdom of 56 k without a stop. Pleasant ride through ranch and cereal country-irrigation still in evidence where possible. Usually these were huge wheels with pipe through the middle; 300 m long in some cases. By my calculation we crossed the Cypress Hills the 1000 th time east of Swift Current. Alkaline lakes used for potash production were most evident near Chaplin. We passed huge plant and a stock pile blowing in the wind like a snowstorm. Lake was almost crusted. Had a final stop at a little gas station at Mortlach for lunch. Interesting spot: 4 local P.U.C. men (54-62) discussing well problems-couple in for coffee. Paid no attention to us but answered questions politely. Dry for the 3rd year. Local wildlife and cattle can drink alkaline water but imported stock will die. Stark early frame home on crest across from the station-a kind of statement on the harsh life of the prairie. By 5:00 had already travelled 182 k to Mortlach

still 15 k to TransCanada Campground. Site well back off the road, like Bass Lake Park near Lake Simcoe. Nice little wooded park. Reason why wildlife survive is that little creeks and ravines provide shelter from the heat of the plains.

A little tough downwind of the toilet -some sewage problems. Great host of little sand ants.

Our team to work. Bob and Judy had things well underway when we arrived. Good shower facility with a little dammed wading pool behind. Unfortunately, leech problem had developed. I saw a Heron on the pond the next morning. We had breakfast wrapped up and were on the road by 7:30 much to the chagrin of the late risers.

189.7 July ¹⁷ ~~18~~

As usual first section felt good, new pavement. Travelled awhile with Connie and then Paul and Mary. This was the first section of the non-irrigated prairie crops. Not bad, but certainly not bumper. Our first drink of the day was on the outskirts of MooseJaw at a Husky station. Seat suffering from the continual pedalling necessary to beat the prairie and head winds. Shoulder of the road varied from good to raised frost cracks. Quite a variety in pace, largely controlled by steady North wind, while we tried to go northeast. Stopped for break 15 k from Regina. Lunched under a row of poplars by a grainfield. Most of the dug ponds now have ducks and occasionally geese.

Trip around Regina long and rough. No restaurants or truck stops. Finally left the TransCanada at an overpass and

found a restuarant. Ron felt the locals were going to have us thrown out for Indecency(tight bike shorts).

Trip from Regina to Bulgonia on the TransCanada was rough (road and traffic). Turned onto the Qu'Appelle Valley Scenic Route (#10). Glad to leave the TransCanada. I took two pictures from the overpass. Route was a little more hilly but land more like S. Ontario, with some bush and good crops. Neck started to cramp from tension of narrow highway and traffic. At about 160 K Rose, Ron and I got a professional back rub from Flo. Supplied enough "oomph" to get us to Fort Qu'appelle. Bluffs around the town like southern Alberta. Four Kilometre drop into town may have saved my life. Four centuries in 5 days, so hamstring was tightening up. Interesting talk to 80 yr. old at the tourist booth. Flo asked if the Husky gas stations had showers as we felt the campground did not. His answer was, "No, but there was a car wash down the street!" Great amount of creative thinking arose as to how 31 cyclists might make use of a car wash.

Florence and I forsook what was a pretty nice campground on Echo Lake and rode to the Country Squire Motel. Our own bathtub and bed for two nights: HEAVEN!

Campground was inundated by mosquitos and may flies at dusk, so the cholge was probably wise. We had our first group dinner at the Pizza that night. Don Lee didn't show and had evaded the sweepers in Regina. Found out the next morning that he arrived about 9:00 wondering what the fuss was about.

July 18 REST DAY

Pretty town-Flo bought a T-shirt. Picture in front of the local H.B.Co. -original site for the area, now a clothing store. Ate fashionably late at the motel. Waitress told us the reason it took two hours to be served was that good food takes time to prepare.

Interesting story: Indian Maid -Echo Lake, Qu-appelle Valley(who calls?) Brave thought he heard his recent wife's voice while he was canoeing on the lake. On his return to camp he found she had bitten the dust.

19
192 k July 20

On the way out of town by 7:00. Tough climb for 5k. Went 72k to Melville without a stop. Wind tough W.N.W. Road often rough. Ran into a heavy hail and rainstorm, totally soaked, the only good part was that it only lasted about 15 min. We had tried our best to outrun it. Sun came out but it stayed cool. Passed a Prairie Plover, pretty, like a large sandpiper or killdeer. Lots of waterfowl in the sweet sloughs. Got partially dried out at a Chinese restaurant in Melville. Wind right into our face for the last 2k. Long ride from Melville to Churchbridge. Stopped for lunch at a little school called Good Hope, now a community hall. Dried our clothes on the wire gate and ate out of the wind on the back steps. Headwind and road weariness starting to get to me. Flo always well ahead. I finally stopped and sat on a bale of hay as the road margins were always cut and baled.

It was the most comfortable seat I had found for a long time. We left #15 at Churchbridge and turned onto #14 to Russel. Greek restaurant provided pie but reluctant service. Instead of tipping, Ron and I looked around to see if we could pick up change left by other customers—we were not impressed. Her one good bit of news was that the highway was new to the Manitoba border. Reached Landenburg at about 5:00, took picture of the grain elevator while Flo raided the bake shop. Ron took a picture at the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border. We had now left the paved shoulders behind. Long climb out of the Assinboine R. valley. Took a picture of herd of cattle on the bluffs above the river. Our approach was announced by a huge rainbow that seemed to fall into the town. Sweepers didn't get in until 8:00.

142 k July 20 20

Better country between Russel and Minedosa, great amount of waterfowl in each little pond and lake. A little black tern often dive-bombed us as we passed their marsh territory. Had toast at a little cafe at Foxwarren. Pleasant lady serving breakfast to most of the local "shakers and movers". Interested in our ride and talked about the High School group that had passed through earlier. Lunched at Shoal Lake. Old chap was tutoring Asian restaurant help. Asked us about our trip and informed us that Manitoba was cotemplating a no-bicycle rule. My answer was, "A no-speeding rule for local trucks".

Interesting little town, Fair Day. Everyone at the fairgrounds. Afternoon break at a grain elevator near Newdale and then again at Baswood. Sat on a pile of lumber beside the highway across from a little lake that had two white pelicans swimming serenely along. We decided that prairie hills have no backside and that prairie elevators are actually mounted on huge flat beds that motor down the railroad ahead of you as you try to make the approach. Trip into Minnedosa down a long descent. The camp was 2k out of town. Nice park with good facilities along the lake. Bob bought a bottle of wine for supper for our cooking group which proved to be a nice treat..

Flo and I rode into town to do the laundry and I talked to a chap from near the American border while the laundry was washing. Quite interesting talk of birds, crops and culture. Dogs were named Nanki Poo and Pishtush.(Mikado)

150.6 July 21

Long climb out of Minnedosa and a late start. Flo and I sweeping. Pretty ride to Neepewa. Probably the best crops that we saw anywhere on the prairies. Pretty kaleidoscope of blue flax, yellow canola, hay and green fields. Road was high enough to provide a spectacular view.

Neepewa has the shrine of Margaret Lawrence. Ron did penance for an hour and even Angle was suitably impressed. Vince ran into a tube problem outside of Neepewa. We changed and booted the tire at a Shell Station-only managed 50 k by 12:30. Stopped at a nice wooded rest area and fed the red squirrels. We were warned by fellow travellers

July 27/88

Walkerton cyclists pedal across parched prairies

by Don Leatham

(Editor's note: Don and Florence Leatham of Walkerton are bicycling across Canada. During the coming weeks they will be submitting a "postcard" at intervals to the Herald-Times to share their sights and experiences on the "Tour Du Canada".)

Second major physical region of Canada now under our belts. Reached the Ontario border on Saturday, July 23; now camped on Canadian shield near Kenora. Although longitudinal halfway mark (just east of Kenora) has been passed, the midway point for our trip won't be reached until July 30 (east of Thunder Bay).

Trip still going well. Assorted ankles, rumps and backs still getting sorted out. After euphoric high of beating the mountains, had anticipated easier trip across prairies than received. However, as oldtimers are wont to say, the prairies grind you down.

Only on the first day from Banff to Calgary (147 km) were we favoured with famous prevailing westerlies (average speed 30.7 kmh). Our route through Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw and Regina provided mostly crosswinds or headwinds and it seemed we crossed the Cyprus Hills about a thousand times.

Two facts evident:

Prairie hills only rise to plateaus and have no downhill, which means you must pedal without rest.

Prairie towns (grain elevators) are visible at up to 12 km and then retreat down the railroad tracks, as you vainly seek to reach that anticipated cold drink.

General impressions:

Importance of water evident: abundant in mountains, precious in prairies.

Tremendous change from closed mountain valleys to wide open prairies. On plains you seem to be cycling on the curve of the globe. Drought most evident between Calgary and Regina; only irrigated crops look worth harvesting.

Continually amazed by hardiness of people who settled in short grass country. Often travelled over 50 km sighting only isolated ranches.

Bicycle helmets great conversation starters. One old chap near Piapot (named after first Indian chief to stop CNR) showed us original buffalo grass which had never been touched. In his opinion, was the way all short grass country should have been left; only vegetation that will handle present drought.

Highlights:

Flying trip from Banff through the foothills of Calgary.

The sight of a real live working cowboy patrolling fences horseback on a ranch west of Gull Lake.

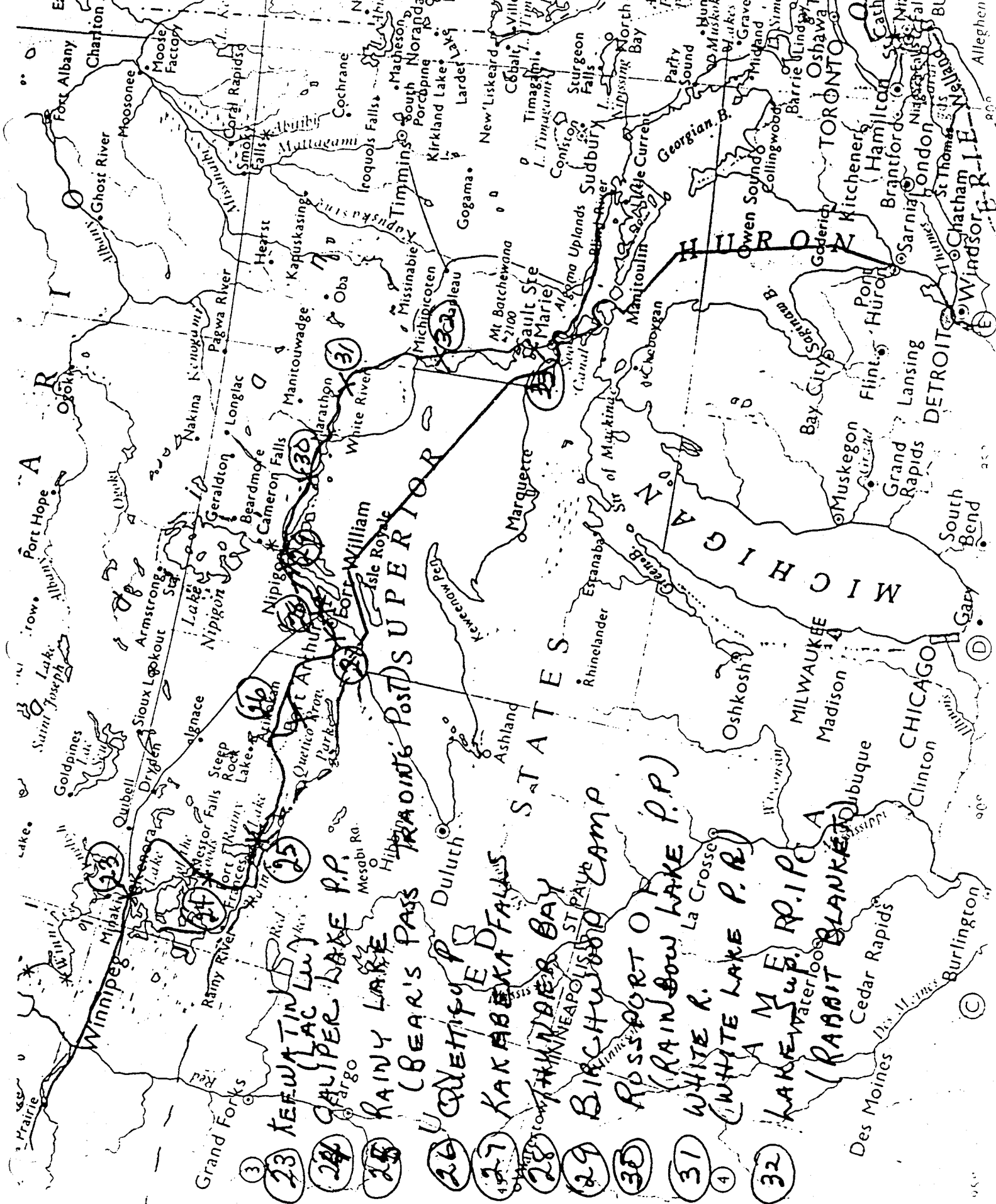
Prairie hawks soaring almost continually as we crossed the prairies. One big old fellow continued to drink from (rare) roadside puddle as we went by.

The waterfowl in the sweet sloughs (some Saskatchewan sloughs are alkaline). One large pond even had two white pelicans.

The ride from Minnedosa to Neepawa through a kaleidoscope of blue sky, yellow canola fields, purple flax, and grain just beginning to turn. The road was high along the closest look at the patchwork quilt of prairie grain fields.

Wildlife - an elk moving down a Banff street (one tourist proclaimed, "I've finally seen a moose!"), a doe in a gully right beside our downtown campsite in Medicine Hat, and a fawn wandering through our campsite in Richer Lake.

I've travelled prairies quickly by car, but after journey by bike, have new respect for early settlers. To look down road that seems endless and appears to be on slight upgrade, with nothing in sight but sky and horizon takes courage I'm not sure I would have had if my vehicle was an old Red River cart.



SCALE
1:8.5 million

- 23 KEWATIN (LAC SEUL)
- 24 GALIPER LAKE P.P.
- 25 RAINY LAKE (BEAR'S PASS TRADING POST)
- 26 QUETICO P.
- 27 KAKABEKA FALLS
- 28 THUNDER BAY
- 29 BIRCHWOOD CAMP
- 30 ROSSPORT (RAINBOW LAKE P.P.)
- 31 WHITE R. (WHITE LAKE P.P.)
- 32 LAKE M.F. (RABBIT BLANKET)

(C)

(D)

(E)

(F)

(G)

Unfortunately, Roy and Sylvia also decided to ride to Winnipeg which made conditions in the van a little crowded.

July 22

Hectic ride to Winnipeg but with quick service received treatment and prescription for analgesic at Grace Hospital. I rode the back of the truck from Winnipeg (100 F.) to camp near Richer. Camp was merely an open field, hot, but at least shower and pool available. The plains are now giving way to the Canadian Shield. Camp surrounded by woods with a pet fawn wandering the camp and a full-grown doe eating tame raspberries off a bush near a trailer. For the riders, heat, headwinds and frost cracks made a tough ride. Bob, however, rode straight through and reached camp at the same time as we did. Our night to cook.

July 23

Rode shot gun again. Trip from Richer to Ontario border a forest tunnel. At least the trees provide some shelter from the heavy crosswinds. After the Ontario border, we had first look at the entry to the real shield territory, lake and rock. We stopped and bought some blueberries near Falcon Lake. Went into Kenora for groceries. It is a much prettier town than I remembered. Waterfront on Lake of Woods looks like it's being rebuilt. LacLou campground back a winding, poorly surfaced road (8k). Pretty lake but only one shower for the whole camp and outdoor privvies. Campground sloped to the sea. Heavy rainstorm

started at 8:00 and proceeded most of the night. There was a tornado in the park east of Kenora. One of the major problems of selecting a camp site from brochures is that you really have no more knowledge than you get from a real estate ad.

166.4 July 24

Rode by myself. Away by 7:00. Drove off the side of a road while I berated a dog coming across a yard. After I dusted myself off, I described the dog's ancestry and went on my way. Took a picture of the Big Muskie and Lake of the Woods on the way past the tourist centre. The day's run was typical Canadian Shield—a little lake and huge rock face at every turn. I stopped first at a little restaurant near Longbow Corners and then at two little lakes and two other rest areas.

We had good strawberry pie at a nice coffee shop outside of Sioux Narrows. Ron and I ran the last 40 k together, stopping at one rest area looking over a lake and a grocery store in Nestor Falls. We talked to an American cyclist, fully loaded and heading the other way. I missed the bloody camp entrance to Calper Lake. Ron lost his sweater from the bike rack when he passed me. The sign said 2k ---. I thought it meant ahead; it meant inland. Tried to catch John who had also gone by; failed; returned; probably went an extra 10k. This likely was the prettiest camp site. Excellent facilities; sat on the table near the water and

Identified 7 different varieties of song bird in 30 min.
Flo and I walked to the gate, but phone wouldn't work.

126.3 July 25

Late start. Tent soaked with dew and I had to phone my report to Mike for the paper.. Van passed me at the gate of the park. First 51 k on Highway # 71 was pretty interesting. I stopped and ate a muffin on a rock outcrop at 32 k. Next stop at 54 k on #11 at Emo-excellent cinnamon buns. From Emo to Fort Frances is a poor attempt at farmland. Some is not bad, but most is pretty desperate. Fort Frances has not much going for it.

Causeway to the east across Rainy Lake pretty-unfortunately the bridge was under construction. Nice rest area just over the causeway. The road up until the last week was professionally frost cracked. I certainly looked with great anticipation for the Bear's Pass Trading Post sign.

Country now totally rock and forest again.

The campground arrived finally and was on a little lake, part of the huge Rainy River system. Outfitters' camp and store even let Flo use their own laundry facilities. Rain threatened before supper but held off. We had a group meeting on the shore of the lake.

162 k July 26

Rode out early. Roads and wind pretty good until I got 20k east of Atikokan. At that point we hit massive road destruction for 17 k. Rose and I had stopped for lunch

about 2 k before the construction on a rock outcrop. We wended our way so carefully through the construction that Rose failed to see a young buck cross the highway just in front of her. Reached the Atikokan corner about 2:00 p.m. Connie convinced me to visit the town. Unfortunately, downhill all the way which meant a 3 k climb back out. Bad decision to go in!

Flo and the van had passed me on the way in but I failed to find them downtown. Rose stayed to rest under a tree at a takeout. I went on and found a little rest area about 20 k from Quetico. Lay on a picnic table overlooking a little lake. We stayed at Quetico Wilderness Park-no showers, good washrooms. Lots of evidence of canoe camping. Our sites overlooked the lake. I sneaked through a neighbouring site to find a place to eat lunch. Tried to take a picture of the sunset over French Lake but had to borrow some batteries from Larry before the camera would load properly.

128.9 July 27

Saw Great Grey Owl and Loon before breakfast. Early morning shower made us nervous. Packed up early. Of 128k, only last 3 very picturesque. Dry, hot and windy. Quetico region has a great deal of 'clear cut areas' and several burned out areas. One stretch after we turned on Highway 17 & 11, the wind was so strong that we had to pedal downhill. Quite a few tried to reach the hostel in Thunder Bay so that there would be 3 days there. Unfortunately, the hostel was located 15 k out of town and those who chose to eliminate

Kakabeca Falls Camp went about 180 k and those who went to the falls first, about 210 k. Florence and I rode in from Kakabeca to Thunder Bay and rented a room at the Shoreline Hotel We had a group picture taken by Thunder Bay reporter before we left. Kakabeca Falls campsite right beside showers but 2k up hill from the Falls, which was a steep climb after a long day.

REST DAY JULY 28

Did our laundry early. Met an interesting lady at the laundromat. She and her husband had left England 2 years earlier on April Fool's Day to cycle the world. Their panier racks were the only problem-didn't stand up. Were living with a couple in Thunder Bay while husband fixed the plumbing. They wore no helmets until # 17 -scared to death. They intended to buy helmets in Thunder Bay. Australia and India had been unbearably hot; while Turkey and Saudi Arabia were nicer than expected.

Had lunch at Cultures: great strawberry and yogurt drink. Purchased a new pair of bike shoes at a local bike store. The sole on the original pair was worn through. Greg, Gaston, Ron, Marg and Bob joined us in the hotel. We tried to get to old Fort William by town bus. After a 40 min. ride and 40 stops, we found that we had missed the last bus by 5 min. This, after we had been assured at the harbour bus station that we would be able to connect. From there the day went downhill. Supper at Doodles-a disaster-all we could eat Chinese buffet, unfortunately no food, even after repeated

hints. When we found the restaurant empty at 6:00, we should have twigged to a problem.

Good harbour cruise which included a look at the elevator that collapsed in the harbour about 15 years ago and a bridge that was counter-balanced so well that both a rail line and road split and overlapped as it rose for the ferry. Sharp Captain-nice cruise-made us think our luck had changed. However, a fast arriving thunderstorm changed all of that quickly. Still raining when we left and to top it off a freight train blocked our exit from the cruise park. Ron's description of Thunder Bay matched his description of the Prairies. They _____.

94.3 July 29

Early start from the motel (7:00), biked to a recommended breakfast spot called "Scooters". Like most of our Thunder Bay eating spots, reputation exceeded service. Took three quarters of an hour to be served. Food was good but Flo couldn't get any cereal or Bran muffins. First day back on the bike for Florence. It was good to have my pacer leading again. We stopped at Thunder Bay by-pass to see the Terry Fox monument. Quite impressive, overlooking the harbour in the distance and the "Sleeping Giant". Long downhill from the monument and then a tough climb out with our first taste of #17 traffic. Now we realized why the English couple were seriously considering helmets. This is an old section of highway, no edge, and heavily travelled by trucks. Partial tailwind. Stopped at the road leading to Agawa Canyon but

the weather looked a little risky for the extra distance. Amethyst mines and shops abound in the area. Most of the group stopped at various times at a gas station near Hucket. Stayed at a campground 25 k west of Nipigon near Red Rock called Birchwood Pleasant Camp with an amethyst store. Five pound rocks too much to carry. This is one of the advantages of travelling by bicycle. Camp arrival time 2:00. No ----- truck; therefore, no tents or showers. Truck arrived about 3:30 after we outlasted a heavy downpour in various sheds and washrooms. After tents and showers were attended to, the rain returned with a vengeance and it was decided to have supper in Nipigon. The van took two loads, with the first group attending to laundry before they ate. The restuarant coped well, but 32 bikers on a Friday night was more than they had anticipated.

98.4 July 30

Day dawned bright after a night of severe local thunderstorms. Near tornado at "Rushing Water Park" near Kenora with quite a lot of traller and tree damage. Flo and I got an early start. We stopped at a little bake shop in Nipigon after getting thoroughly lost in attempting to find it. We crossed the railroad track carrying our bikes three times. Good honest climb after crossing Nipigon River. Road good and traffic light. At about 10:00 a.m. we rounded our first major Superior Hill and got our first glimpse of Lake Superior. We pulled into a rest area and talked to a couple from the Maritimes who were completing a cross country tour by car.

Lake Superior is a deep azure blue colour, probably because it is much deeper than Lake Huron or Ontario. The hills served notice immediately that we were to earn our money. Half-way up the second hill we had our mid-point celebration. The view backward featured the lake and a long white sand beach. Looking forward a 200 m rock cut and another 2k climb loomed. We sunbathed while we waited for the van and our lunch. When it arrived we ate too well and the start after dinner was tough. We had an ice cream cone at the outskirts of Rosspport, a pretty little vacation town. We actually thought we were going to be able to camp right on Lake Superior at Rosspport Provincial Park but it is only a day park. Pretty spot though, with the water lapping on the rocks. We had to psych ourselves up for another 12k and one more solid climb to Rainbow Provincial Park. Even at that, arrival time was still only 2:30. Park had good facilities and was situated on a lake with a nice falls. We had a fine supper with a birthday cake and a card built by Greg in honour of my 49th.

165k July 31

We have arrived in "Headland" country. Road generally pretty good but follows the lake, going constantly over headlands. No river valleys to follow. They all head for the lake. Stopped for toast and tea at a motel in Terrace Bay around 8:30. Pretty looking town, unfortunately pulp smell fairly evident. We stopped early at a little motel restaurant. Owner was a bird enthusiast. Opens his sliding door on sunny winter days and feeds the Jays and Juncos on

his carpet. First 100 k the toughest of the ride. Hard climbs and various degrees of headwinds. We had lunch at Jack Fish Lake on a little sheltered rock pile in about 55 degree F. weather. Reached the Marathon junction at about 2:00 (110 k) and felt that at the rate we were progressing it would be dark by the time we reached camp. Fortunately the highway moved inland and the headwind eased so that the last 65 k went fairly quickly. Just after Marathon at the top of a solid hill, my front brakes fell off. I managed to get stopped, put the parts in my handlebar bag and used my back brakes gingerly to get down the hill. The gods must have been watching because the terrain levelled and I faced no more major grades. We stopped at about the 150 k mark and faced our only black fly attack—one of three times we used muskol. White Lake Provincial Park near White River was a nice park, but we were again shuttled to the group camping area which was 3k from the shower area and had no facilities, not even a "bloody privy". Ron MacDonald and Flo fixed my brake with a nut that Paul Way happened to have that fit perfectly. Our tent was up when we arrived, courtesy of Ron and Ron. Looked right out on the lake. Took a picture of the sunrise.

Cyclists find Northern Ontario difficult

by Don Leatham

(Editor's note: Don and Florence Leatham of Walkerton are bicycling across Canada. During the coming weeks they will be submitting a "postcard" at intervals to the Herald-Times to share their sights and experiences on the "Tour du Canada.")

On August 5 at about 11:15 we crossed the swing bridge at Little Current, leaving the north behind us.

When talking about the trip with friends before we left, two areas mentioned most: Rockies and escarpment north of Superior. The Rockies were no surprise, but unrelenting headlands of the Superior shore from Kenora to Sault St. Marie instilled day by day in each of us a very healthy respect for some of Canada's most challenging routes.

Although climbs weren't as long as those provided by mountain passes, grades generally were steeper and sheer number of climbs added up to make northern Ontario section as tough to cycle as the mountains.

As in most endeavours, however, our hard work had its rewards. From east of Kenora to Nipigon, came into typical Muskoka setting of rocks and deep blue lakes. From Nipigon to the Sault, route was dotted with beautiful parks and spectacular views of Superior. Last section from the Sault to Little Current provided look at Lake Huron and Manitoulin's north channel, as well as host of shield lakes.

General impressions:

If largely unused Superior beaches could be moved nearer to southern Ontario population centres, summer would be happier for a great many people.

Mountain highways follow river valleys and passes, while northern Ontario roads simply go over top.

Dreaded logging trucks are generally driven by quite considerate operators who give cyclists more than even break. Neither

traffic nor highway widths were as hard to deal with as anticipated.

Sheer size of northern province apparent as we cycled. Took us 12 days to cross its breadth while spent only 10 in Rockies.

From Winnipeg to Sault lumbering and mining are king. Farming was almost non-existent on our route. Road to gold mines near Marathon called "Yellow Brick Road."

Mine tailings, "clear cutting," and smell of pulp mills all evidence of attempts to wrestle a living from the north. Unfortunately, none very attractive to traveller.

Highlights:

First views of: Lake of the Woods near Kenora, Lake Superior near Nipigon, and Old Woman Bay near lake Superior provincial park.

Picnic lunch celebrating our halfway

mark near Rossport. Stopped at rest area halfway up 3 km climb, which gave us great view of a lake Superior inlet and about 12 km of untouched beach.

After crossing highway in front of me as I picked my way through only tough stretch of construction so far (17 km near Atikokan).

A swim at Pancake Bay provincial park after a long day's ride - 12 to 15 km of sandy beach in a horseshoe shape with maybe 30 people visible at 5:30 p.m.

Tour still operating on all cylinders. Only injury of major proportions so far occurred when one of our people wrecked his knee stepping down from van. He hopes to be back riding by time we reach Ottawa.

By time this postcard reaches you, Florence and I will have stopped over in Walkerton for a few days at home, and be back on the road on our way east.

161k August 1

The run from White Lake to Wawa was fast and scenic, marred only by some mining and clear cutting. Typical Canadian Shield: lake, forest, rock. Weather warmed up considerably by the time we reached Wawa and the Mighty Goose. Long climb by Wawa, a foretaste of what was to come. We travelled 90k without habitation through Lake Superior Park, similar to Rossport-Marathon run. Stopped at two different lakes for drinks. Views of Superior, spectacular, especially the downhill to the curve overlooking Old Woman Bay. Like all beaches in the area, miles of sand without a soul to be seen. During the climb out of Old Woman Bay not even my J cloth could keep the sweat out of my eyes. Even Mark mentioned on the way by that it was an honest climb. Camp was nice but uphill to the sites in Rabbit Blanket Provincial Park. Second century (100 miles) in a row of hills and I was beat: legs felt like mush. Rejuvenated by a swim in the little lake with Ron and Rose as there were no showers or hot water. Dry spell was causing the camp some difficulties; tap at our site ran dry; had to carry the water a fair distance. Fortunately it wasn't our night to cook! Looked like a good night but a storm rolled in at dusk and we had heavy rain all night. This stopped while we had breakfast but the tents went down wet and we all started out in full rain gear. Fortunately the storms went around us and by mid-morning we had sunshine back.

117.4 k August 2

First 35 k out of Rabbit Blanket mostly downhill with only one long climb and a solid tail wind (25-27 k/h). Stopped at a level stretch for washroom break and Ron and Rose caught us. The highway now had again found the Superior Shore and it was headland time. The wind also changed and one section before the road to the Indian cliff paintings, the going was so tough that I got off and had to lie on the rocks to re-cuperate. We finally made it to the park boundary and our first sign of habitation after 55 k. Nice bake shop-restaurant attached to a gas station and craft shop.

Flo and I left first but I forgot my water bottle and had just turned around to go back when Ron caught up with it. Climbs 6-8%, one after the other. Great downhill into Montreal River with a magnificent view of the lake. Unfortunately, equally as great was the climb out. We learned later that the heat got to the couple riding the tandem and they had to push it all the way up-5k. Flo and I made it. Rose walked the top part in over 30 degree C. heat. Little garage and restaurant almost at the crest. We pulled in and drank everything in sight. As we attempted to restock our fluid balance, I noticed a big guy in a black leather jacket and helmet eyeing our bikes as I looked out the restuarant window. I thought, "Oh my God! he's going to trash our bikes and we're a hundred miles from nowhere."

Just as I was about to go and ask his intentions, he came around the corner and into the restaurant. As he entered, he took off his helmet. It was my nephew, Skip. He and Marl were motorcycling to Banff. Marl was suffering the same ailment as we fared because of the hours in the saddle and the rough road. They had been delayed by a flat tire which made the meeting even more coincidental.

This area deserves a closer inspection. It was one of the prettiest stretches. If it wasn't so far away it would be ideal cottage country;- all kinds of untouched beaches and little lakes. Highway coming from west to east often looks like it is going to go around a cliff right into the lake. Day continued to get hotter, needed oils and emulants. We stopped at a motel and I got a milk shake and Flo a cone. The old chap running it assured us that we only had two more big hills before Sault Ste. Marie and only about 15k to go that day. We had stopped earlier and walked our bikes back up a logging road to get out of the sun. (32 degrees C. in the shade) We reached the camp about four o'clock. Nice setting on a sandy horseshoe shaped beach (10 k, not a soul to be seen). We pitched our tents and I went for a dip in the lake. Just like Sauble and quite warm for Superior. We cooked hot dogs and corn for supper-beach party.

Thunderstorm came up but it held off until just before dusk. Pretty spectacular lightning display! I forgot some J- cloths that we had hung out to dry and had to run for them as the rain started. Unfortunately I ^{also} forgot about my towel. I

couldn't understand what the dark shadow on the top of the tent was during the lightning flashes. It was slightly damp by morning. The rain had stopped and we felt that we might get breakfast over. Don Lee had tried to shut the back door of the van when the rain started and forgot about the tarp rope. Needless to say the tarp was no longer in place when we got up.

To this point, we had never had to face a totally wet meal but about 7:00 a.m. the sky opened up. Some visions that still remain: John trying to make a peanut butter sandwich in the pouring rain;

Rose taking down the tent singing as rain pours down her face;

Ron at the same time coming into the camp site area asking if we wanted to sign up for next year's trip.

We finally got packed up about 8:30.

85.2 k August 3

Flo and I decided to ride in the van to Sault Ste. Marie. Hot and sticky in the back. Stopped once for gas and then at a place in the Sault. We tried to get money at a bank but we couldn't find an Instant Teller. Nice plaza of the Square 1 variety. We biked to Larry's Place for goodies and drinks, and then headed for Thessalon. Although the day was hot, we had a good tail wind and a portion of the highway

was 4-lane. We found a little spot near Richard's outside of the Sault (45 K) that sold yogurt. It had cushions on the benches outside the store and was your typical country restaurant. Caught our first glimpse of Lake Huron-almost lavender.

The campground at Thessalon was like a fairground, across the highway from a nice beach. A large number of trailers had used up most of the available shade. At least there was no problem drying out the tents. I picked an area that I thought would have late afternoon shade. However, three German shepherds were on a wire run by a trailer across the way. Bad choice of site!

We had showers and tied our laundry to our bike and headed for downtown Thessalon. While the laundry laundered, we had fish and chips in a little restaurant devoid of air-conditioning. Good food, but really hot and sticky. We had an ice cream cone before returning but even that had little effect on the heat. One of the few nights that it was difficult to get to sleep because of heat and humidity. The arrival, departure and arguments of the dog owners and their offspring helped our sleep very little.

128.4 k August 4

The day dawned with little cooling. We left at 7:20 and biked through Thessalon, stopping at a little bakery. Pretty town with a river through it. Several business sites boarded up which indicated the typical small town problem of

keeping a strong industrial base. Trip as far as Iron Bridge fairly easy although rain threatened. Only one large hill outside of Thessalon. We followed the Mississauga River valley almost to Blind River. Pretty route but seemed to be a gradual ascent. We ate our lunch at Serpent R. just before the Elliot Lake cut-off. A new little drive-in with an outside shelter. Rose and Angie, Peter and Aaron also ate there. Rocks and configuration began to look like Muskoka. We just got by one spot before a blasting operation took place. Road widening is still not complete in some locations.

Threatened rain but the overcast made the heat more bearable. Our first really humid day. Reached Chutes Provincial Park in Massey at about 2:30. Nice park with an excellent description of the early log chutes around a natural waterfall. Rose and Ron, Flo and I went for a walk to see the old site. Lake at the base pretty shallow and having a problem with leeches.

We put our tents up in a drizzle but were able to get our supper without a heavy rain. After we had our showers, we were just as wet ten minutes later from what must have been 100% humidity. The entire camp appears to be a natural berry site. Several types available but when we arrived, the Saskatoon berries were at their peak. Larger and sweeter than blueberries. We ate them by the handful and used them to highlight our meals. The only downside was the ant population which was also at its peak and chose

4:00-8:00 p.m. to swarm. The rising clouds attracted a great many kingbirds and swallows. Some talk of two splits: Gaston and the Ottawa troop heading straight for Ottawa and Aaron and Peter heading straight for the Ferry as opposed to staying over on Manitoulin Island. Thunderstorms through the night eased the humidity somewhat. We find it hard to believe that we leave the north on the 5th and will be home for three days rest and relaxation on the 6th. I was foolish enough to promise a rather tired Judy that the tough hills are soon behind us.

112.9 k August 5

Left Massey at 7:20 in threatening rain and mist. Slight head wind and fairly heavy rolling terrain to Espanola. We had a bite to eat at a restaurant on the eastern end of Espanola. From there to Little Current was definitely Canadian Shield country. (Poor Judy!) A lot of rocks and hills with an occasional lake. A large dog fox crossed in front of me just before White Fish Falls. We caught an occasional glimpse of the old road bed and were quite content to be on the new version. At one of the more picturesque lake vistas, a local art group were engaged in painting and photography. We ran through a persistent rain until we reached the flat section before Little Current. The isthmus is a large rocky plateau with limited agricultural possibilities. One large section had a few buffalo along with herefords in what looked like a

combination park and ranch. Just before Little Current we saw a free campground advertised. The view from the road may have justified the admission price. By the time we reached the bridge at Little Current, the weather had cleared and it had become quite hot. While the bridge rotated on its axis, (every hour for 15 min.) we ate our lunch and watched the R.B.'s sail through. Quite an impressive bridge, comparable to the one at Thunder Bay. We took a more formal break at a restaurant on the way out of Little Current—good apple pie. We actually wanted more to get out of the sun than to eat. Those who went downtown in Little Current were impressed.

The climb onto the island was challenging, especially as it was into a stiff headwind which gradually picked up all afternoon. The road gives a nice view of Manitowaning Bay on the way onto the island and later at a Mission marker at craft area you see the bay again off the escarpment. The wind was almost strong enough at this point to blow you up straight on the bike. The final 32 k to Holiday Haven took us 3 hours between hills, heat and headwind. (3 H's) The pasture land looked like it last saw rain in 1986. Little stops at a rest area and gas station by a little lake helped. Reached campground at Lake Manitou about 3:30. Thunderstorm on the horizon. We tried to dry our tenting equipment as it was to be down for three days. Rain struck about 4:30. More sound and fury than actual storm. Lake Manitou is an impressive lake, especially in a storm; waves

broke the same as Lake Huron. We rented a little cabin called Nod Hill about 12X20 with a shower, kitchen and bed overlooking the lake. GREAT IDEA!

Greg had purchased some white fish and John and his team cooked up a great fresh fish fry. Since we had to be at the ferry dock at Southbaymouth by 8:30 and the winds promised to be as strong, it was agreed that breakfast would be available only from 6:00-6:30. Flo and I got Mark to do our 'sweep' duty and set the alarm at 5:30.

102.2 k August 6

Pre-dawn breakfast but the storm had cleared the air so we didn't have to worry about riding in the rain. We left at 6:15 and joined Barb and Gaston at the Manitowaning by-pass. Using the draft technique against a slight but steady headwind, we were able to average 25 k per hour over the last 32 k. to Southbaymouth. This portion of the island much better farmland. We arrived in Southbaymouth at about 7:30 and had time for a second breakfast. We bought Barb and Gaston's breakfast for towing us in.

We were allowed to enter the ferry first and tie up our bikes. We sat on the upper deck on the side out of the wind and had an excellent crossing. Left the ferry at 11:10 and were on our way to Sauble Beach by 11:30. Heavy crosswind prevailed. We got a little protection for the first 30 k because of the heavy forest. We stopped at Ferndale, Miller's Lake and a rest area near Wlarton. The terrain was

flat to rolling ;only two Granny gear hills. Great ice cream cone in Wlarton. (Old-fashioned parlour). Ione Unsworth was waiting for Bob U. to catch up in Wlarton and reported that our gear was all safely stowed at Sauble. The rest of the troop had stayed at Cypress Lake Park. Section from Wlarton to Hepworth really busy and from Hepworth to Sauble we faced an extremely strong headwind. We appreciated the shower and meal at John and Mary Raeburn's immensely. Boys drove us home at about 9:00.

August 7-9

Layover at home.

GOOD BED! GOOD FOOD! GOOD CHAISE LOUNGE ! GOOD IDEA!

126.8 k August 10

Mike drove us to Bradford. Saw several of the cyclists at KOA (Toronto north). Tongue for the trailer broke on the way to Bradford and had to be repaired on the layover. We stayed at a reasonable bed and breakfast outside of Bradford. Kitchen locked, but a nice old farm home. Muggy evening, nice breakfast. We had a good discussion of settlement of the area and the encroachment of the city on the rural areas. Left my shampoo. The first ~~70~~¹⁷ k from Bradford was 4 lane on # 11 and a little hairy. Rolling farm land. A treat to be able to travel country roads through good farmland once more. The hilltops provided a view of a typical rural Ontario farm setting. Villages and

stopping points abundant. A great contrast to the Prairies and Northern Ontario. The last 60 k on Highway #7 and 115, traffic was a little tougher due to quite a few large gravel trucks.

We lunched at a restaurant, bakeshop just before the #115 intersection. Barb and Gaston, and Connie joined us and we spent most of our time eyeing the desserts and laughing at a poster of Murphy's Laws.

We caught Judy at the outskirts of Peterborough and while we looked at the tourist booth, Klosk, Ron arrived. We followed the Otonabee River across town to Beaver Mead Park right in the centre of Peterborough. Nice camp and lo and behold we were allowed to stay within hailing distance of the showers. Bud came to see the group and ask if we would agree to give the deposit back to a lad from Ottawa who wasn't able to go at the last minute. Just before supper, Andrew reported to Florence that he was having serious stomach discomfort. Since he was no better by 9:00, Bob went with him to the nearby hospital. Fortunately, it wasn't appendicitis, but merely a stomach flu and he was able to return to camp.

146 k August 11

Flo and I got away early again (6:50) My concept of Peterborough as a hilly town totally changed. I kept watching for the big hills we had faced in the spring run. The route we took through the city had none, of any account. The first 6k on 7A was 4 lane highway but the next 20k was

only 2 lane with no edge and heavy traffic. It appeared that it was going to be a long day, but thankfully the 2' edge strip appeared not too much farther along and traffic thinned noticeably. We chugged to the 44 k mark before we stopped, going through whole towns without so much as a muffin or cup of tea: Flo at her slave-driving best! Madoc was having the main street chewed up by a pavement eating machine which took up a 3" layer to prepare for new pavement. Quite an operation; looked like a combination planer and forage harvester.

The country changed again as we entered the Land-o-lakes Region-Canadian Shield, pretty but many of the smaller lakes almost dry. We visited a craft shop that had, among other things, a five foot wrist watch with a woollen expansion band. The bake shop next door was well received and advertised. We had an early lunch at a motel near Kaladar #41. The German couple who ran the business were dears. They wouldn't believe that we had cycled that far. She kept saying motorcycle-we simply pointed to our bicycles. She was extremely proud of her flowers which were beautiful despite the driest summer in 35 years. She gave us some purple beans from her garden to show the group. She talked of a mining engineer from Calgary who worked at a local mine and always stayed at their motel rather than going to Belleville or Kingston.

Noon stop at Kanata restaurant and Cheese house. Great blackberry pie. The blueberry stands were thick in the

tourist area. New twist was that they all featured home baking as well as the fresh berries. Our final stop before Sharbot Lake camp was a little restaurant, gas station store that appeared to be in a take over discussion. Three Asian gentlemen, the owner and a lawyer were in serious discussion during our rest stop. Arrived at camp about 4:30 and immediately tried to contact Mary and Jerry Johnsrude who thought we were camping at Verona. They were kind enough to drive the extra distance from Kingston to Sharbot Lake to save us facing another camp dinner. We set up camp looking directly over the lake in nice spacious sites not far from the showers. We knew that there had to be a catch and we found out later that night. We were camped right beside the highway and worse still, beside a hill. Ron felt that the truckers were hunting bikers and they hunted in packs.

Mary and Jerry Johnsrude were nice enough to bring a picnic lunch and we ate at the camp picnic area overlooking the lake. Wine, cold chicken salad, blueberries and yogurt never tasted so good. They feel that Kingston will be their final stop and are quite content with the move. After a final coffee and non-descript pie for dessert at the local restaurant, we said good-bye and picked our way to our tent in the dark, almost tripping over the several tent ropes in the process.

125.5 k August 12

Cyclists return to farmland

by Don Leatham

(Editor's note: Don and Florence Leatham of Walkerton are bicycling across Canada. During the coming weeks they will be submitting a "postcard" at intervals to the Herald-Times to share their sights and experiences on the "Tour du Canada.")

Group is now down to 28 riders and the van driver. Two left because of knee and ankle injuries, and two left for business reasons. The fact that all four are of male gender may make some comment on relative strengths of each sex.

Stretch through southern Ontario and southern Quebec has proved a welcome period of adjustment. Return to rolling farmland dotted with country villages has reinvigorated entire group. Our schedule as well has provided rest days at both Ottawa and Quebec City in space of six days.

By time this reaches you, will be entering Maritimes, rested in both body and spirit.

General impressions:

-Beaches along Lake Huron and Georgian Bay still comparable to any we've seen.

-Rolling farmland in Peterborough area is not only picturesque but county roads are paved and in good shape.

-"Land of lakes" region west of Perth

has had driest summer in 35 years. Some of smaller ponds and lakes are almost dry. Perth is one of prettiest areas through which we've travelled.

-Capital region around Ottawa including Gatineau Hills with its bike paths is cyclist's delight.

-Both Montreal and Quebec City are much less hectic (and more charming) by bicycle than I remember them by car. Only exception is Jacques Cartier Bridge, crossing of which was hair-raising.

-Eastern townships of Quebec, like Niagara Peninsula, are pancake flat and excellent farmland (best cornfields we've seen to date). Townships provide quite enjoyable cycling.

-Amazed at number of Holstein herds. Probably more noticeable because farms are so long and narrow. Some of roads seems almost to be one long continuous village.

-In prairies grain elevators announced next village or town; in Quebec, it's church spire that is visible from well down road.

-Trip along St. Lawrence on south shore road (No. 132) provides almost continuous look at river and seigneurial farms and villages along north shore.

Highlights:

Windy but great crossing on Chee-Chi-Maun. Many of group had never heard of the boat and were amazed by its size as an

inland ferry.

Ride from Bradford to Peterborough and excellent camp within city (Beaver Mead).

Morning ride along Silver Lake on way to Perth, and stop at Maple Drop Baker for swamp-juice and home baking.

Our stopover in Ottawa as guests of cycling friends Joan and Bill Taylor. Although weather was sticky, royal treatment made stayover fly by. Ottawa will definitely be an area we return to for more detailed exploration.

In Montreal, lunch at Beauty's on St. Urbain, a street made famous by Mordecai Richler.

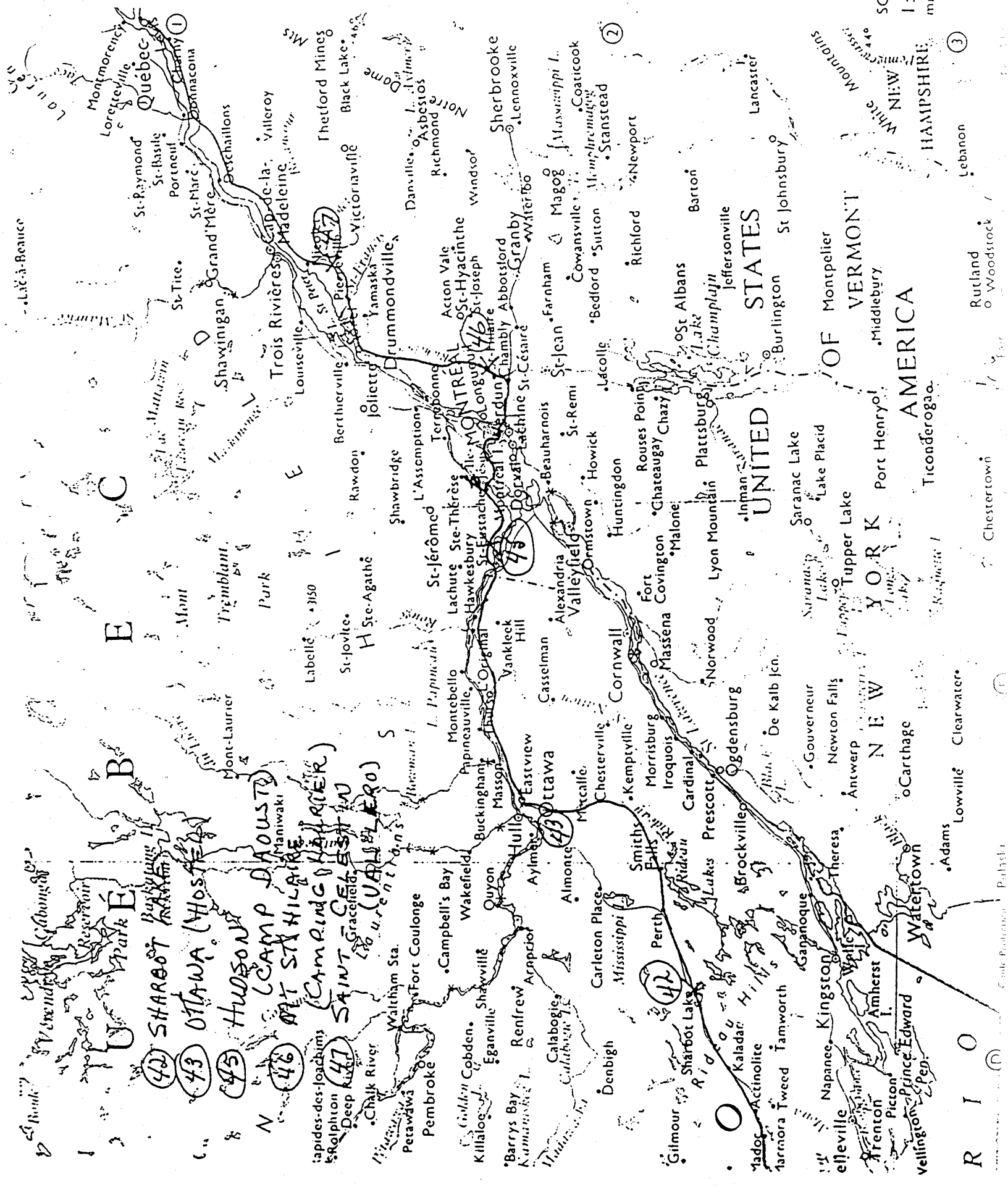
View of Montreal from centre of Jacques Cartier bridge as thundershowers approached.

View of Quebec's citadel from old cemetery across river near Levis point. Site guaranteed to raise hackles of any old history teacher.

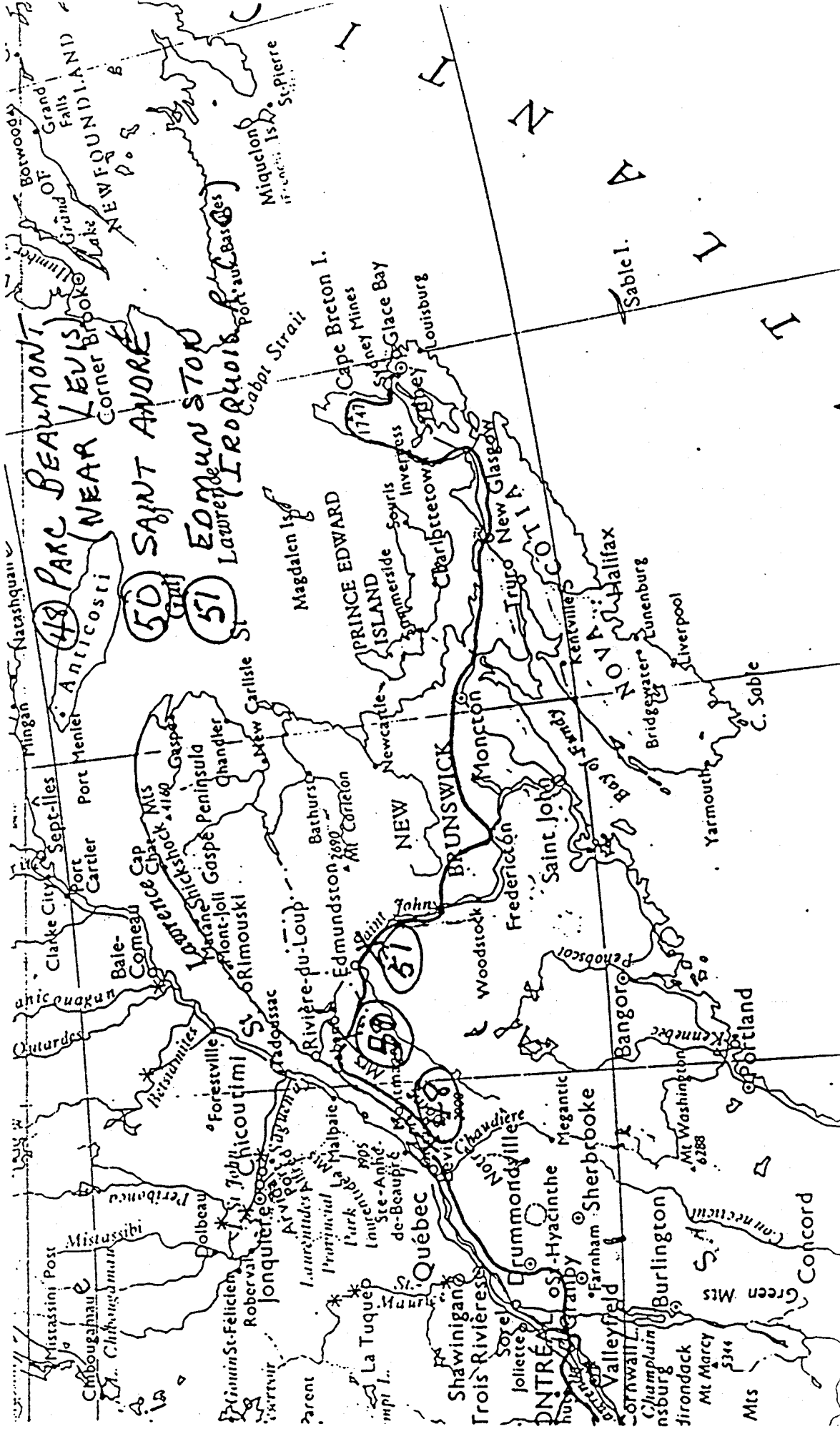
Our return to St. Lawrence and Great Lakes' Lowlands have served to emphasize need to preserve farmland now in production. Despite Canada's size, only very small percentage is grade "A" farmland. This year's drought underlines crucial importance of that land.

ONTARIO & QUEBEC

SCALE
1:2.5 million



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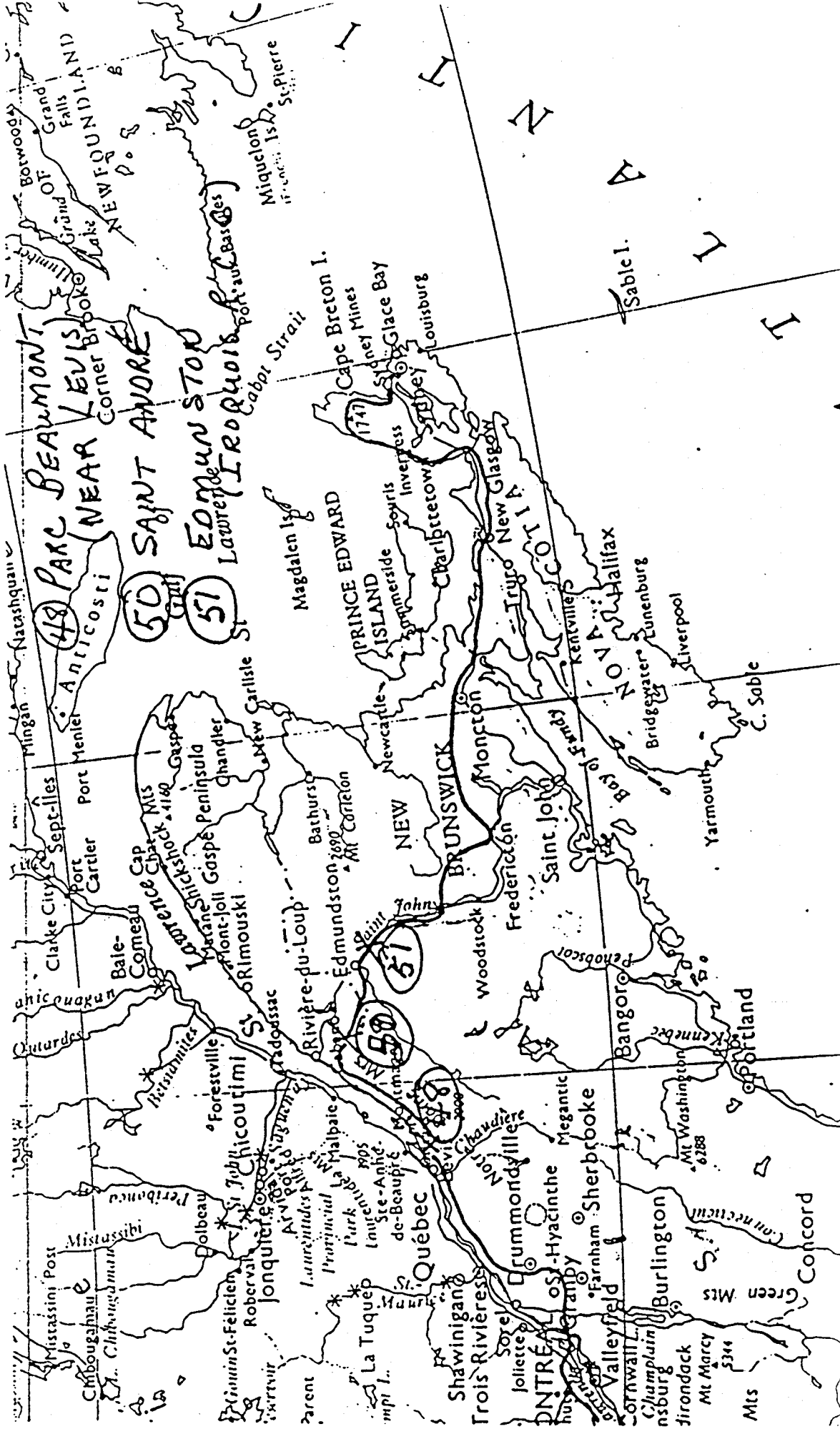


48 PARC BEAUMONT
NEAR LEVIS
(NEAR CORNER BIGOYER)

50 SAINT ANDRÉ

51 EDMUNDSTON
LAURENCE (F. AU BAS DES)

52 SAINT-JOHN

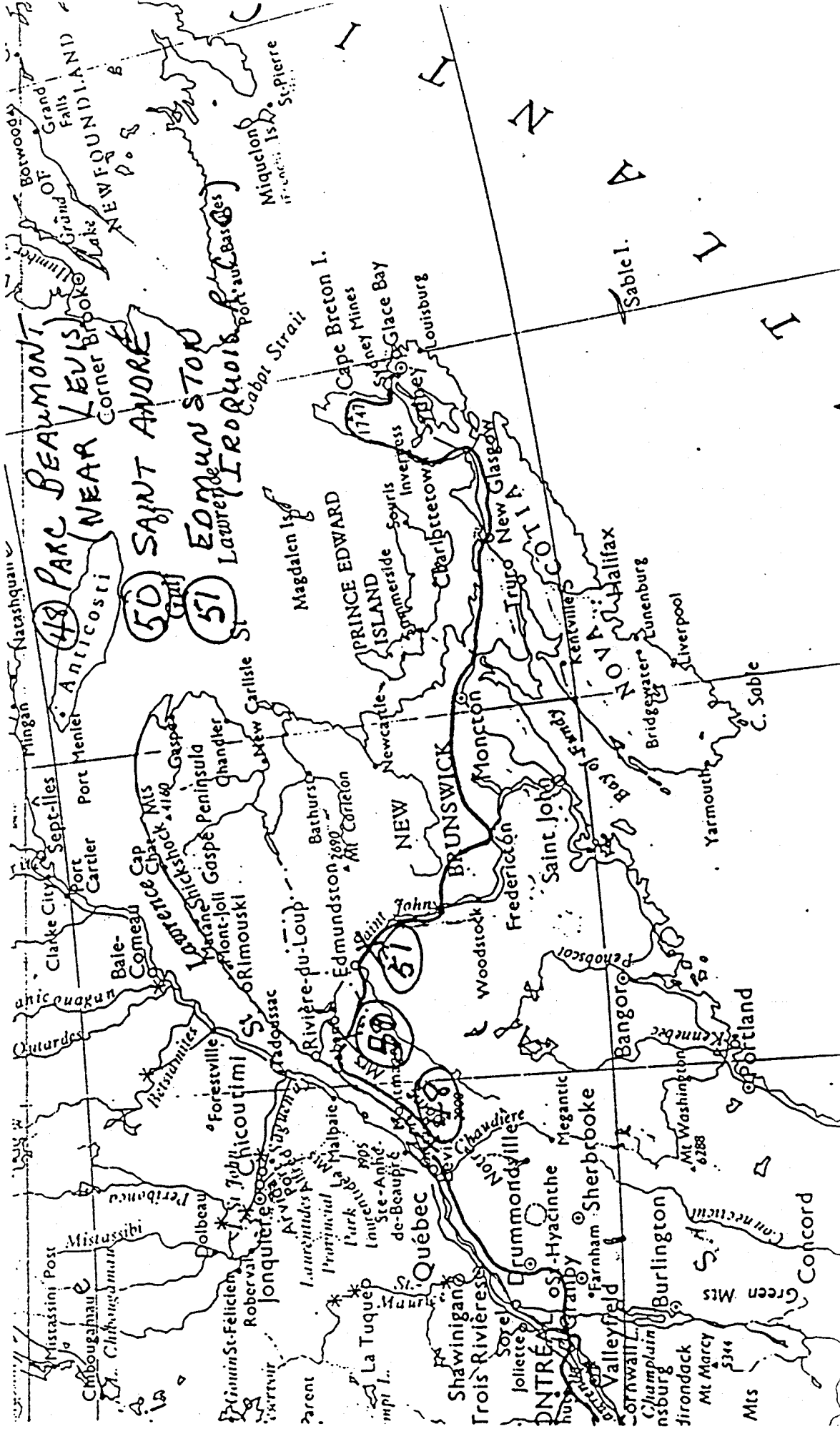


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50 SAINT ANDRÉ

51 EDMUNDSTON
LAURENCE (F. AU BAS DES)

52 SAINT-JOHN

Nice morning, a little later start, we got away about 7:30. Made it all the way to Perth (40 k) without a stop. Land levels into a farming district with only one major lake between Sharbot Lake and Perth. Pretty trip past Silver Lake. Traffic fairly heavy but the road was in good shape and the winds were no problem. Found a tea room, bake shop in Perth called the Maple Drop Bakery. It was cool and featured swamp juice, date squares and other delicious sustenance-like homemade toast and fresh raspberry jam. Perth continues to be high on our list of pretty towns. We gave serious thought to going down to the park for the morning and returning to the Maple Drop for dinner.

On the management and Connie's recommendation we followed County Road 10 all the rest of the way to Ottawa. Until we got to the outskirts of Richmond we had generally good roads and little traffic. We had lunch at Richmond but the waitress wouldn't let Flo eat her muffin and the meal was less than inspiring. Ron, Andrew, Rose and Angie arrived just as we came out and we did not recommend the spot very highly.

Florence was able to find the end of the bike paths and we followed them right down town to the back of the Parliament Buildings. I took a very distinguished shot of the Parliament's behind as well as the bridge to Hull. Florence asked a group of Mounties how to get to the youth hostel which is housed in the old jail but they told us to go to the tourist booth at the front. After a rather interesting

climb, we asked directions at the Tourist Booth and promptly got lost. A kind University of Ottawa student took us under her wing and led us to the hostel. Bike paths (we stopped along the river for a snack) still great, although frost cracked too.

The old Jail is done over in pine and is a unique spot. We phoned Joan Taylor and she came to our rescue in what had become a very hot day. The Taylors have a lovely home and Joan plied us with so much food and drink that I fell asleep trying to describe our trip. Joan looked great and Bill and Tad were on an Arctic dig. They were to return the next Tuesday. Two freak storms had flooded the basement and Joan wasn't sure whether she was brave enough to tell Bill or simply wait it out. Great bed-lovely home!

August 13 REST DAY

Great breakfast including eggs and black pudding (blood sausage). Jean took us to a bike shop where she does a lot of business. Owner is a master cyclist who still often cycles to Montreal from Ottawa. Gaston was collecting his bicycle that he had serviced on the layover, when we arrived. Flo bought a pair of shorts. Joan then took us on a tour of the Gatineaus-bike paths looked challenging but super. We swam at Meech Lake and had dinner with Ella Gray (a friend from a previous Nova Scotia tour) at Kingsmuire, the summer residence of William Lyon MacKenzie King. The day continued to grow increasingly hot. We then visited

Champlain Lookout which gives a tremendous view of the escarpment and the Quebec side of the valley. A hang glider played games in the updrafts caused by the cliff face. We were also given a Cook's Tour of the VIP portion of the city on the way home. The skies broke at about 5:00 but there were no serious flooding and unfortunately no break in the humidity. Arrangements had been made to say farewell to Bill Dixon who was leaving the tour in Ottawa at a supper at Mother Tuckers. The restaurant was crowded and the air conditioning had broken down. Another tour member and her husband who cycled with us in Nova Scotia, Rosalie, joined us for supper. Interesting couple. The husband works in protocol. Rosalie brought us muffins and jam at 5:30 the next morning to send us on our way.

It should be noted that Larry Beaton had recovered sufficiently from his surgery to meet us in Ottawa with his bicycle, although the riding was still limited.

154 k August 14

After many good-byes, we started out on an overcast morning for Hudson, Quebec. We followed country roads for the first 72 k through little Ottawa Valley villages and reasonable farmland. Flo needed to use a washroom and finally after two strikeouts, stopped at a gas station just beyond Karlsbad Springs. There were seven dogs that looked like they would eat Rin Tin Tin chained in different locations beside the garage-all in full chorus. I noticed that there

were horses in the field across the way and the owner appeared to be working on a halter. I asked if they showed horses and it turned out that he knew Jim McKay. Flo had found out from Mrs. Bergeron that Jim had arranged for her brother to judge the commercial horses at the Exhibition—small world!

Shortly afterwards, we ran into persistent rain and a fairly stiff headwind. A cycle club was smart enough to be running toward us—about 30 riders usually in 2's and 3's. We stopped to dry out at a little restaurant and just made it inside an open garage bay at Bourget before a downpour. The young lad suggested that we weren't very young to be attempting such a feat and then spent the next few minutes extracting his foot. The heat of the previous day had disappeared but the humidity was still high.

We had lunch at a restaurant motel just before the junction of Highway 17 at about 80k. Bob, Rose, Angie, Sharon, Andrew and Ron all arrived shortly after us. We used the air dryer in the washroom to warm up and dry off. Traffic and ride became more challenging on 17 and 417 which is the major route into Quebec. We were able to get directions just after crossing the border and followed a quiet route along the Ottawa into Hudson. Lovely homes—Montreal tourist area. We had a tough climb out of Hudson to Camp Daoust (as in Don). Great facility with a large casino that we used as an eating area. Mosquitos were large and hungry. We were camped right beside a petting yard. Several locquacious

geese were close to greasing our plate had they not settled down toward dusk!

104 k August 15

Thunderstorms were the rule through the night. Flo and I were up by 5:30. The weather had cleared but everything was wet. Tents went down soaked. We grabbed a quick breakfast and were away by 7:15. We crossed the Ottawa R. on a neat barge-ferry towed by a rope cable from an ordinary powerboat. When we reached the other side at Oka, the power boat simply gunned out of the way and shot us up to the loading ramp where the crew quickly secured the barge for unloading.

The ride along the Ottawa to Montreal was generally through rolling country with villages and towns at regular intervals. Monasteries and cathedrals were more in evidence each day. We reached Montreal around 10:30 and were able to reach the downtown by a fairly quiet route. Unfortunately, the weather turned catchy and we had to run for cover a couple of times. By 12:00 we were in the McGill University area and with Mark in tow tried to find an eating establishment recommended by Andrew. When we finally found it halfway up Mount St. Royal, it was closed for the day with a dejected Andrew and Ron standing outside. Andrew saved the day by getting us into 'Beauties' on St. Urban St. (Mordecai Richler)-a little restaurant specializing in bagels and fresh fruit concoctions. Florence had a smoked

salmon and cream cheese bagel and a frozen yogurt dessert. I had a generous western omlette and fresh strawberry pie. We bought Mark's lunch for sweeping for us on the Manitoulin-Southbayment run.

The trip to the Jacques Cartier bridge took us through the merchant district which was colourful and busy. Andrew had to check for some clothes that were ordered and while we waited, we met Angie who informed us that we would have to walk our bikes 3 k across the bridge as neither the train or the buses would take them. #\$\$*#! When we reached the ramp about twelve others hove to. With much grumbling we started walking. An on-rushing cloudburst did little to improve our spirits. The view from the bridge was impressive. By the time we reached the top, we had had it. Bob asked a policeman for special compensation and we crossed under four lanes through a tunnel and rode the passenger walkway on the wrong side for the last half. It was more than a little scary because there was barely enough room to meet other cyclists without touching handlebars(mountain bikes, especially). After crossing the bridge we came to a spaghetti junction and ended up having to run across about six lanes of traffic to get to our right exit.

A little tourist centre gave us general directions to Chambly. We missed a real downpour by stopping at a Dairy Bar and Market just before #116. This proved to be one of the hairiest stretches of our trip; four lanes, no shoulder,

60mph traffic, five o'clock out of Montreal. It was twelve miles that we would rather forget. A young lady in a white dress used a unique method of hitch hiking on the other side of the highway. She walked down the white line in the middle of the road.

We arrived at Camp Laurier near Chambly in a rain lull but the truck was nowhere in sight. The cooking group, having lost Bill and Larry, had to be re-organized and was desperately seeking supplies under Shawn's tutelage. Our site was right beside a ball park and fortunately an 8 o'clock shower drowned out all activities including ours. After a late supper, and considerable difficulty in reaching the boys by phone, we packed it in. The camp was fairly well-equipped but not too clean. Flo met a stripped kitty on the way to the washroom. The skunks totally destroyed our garbage bags. Sharon misread her watch and got up to make breakfast at 3:00. Just as I was getting back to sleep, the C.N. drove through our tent at 3:30.

143k August 16

Catchy and cool morning. Dodged the rain for a late breakfast. Morning ride along #116 and then north in a light rain(Scotch mist). Flat country roads in the Eastern townships. The only downer was a cool and persistent headwind. We played hopscotch for much of the day with Gston, Connie and Barb. The seigneurial farms are mostly pig and dairy cattle operations. They are so close together

that on the roads that carry main houses, you would think that it was one continual village. No wonder Quebec continues to overproduce its milk quota. Many of the barns and shed doors had paintings of stars and circles like Pennsylvania Dutch Hex signs. Each village has a central Catholic church with a steeple that dominates the approach. We met a paving gang working on a county road. They were paving the entire road and the shoulder was hip high with wet grass and weeds. We rode the new pavement sooner than was likely appropriate.

When we reached the St. Lawrence near Sorel, we were able to turn more easterly which allowed a little faster pace. We had our lunch in a little cafe in Pierreville just across the St. Francis River. The proprietress was friendly but spoke no English. A salesman from Montreal translated for us and we discussed the merits of the Expos and Blue Jays as well as inflated salaries.(George Bell). Our afternoon stop was at St. Celestin where Charles, already suffering from hypothermia insisted on drinking blueberry slush. We tried a Quebec delicacy called 'potat-fromage'(not bad). Our camp was close by at an old army base called Val Lero. It was about 4k off the main road on a sand and stone road the last 200 m of which was a sheer cliff,paved thank____. The camp was right on a river which was almost in flood because of the heavy rains. Facilities done over from the old army base. Toilet barely large enough to sit in. Shower was a wooden stall and the sink was in another cubicle. A large

Quonset hut was available for the Quebec National Pastime-BINGO. Sharon was late and never did get her tent up. She slept in the Bingo Hall.

We cooked supper under the tarp although the threatened rain never amounted to much. We made a fruit salad for breakfast and since we didn't dish it out, a couple beat the system for a larger share. The camping areas were tight. We ended up between the two most famous snorers but still managed to sleep. After breakfast clean up Bob and I found some articles in the spot where the stoves were to go. Bob showed a tremendous amount of cool as wagonmaster, but people using more than their allotted space was one of his pet peeves. By distributing the offending material quickly to all corners of the truck, he let everyone within 2-3k know that he felt the problem should not arise again. The storm passed quickly and Ron was too big a chicken to leave his shoes in Bob's spot when we prepared to leave.

164.5 AUGUST 17

We were on our way by about 8:00 a.m. I walked the hill up the cliff. We sent Don Lee on a scouting mission when we got to the main road to see if we could get across the river. He reported a duel with a local farm dog plus a complete lack of bridge structure (had not been replaced after a spring washout). We had to retrace our steps to near St. Celestin and then travel about 10 k of gravel road to get to the other side of the river. I had my only flat

while crossing a wooden bridge with pavement in sight. Fortunately, Ron was able to catch Flo who was carrying the patching kit. She changed the tube and put a boot in the tire. We travelled on carefree country roads in a misty morning with the sun manfully attempting to break through the haze. It was as pleasant a ride as we had had to that point. The farmland had given way to evergreen plantations along #226. Houses all had front porches with various types of chairs and swings for solid viewing and contemplation. In general, the entire trip through the Eastern Townships was a welcome break from the generally hilly routes we had faced. It was almost table flat with the seigneurial farms every 100 m to break the monotony. As an old history teacher, I enjoyed seeing at close range the drainage ditches that separated the original habitant farms still in evidence although sometimes now in the middle of larger farm fields.

The good land and fine corn crops returned as we neared St. Croix. We had a nice run with Connie and Ron to St. Croix, then with Judy and Andrew to Levi. This route along 130 by the St. Lawrence was really pretty. The river was almost constantly in view. The trip past the Quebec bridge was a little hectic but we made it. The main street of Levi was torn up for sewer construction. We finally headed for a back street to get away from the mess. As often happens, we found the old river road and were able to look across the river at the Citadel and Plains of Abraham. I took some

pictures from an old graveyard but was disappointed in my attempt to find 1759 gravestone. It was still fascinating to look across at Quebec as Wolfe must have done 230 years before.

Our camp was 3 k beyond Lauson directly across from Isle d'Orlean. We got our final directions from a helpful local. We travelled under what looked like the major Hydro-Quebec transmission lines from the James Bay Project. Camping Parc Beaumont was a modern Trailer-Parc with full facilities including a little restaurant and gate-house motel. Since it was a stop-over point, we rented a room and luxuriated in both bed and bath. The park overlooked the river and had its own little lake with mandatory waterfowl.

Most of the crew used the rest day to catch a ferry ride to Old Quebec. We decided to do the laundry and recuperate. This we accomplished. Quebec City and Ile d'Orleans we will reserve for a future trip.

162 k August 19

Started the day by pumping up my tires-inauspicious start. Feeling the effects of a stubborn sore throat. Found a strong tail wind which we could hear roaring in the leaves. Managed an average of 30 k/h. Pretty route, slightly rolling. Picturesque towns sandwiched between the river and seigneurial farmland. I tried to take a picture of the magnificent church in St. Ignace but I was out of film.

Carving is the national pastime of the area with shops everywhere.

After Riviere Ouelle the terrain changes. Wild granite ridges and mounds highlight a much more rugged landscape. The little towns along the St. Lawrence often have eel weirs stretching out into the river. They look like fences to nowhere at lowtide. We raced a storm coming off the river to a little motel restaurant in mid-afternoon and just won. Arrived at K.O.A. near St. Andre around 4:30. No truck, no shower _____!!! By the time supper was built, the weather had changed. We tried to eat in a heavy rain. My throat was too sore to make much difference. It looked like strep throat. The only advantage of the wind and rain was that it put us on even footing with our first real mosquito epidemic. It appeared that the New Brunswick mosquitoes were making a cross-the-border raid into Quebec. One of our less spectacular meal attempts. Gaston was still vainly trying to heat the corn-on-the-cob, when I gave up and went to bed.

7k August 20

After a wild night of wind and rain, the morning broke cool but promising clearing. Flo and I decided to ride the van and see if I could get some help for my throat at the hospital in Edmunston. As the camp broke up after breakfast, Ron, Rose and Angie decided that we should make up a series of skits to act as suggestions for future tours.

The suggestions included: 1. Having Ron MacDonald ride out of his tent fully clothed and ready for the road. (2) Angle give a demonstration of dressing in a flat one-person tent. (3) Ron show how to dry one foot while holding the other off the floor in a shower. (4) Rose putting up the tent in the wind.

Before we left I got a head start on my throat treatment with some penicillin pills Bob was carrying. Strangely enough, it turned out to be exactly the type I was given by the doctor in Edmunston.

Our route followed the main highway to Edmunston while the cyclists went on a less travelled highway. We stopped for pictures at the intersection with Highway 20 and at St. Louis de HaHa. We couldn't resist a name like that! Flo was able to get some up-to-date maps at the excellent tourist centre on the New Brunswick border.

Our impression of emergency room treatment was given a solid boost by our treatment in the Edmunston Hospital. I was in and out within 30 min. and the doctor even offered to call me at home if the lab reports were different than he expected. We toured Edmunston for a short time, purchasing, among other things, a tire, tube and bike pump for my bicycle. We lunched at a nice spot called the Belair. Edmunston is like many Maritime towns, built on hills. We had more than an honest climb out. My throat was feeling some better so we decided to bike to the campground. It was

called The Iroquois Campground in nearby St. Basil. The facilities were limited but it was right beside a pretty river and had unique covered picnic tables like little gazebos. Mark and his crew served excellent hamburgers and we celebrated Bob's 60th birthday with cakes for dessert. I spent a large portion of the evening trying to learn the noble art of gargling with the green guck (medication) purchased for my throat.

152.5 k August 21

The morning was really cold. Thoughts of the Ottawa heat wave had completely disappeared within the week. Flo dug out a pair of gloves which may have saved my life. I was up by 5:30 so I thought it would be safe to use the washroom with the mirror (the ladies) My theory was disproved both by Barb and Connie. My throat had improved to the point that I was able to enjoy French toast for breakfast.

We left about 7:00 and found the morning cold, windy and damp. Vincent stopped at the same restaurant we did to warm up. He had only worn a light shell and was close to hypothermia. A lady from Winnipeg noticed Flo's sweater and was quite interested in our expedition. She and her daughter had travelled the route from Winnipeg by car and couldn't get over how we had managed to survive both heat and hills. We had made one earlier stop just beyond St. Basil to phone the boys. It was a very large modern motel complex but just to make sure we understood that New

Brunswick runs to a slightly different drummer, there were about 50 assorted heavy hens and 15 or 20 rabbits wandering about. We didn't check the menu! Highway 2 has good wide shoulders and long gradual hills. If the weather had not been so catchy, the trip along the St. John would have been quite enjoyable. We stopped to dry out and have lunch at a little Irish restaurant called the Patricus. Mark, Bob, Rose and Angle all arrived while we were eating. At Florenceville we turned onto #105 hoping for less traffic and more places to take a break. However, Sunday in the backyard of New Brunswick is still sacrosanct. We saw no place to stop, not even a garage for over 40k. The road, although narrow was right along the St. John River. Just before Hartland, we saw our first flocks of Black Cormorants. The park looked over both bridges, the major cement highway bridge and the covered wooden bridge at Hartland. We celebrated our arrival with a monstrous ice cream cone, probably the best on the trip. Good camp with nice facilities.

167k August 22

We awoke to the coldest morning to date. Frost, dew and mist rising from the river. Breakfast was eaten with gloves on hands, manfully trying to hold cups. Our tents were packed, dripping from the condensation. We decided to go over the hog's back from Hartland to Millville. The last 8k before we reached #104 and 575 was stone and clay. It did

give us an interesting look at rural New Brunswick. The homes ranged from quite good looking bungalows to wooden shacks. Dogs, a few of which gave chase, were quite numerous. One little place had two sections of a wooden shed that had not yet been re-united. The half farthest from the road, however, was already occupied. By about 10:30 we reached Millville and had delicious muffins at a little restaurant run by a lady well into her sixties. A fellow customer, after hearing of our trip suggested that we weren't all that young to be attempting such a feat. After trying to get his foot out of his mouth for a minute or two, he wished us luck. Ron made the situation much better by introducing Sean and Charles, both nineteen, who had just arrived, as our grandchildren.

The local rural mail carrier was also a lady in her sixties. She restored our faith in the Post Office by not only offering to mail our postcards, but stamp them as well. We asked her how she managed 65 k of the local roads in the long Maritime winter. She just smiled and said that the snow generally came gradually and by the time the rough weather arrive, she was quite accustomed to it. I was astonished to find when we finally left that her car had windshield wipers on the headlights.

The climb out of town and another 10k farther were both 10-20% grades (thigh busters). The countryside was Northern Ontario without rock and with fewer lakes. We met a unicorn hitch of Black Belgians pulling a wagon and manure spreader

up a sharp hill. The chap driving wondered if I wanted to help pull. The long uphill paid dividends because the last 50k into Fredericton was mainly a gradual downhill. We lunched on the eastern outskirts at a place called Annie's about 1:30 in the afternoon. The run outside of Fredericton followed the river and was quite picturesque. Again, a fairly strong crosswind took away some of the fun of watching the boats (a paddlewheeler included) and the waterfowl as we rode. As we rounded one bend, we came upon a doe and two fawns debating a highway crossing. An approaching truck helped make the decision and they disappeared quickly into the reeds by the riverbank.

I found the last few kilometres difficult-too many long days in a row. We arrived at Lakeside Provincial Park at about 5:30. We spread out our tenting equipment to dry while we prepared to strike off on our own to do the Cabot Trail. The groups itinerary included Fundy Park and P.E.I., both of which we had visited extensively. After attaching our saddlebags and stowing our tent in the van we made our farewells and headed down the road to McNamara's Hotel. We felt that the tent would be too wet in the morning to leave packed for ten days.

155.3 k August 23

We were up and ready for breakfast by 6:55 but the motel wasn't. We decided to ride through the morning mist along Grand Lake to the next motel (20k) and breakfast there. The

trip was a little hair-raising as packs of huge trucks lumbered out of the mist from behind and in front without seeming to take any special precautions for the visibility. The Grand Lake area appears to be heavily slanted toward the recreation industry.

We met Sharon at the restaurant. She also had struck out on her own and was headed to Moncton to visit her Grandmother. We left #2 and took the less travelled route #112. This route allows no trucks except for delivery and was a relaxing break from the heavy traffic on #2. Great road to cycle, but the stops were few and far between. Our first stop was 44 k in at Canaan Forks on the Canaan River. Good muffins and juice. Waitress indicated the area across the road had burned out two years earlier. The restaurant had been saved but several homes and camps were lost. It looked like a moonscape but you could see the underbrush coming back. Just beyond the restaurant, a new little covered bridge crossed the river and led back into the countryside. The road before Salisbury had several steep climbs that were compensated for, to some degree, by a long gradual 6-8 k descent into the town. We couldn't find a place to have lunch and had to go on to Moncton, much to my chagrin. Finally, lunched at a Pizza Delight at 2:00 and we were starved. There was a small discussion as to the wisdom of long treks between food stops.

Moncton, downtown, has had a facelift and looked rather attractive. Hectic ride out on #106. The street was rough,

busy, narrow and hilly. We were rewarded with a 4 k drop into Bellacook. We ate a fine ice cream cone at the Junction with #2 to Sackville. We had to eat quickly because the local mosquitoes had moved in from the nearby marshlands. The main highway, although busy, had good riding shoulders and we reached Sackville about 6:30 after yet another long downhill. Our motel was on the north-eastside of town. We were assured that the laundromat was within 8-10 blocks and open until 10:00 p.m. After walking for over a mile, carrying our laundry, we were rescued by a young lady who took us to the location which was already closed, of course (8:35). Although the laundry expedition coloured our opinion of Sackville slightly, it still appeared to be a pretty town with a multitude of large old mansions, some of which looked to be excellent Bed and Breakfast possibilities.

105 K AUGUST 24

The weather was clear when we left Sackville but became quite foggy as we crossed the Isthmus. Entry into Nova Scotia was an honest climb. We stopped at the excellent tourist centre and made use of the direct dial room rental service to guarantee a spot at Tatamagouche. The flower gardens, piper and surrounding Acadian dike land make an ideal setting.

Our route, Sunrise Trail, took us through the pretty old city of Amherst. We stopped for a drink at a little village called, "Head of Amherst". The villages tend to spread over two or three miles with great spaces in between businesses. (Scottish influence ?) Headwind, hills and the weight of the bike panniers made me quite happy that we only had another 75 k to go.

We lunched at the Caboose Cafe at Pugwash. A little restaurant, specializing in fish and chips, run out of the old caboose. Excellent lunch topped off with an excellent muffin. We cycled out to see Eaton's summer home on the Sound at the outskirts of the village. This was the setting for the famous Pugwash Conferences. Apparently Mrs. Eaton still summers there. We had now reached the shore road along Northumberland Strait. Our next stop was at Wallace which was the first real maritime fishing village that we had seen. The red tidal flats were thick with Grey Herons, close to thirty in one cove outside of Pugwash. We tacked

our way across the headland to Tatamagouche, passing on our way a Tim Horton Foundation Youth Summer Camp. It looked well-equipped and well run.

Our stay in Tatamagouche was at the Balmoral Motel. Our window looked out on a large sound in which we could mark the progress of the in-coming tide. Since we arrived early, we were able to look about the town. A blueberry festival at the local museum provided us with a delicious afternoon tea. The little museum, among other things, had a large display of the effects of Anna Swan, the Nova Scotia giantess, (7'9") made famous by Barnum and Bailey. A little downtown restaurant provided us with an excellent fish chowder and homemade biscuits, just like my Aunt Evelyn used to make.

August 25

The route continued to give us spectacular views of the Strait. The area, although cleared for farming, looks as rugged as New Brunswick. The farms generally are small and tend toward a mixed bag-sheep, cattle, some grain. A strong headwind again slowed our progress. We passed such notables as McKay's Road. Flo had to have her picture taken beneath the sign. Also saw Aunt Gussie's Doll Hospital, and the Scott Paper Mill outside of Pictou. We could smell the pulp mill 15 miles before Pictou. We learned that the local people were petitioning the government to stop the millions of gallons of effluent that the mill was dropping into the

Sound each year. (23,000,000 per day). The trip past the mill on the little causeway was done with very shallow breathing. We lunched at Homer's Cafe in New Glasgow. The headwind had pretty well spent my resources. I was more than relieved to have a chance to refuel.

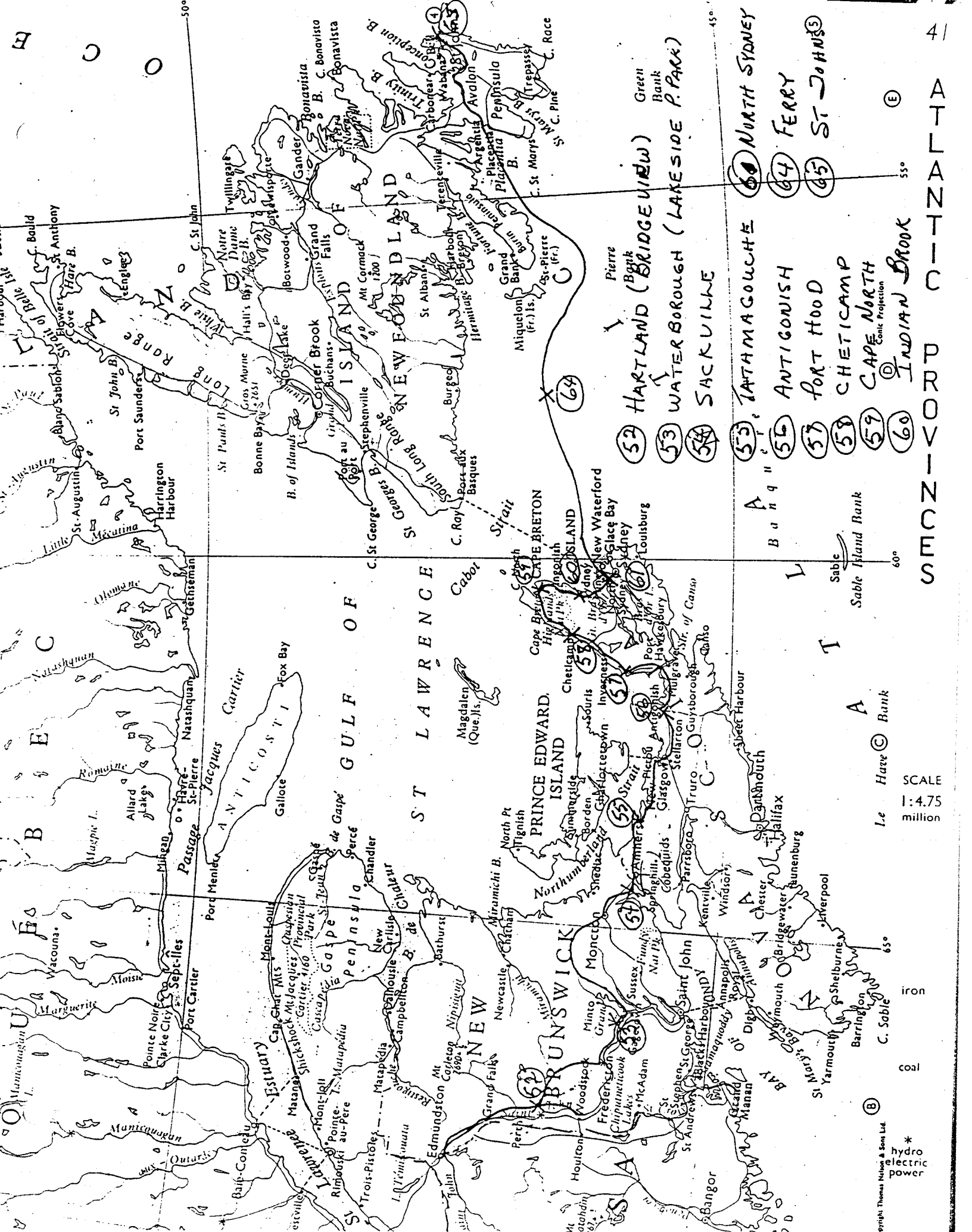
The owner, obviously an original, wore yellow sneakers but cooked up a storm including great Jelly do-nuts. We toured New Glasgow to try and find a bike shop that would check our tires but weren't successful. The one that Homer directed us to had gone bust. We met a young couple from Maine who had just returned from a long cycle trip to northern Newfoundland and Labrador. They had visited the Viking ruins and were quite impressed. Route from New Glasgow to Antigonish was busy and devoid of rest stops. We stopped at the firehall near Barney's River and ate cookies and gorp to refuel for the rest of the trip. Wind finally broke about ten kilometres from Antigonish. I took a picture of the "clear cutting" opposite a gas station. Regardless of where we saw this occurring, it never failed to make us think of huge scars through the forest. Our stop at Antigonish was at the Wayfarer's Inn. Nice motel across from Xavier University's Bishop's House. Pretty spot with great homemade rolls and bread.

99.1 k August 26

Run from Antigonish to Causeway into a stiff wind with a constant threat of rain. The weather turned much milder-19

degrees C by 8:00. The route was not quite as hilly but had two honest climbs reminiscent of Northern Ontario, from the top of which, glimpses of the Strait could be seen. All of the little towns are on the old highway. As a result, we had our morning break under a bridge overpass near LeHavre. The last section was much prettier with a regular view of the little reaches and bays. It was very dull and misty when we reached the Causeway. A stop for a drink didn't improve the weather at all. We raced an incoming ship for the swing bridge and nosed it out by a whisker. The bridge, although smaller than the one at Manitoulin Island swings in a similar fashion. We stopped at the tourist centre to update our trail maps. I watched a storm front move up the causeway while we lunched in a restaurant above the strait-excellent blueberry pie!

We started on #19 at about 1:20 with the hope of circling the cape. The first 30 k were right along the shore with a high headland to give us shelter. A quite spectacular run and the sun broke through to make things even better. We stayed at Port Hood, made famous as the stone quarry for Louisbourg's construction. Our motel overlooked the bay and next door a better than average craft shop beckoned. Florence bought some fine china with a scotch thistle pattern. The motel-restaurant served an excellent fish dinner with Scottish oat cakes. The waitress mentioned that they had been busy most of the spring and summer with oil riggers.



52 HARTLAND (BRIDGEVIEW)
 53 WATERBOROUGH (LAKESIDE PARK)
 54 SACKVILLE

55 TATHAMAGOUCHE
 56 ANTIGONISH
 57 FORT HOOD
 58 CHETICAMP
 59 CAPE NORTH
 60 INDIAN BROOK

A
 B
 C
 D
 E

SCALE
 1:4.75 million

iron
 coal

* hydro electric power
 Copyright Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.

102.8 km August 27

The morning was cloudy as we left Port Hood. The terrain became progressively more challenging as we approached Mabou. Mostly forested with an occasional farm, the landscape continued to be rugged. Gaelic signs and names appeared everywhere. I asked a local what the forty-three letters under the Post Office sign in Mabou meant. She smiled sweetly and said it was the Gaelic for Post Office. By the time we reached Inverness the sun had broken through the overcast. The local druggist was originally from near Flesherton (small world). He directed us to a lunch spot 2k out of town. You guessed it—it was closed for the local fair!

The prettiest spot of the morning run was Whale's Cove near Margerie Harbour. Unfortunately, the tourist industry stumbled on to the same fact as about fifty condominiums were being built above the cove. We lunched at a wild Scottish outfit, combination gift shop and ship restaurant. We followed the coastline to Cheticamp which is considered the gateway to the Cabot Trail. Most people drive directly from Port Hastings to Cheticamp and start from there. The main street stretches for about five miles right along the harbour which is sheltered by a large island called Cheticamp Island, strangely enough. Whale sightseeing tours are well advertised and one of the local craft and gift shops sports a whale jaw of impressive size as a tourist attraction. The fact that tourism is so important can be

seen by the gimmicks used. One shop is built in the form of a huge lobster trap(symbolism). One of the main advantages of biking is that the load capacity makes saying no to potential purchases much easier.

Our motel was right at the entrance to the Cape Breton Highlands Park beside the Cheticamp R. A pretty location but psychologically a poor choice as we could see no way into the dense Highlands. Neither of us slept that well, wondering whether we had bit off more than we could chew.

August 28

The motel owner wished us luck the next morning. We weren't sure that that was a good omen. The first few k provided an easy warm up. The game started in earnest, however, as soon as we reached the shore. We were quickly introduced to an entirely different road gradient system. The little entry to the Cape Rouge run was almost vertical for about 50 ft. and then levelled out to about a 10% grade for 2k.

The sun was shining and the view spectacular.

Unfortunately, we could see the road undulating along the coast and up over the next headland called French Mountain. We reached about 55 k/h by the base of Cape Rouge. I stopped twice on the 6.5 k climb supposedly to take pictures but actually to allow my heart rate to get below 200.

Although on the switch backs the gradient decreased, it was pretty well a straight climb comparable to anything we had faced in the mountains or north of Superior. The scenery

with forest, rock and ocean was equal to anything we had seen to that point as well. After what seemed the one hundredth switch back the top finally came into view. My gloves and shirt were soaked with perspiration. The Cape Breton Highland Park provides a little emergency cabin at the top of each major climb, an interesting concept! It has a stove, bench and wood as well as a telephone link to local services. A note pad by the phone was filled with interesting messages, mainly from cyclists. Thank _____ for Alpine gears. After changing into fresh sweaters, we had an easy ride across the top of the headland. Trees were more open to the wind and much shorter than in the sheltered valleys.

On my way across to Pleasant Bay, I felt that my front tire must be going flat, because the bike wasn't handling as well. It reminded me of the old "free wheeling" they used to talk about on the cars made in the early thirties. We tried adding air but it didn't seem to help. Florence made a more careful check at an interest centre and found that my headset which links the handlebars to the front wheel had worked loose. By continually pulling, as I climbed French Mountain, I probably shifted it. We tightened it as well as we could and the up-coming descent to Pleasant Bay immediately became more interesting. The view from the little tourist interest area looked over a little cove that had an isolated settlement until 1940, accessible only by

boat. The Pleasant Bay road was only a trail until after 1950.

The view from the lookout above Pleasant Bay was magnificent—the white caps—blues and greens and the haze in the distance made it truly spectacular. Like most of our Journey, the wisdom of going West to East and clockwise around the trail was proven again. Our descent off French Mountain to Pleasant Bay covered about 8 k of steep switchbacks, which would have been much tougher to climb than our earlier session up French Mountain. Several nice gift shops can be found in the area.

We had a great lunch in Pleasant Bay and borrowed a pair of ancient vice-grips to make a more permanent repair job on the headset.

With two substantial climbs under our belt and the heat of the day settling in, we headed for North Mountain with some trepidation. The first few k took us back into the Highlands Park and we passed a cyclist whom we had met earlier pitching his tent. It looked like an excellent idea to me!

At the foot of the mountain we visited a replica of a stone crofter's cabin, placed there as a memorial to the lonely life of the Scottish shepherds. It was about 12'x12' with only a small fireplace and stone slabs for bunks and a thatched roof.

The climb up North mountain was the toughest of the trip. The grade was always 10-12% and it never stopped for 6 k. A

combination of heat, loaded bikes and heavy Sunday traffic, along with the previous heavy climbs, slowed us to a crawl. I finally decided that I could push the bike faster and walked the top 500-1000 metres. The downhill was just as sharp and we had to use all of the rest areas to ease the cramping in our forearms. It was fascinating to watch the large motorhomes and tour buses negotiate the switch backs. Less fascinating, however when we were on the road! The route levelled out considerably for the rest of the road to Cape North. This section, however, had the worst pavement of the entire Trail-shoulder and road edge were in very poor shape. Several interesting little shops-one in the shape of an octagon and another a Scottish Bake Shop called the Gingerbread Man-were checked out carefully before we reached Cape North.

Our motel looked out on Aspy Bay and a lovely little restaurant built from a restored general store served us afternoon tea in a huge china pot with delicious English dainties. After cleaning up from a long day's ride, we visited the local museum next door to the restaurant and then had a lovely fish supper. Two young lads from Montreal came in while we were there. They were travelling on fully loaded bikes in our direction. They had spent the day in the Cape North area and were headed for Cape Smokey. It was interesting to hear their version of the climbs to that point. Their trip started at Port Hastings and had followed the regular Cabot Trail.

Cape North's fame, beside being the graveyard of many ships, was that it was the North American end of the first Trans-Atlantic cable.

90k August 29.

We left early. Florence had hung my gloves outside because of their smell. Forecast was for rain later in the day. We wanted to be well past Cape Smokey before the rain hit. Visions of careening down another version of French mountain in the rain was not at all appealing.

After an easy downhill to the Bay, we earned our money crossing the headlands (12k) to Nell's Harbour. We hoped for breakfast there but Cape Breton doesn't open until 12:00 noon on Mondays. We had a pretty trip past Black Creek and Green's Cove to Igonish. The shoreline resembled the area along Peggy's Cove. Finally had a good breakfast at a restaurant-store on the outskirts of Igonish. I had an 'egg McMuffin' and we split a blueberry turnover. We were rather disappointed in Igonish. Either our memory had misled us or the town has not weathered well over the years. A few nice craft shops persist but not much else. We had hoped to visit the Celtic Lodge but the long entry and threatening weather made us turn back. Certainly is something for another time.

We circled the deep South Bay and started up Cape Smokey. The first part was steep and we felt that we were likely in for a tough climb. Fortunately, the gradient became less

steep and although longer than French or North Mountain, the climb was only difficult because of a strong head wind. The wind made the descent equally tricky. We were almost blown off our bikes rounding the final turn.

The shore road stayed quite interesting and we travelled with the confidence built by the knowledge that the three major climbs were behind us. Our lunch stop was at a nondescript general store but it provided the best lobster sandwiches on thick homemade bread that we had had since our earlier bike stop in Nova Scotia. Florence bought a T-shirt at the craft shop called Blue Gull near Wreck Cove. While we were at the shop, the wind really started to pick up. We made our final dash to Indian Brook as quickly as we could. Our stopover was at a guest house run by the local campground owner. We had to work hard to convince the girl who babysat the place to allow us to bring our bikes inside. Supper and laundry were accomplished at the trailer park down the road. An interesting little leather shop on the other side of the guest house provided key cases for the boys. The proprietor was originally from Kitchener. He would have been at K.C.I. while I taught at Rosemount. The young lads we met at Cape North arrived while we were having supper. The campground, although nice enough, was alive with mosquitos. We picked up our 'memorial' stones along the beach on our way back to the guest house.

55.5 K AUGUST 30

The weather forecast and the heavy clouds next morning indicated our luck was running out. We made it to the English Town ferry without rain, but it soon began to drizzle. We stopped at #105 at a rest stop overlooking English Town on the way up Kelly's Mountain. The election posters all advertized Ken McAskill as the best man for the job. We had fun with this for two reasons. Our neighbour down the street has a lad named Ken McAskill and we passed the museum for the giant Angus McAskill who was raised near English Town.

As we crossed Kelly's Mountain, the Scotch mist changed to solid rain and we were glad to find a restaurant just beyond the bridge over Great Bras d'Or. We again found an excellent bakery along with a restaurant (Boulardgrove East) and our calorie intake jumped again. Sharon arrived just as we were departing. She was on another solo excursion. She also confirmed our suspicions that the ferry to Newfoundland was having engine problems and would not likely make the Wednesday crossing we had hoped to use.

The weather became increasingly obtuse and by the time we reached Bras d'Or, it was raining buckets. We gave some thought to holing up but since our shoes and gloves were already soaked, we simply pushed on to North Sydney as fast as possible. Ron Jacques watched us pass from a little coffee shop but by the time he got out we were long gone. Driving through North Sydney in the pouring rain was more than challenging and as it turned out our motel, the

Clansman, was on the other side of town. The tour's campground was about 3 k down the road on Little Bras d'Or. We arrived completely soaked at about 12:30 and had lunch while our room was prepared. A hot bath and warm soup were never more welcome. Despite the rather wet final dash, we had a little celebration over supper to toast a successful coast-to-coast Jaunt.

North Sydney is a pretty town but like many northern towns the recreational outlets are not great. We were amazed to find out that there was no regular bus service either to Sydney or Louisbourg. Fortunately, Ron was able to arrange for a taxi to take us to Louisbourg on the 31st. He called to see if we were interested and we jumped at the chance after our debacle over Fort William at Thunder Bay.

Spent the day at Louisbourg with Connie, Bob, Gaston, and Ron. It was great to see them again and hear their accounts of Fundy Park and Prince Edward Island. Louisbourg is a remarkable reproduction of the 1742 Fort. All visitors are bussed from a gathering point about 4k around the bay to the actual fort. Costumed inhabitants challenge you at the gate and serve pea soup on pewter dishes. We talked to one merchant who was so steeped in his role that you could almost see the years roll back as he talked about wintering in Jamaica and privateering.

Passage to Newfoundland now set for Friday, September 2 at 11:30.

71 k September 1

Florence and I biked to Sydney following the shore road. Weather had cleared and the ride was a pretty one. Sydney and North Sydney drivers and traffic are not high on our list of favourites. Cyclists must be rare in the area. We had our bikes checked over at a bike shop and ate lunch at an interesting little place along the style of Grandma Leas called 'Little Nugget Diner'. Flo bought a scarf at a nearby boutique and we were back in time to attend a council meeting at the Mira Water Campground scheduled for six. After a long discussion about dispersing surplus funds, we made a run back to town just before dark with several people who were also intending to spend the night in town. We sang Happy Birthday to Sylvia before we left as the cake was being cut.

3.5 k September 2

Ferry finally departed at 4:30. Our patience was pretty well spent with the noise, confusion and the fact that everyone east of Ontario seems to smoke. The crossing, though slow with the engines running about two-thirds power, was surprisingly smooth. Most of the gravel consumed was likely unnecessary. Because of the two day delay, the bunks we had reserved were no longer available and we had to sleep in airplane seats. Movement during the long night was extremely dangerous as aisles, ledges and seat edges were used by desperate sleepers. Because of the delay, washroom

and cafeteria facilities were strained to the limit with the heavy passenger load. Apparently a new state-of-the-art ferry is to go into service next year,

September 3

We chugged into Argentia at about 2:20 Newfoundland time. We were allowed off first and all grimly looked at our watches. We estimated daylight to last until about 8:30 and we had over 140 k to travel. As luck would have it, we started out into the face of a brisk headwind. Newfoundland is heavily wooded and shows a great many little lakes (ponds). The terrain was rolling except for one long climb just beyond Dunville. The weather was nippy but started out partly sunny. We were met at the junction of #100 and #1 (main highway) by Sean Winter's father. He said the ferry delay had not only squashed our closing banquet but also a greeting by the St. Johns Cycle Club.

It was unfortunate that our trip through St. Johns had to be so hurried (131 k in 6 hrs.) because some of the scenery was spectacular. The area around Holyrood was especially interesting as large boulders seemed to be thrown around all over as if a race of giants had had a huge stone fight. One large boulder was perched on the side of the hill and appeared only to need a small touch to set it rolling.

The weather gradually became colder and more threatening. Our final 8 k from Mt. Pearl to St. Johns was completed in a typical fall rain squall in fading daylight. It seemed

almost poetic that we should start in rain and finish in rain.. The weather drove most of the campers to join us in the Kenmount Motel. A lenient concierge allowed up to five people per room. After everyone had dried out, we taxied to the local Swiss Chalet to celebrate at about 11:30. After good food and a sufficient number of toasts, we all headed back for a well-earned sleep.

7.1 k September 4

We packed our clothes in the food cooler we had lent the tour and were able to pack all other things in our paniers. We arranged with the motel to leave our bikes in our room and with Ron as guide, hired a taxi to see the hot spots of St. Johns. The taxi driver turned out to be a delight. With a pure accent, a bulbous red nose, a little leather cap and a fine disdain for St. Johns Hills, he quickly filled us in on the present state of the city. When I asked how he managed to get down the steep hill leading from the Signal Hill Tower, his answer was, "Well, bys, sometimes she goes down sideways". We walked the harbour area and were impressed with what appeared to be a successful core revitalization.

We returned to the motel at about 12:00 and cycled to the airport against the wind, needless to say. After parking our bikes and checking our paniers, we reminisced and signed each others' Journals. The plane was on time and the flight uneventful except for a little turbulence over Quebec. A

large number of the group came back to Toronto on the same flight so the departure at Pearson was nearly as tough as the one at St. Johns.

Kevin and Mike were waiting for us and we were home by 8:30.

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POSTSCRIPT

Hard to believe that we actually made it. We were continually amazed by the beauty and variety of the country. The group we travelled with were super and despite the wide spread in age, 19-60, and experience, both in cycling and camping, there was very little friction. Our regrets centre mostly around the inability to spend as much time on sightseeing and in-depth inspection of certain areas as we wanted. We would probably recommend either a two summer crossing or a mid-June to mid-September time span.

We now have a good grasp of the areas we intend to re-visit and study in more detail.

Cyclists glad they went

by Don Leatham

(Editor's note: Don and Florence Leatham of Walkerton have spent the summer bicycling across Canada. This is the last of a series of articles detailing their experiences on the "Tour du Canada.")

The last portion of our trip was reminiscent of Northern Ontario. New Brunswick is still heavily wooded, except for the river valleys. Our route often overlooked the St. John river or one of many lakes.

In Nova Scotia we split from the main tour so we could follow the shore line, along the Cabot trail. The Sunrise, Ceilidh and Cabot trails all provide fascinating views of the bay, straights and inlets of the area. The move from camping to bed and breakfast accomodation more than made up for the extra effort needed to pull the loaded paniers (saddlebags) up long and often steep inclines.

We met the group again at North Sydney to catch the ferry to Argentia, Nfld. Unfortunately, an engine problem held us up two days, and we didn't set sail for Newfoundland until Friday, Sept. 2.

Since the voyage took 20 hrs and our flight departure time from St. John's was Sunday at 2 p.m., our run through Nfld. was short and to the point. We managed 134 km from 2:30 p.m. over rolling terrain and into our usual headwind.

A modest celebration took place later Saturday evening. None of us could really believe we actually had crossed the entire country. My total was 6600 km. I'm not even sure if I was asked that I would agree to drive that far.

Of the 32 cyclists who started, all but four arrived at the final point. Two were forced out with injuries and two others had to leave for personal reasons. Overall, a trip of a lifetime.

The Maritimes probably provide the best cycling opportunities in the entire country (although perhaps this opinion is prejudiced by the fact the Maritimes have the freshest hold on my mind). The roads are good, traffic reasonable, and the coastal vistas spectacular.

The Cabot trail is even more impressive by bicycle than by car, but should not be attempted by the faint of heart. The long descent into Pleasant Valley is quite true to the name.

We enjoyed the Maritime cuisine. The daily bowl of thick chowder was a delight. Fresh fish, like fresh corn well prepared, makes most inland fish dishes pale in comparison.

A bicycle provides two major opportunities for the traveller. First, your speed, especially on the uphill, allows time for careful perusal of all the flora and

fauna along the route.

Second, there is more than enough time, as you pedal along, to think about local and world-wide issues. Three themes seemed to come to mind continually.

Canada is a vast country. A young English lad who was a member of the tour group could not get over the fact it took us 22 days to cross Ontario alone.

However, despite its size, it has only a very small amount of arable land. The eating-up of a large portion of farmland by expanding urban development worries me. It appeared along the route we followed that not more than 10 percent of the country would support crops.

Canada has vast natural resources. Especially evident were the forest and water reserves. Clear-cutting near Quebec park and Northern Ontario, and the condition of many of the rivers in Ontario, made me realize these gifts are not likely to be permanent without careful management.

All sections of Canada have their own natural beauty. Each day we travelled seemed to have its own identity. It is easy to see how most Canadians become firmly attached to their home region.

We feel we have been part of a great adventure. The full scope and ramifications will not likely dawn on us for some time to come. All and all—despite aches and pains—it was a great trip.

PAGE 12A—WALKERTON HERALD-TIMES, Wed., September 7, 1988



CROSS-COUNTRY CYCLISTS — Don and Florence Leatham bicycled over 6000 km during the last two months. They returned home from their cross-Canada tour last Sunday. (Leatham photo)