

"Centennial Year opened with one of the most outstanding events in the Northwest Territories when Yellowknife was named the seat of government. Ottawa has been the seat of government since 1905. The gold-mining town of Yellowknife on the north shore of Great Slave Lake was officially named Territorial Capital in an address given there January 18, 1967, by the Honourable Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development." (From *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories 1966-1967*.) The Commissioner and his support staff moved to Yellowknife before the end of Centennial year and a large-scale building project for the new capital is already in progress.

Cover picture shows Yellowknife 1967; photograph above shows part of the crowd at the airport to meet Commissioner Stuart M. Hodgson and his staff. (Photo courtesy of Information Services, Territorial Government.)

Northern Highlights of Canada's Centennial

At midnight last December thirty-first, in the Arctic and Subarctic, as in other parts of the country, bonfires were lit and bells rang out to launch Canada's Centennial of Confederation. Throughout the year, the event that in 1867 brought the Dominion of Canada into being was celebrated across the land and north as far as the Pole.

The Commissioner of the Centennial Commission observed at the beginning of the year that no people in Canada were quicker to catch the Centennial spirit and to throw their energies into the planning than those who lived north of the 60th parallel. Later, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories reported: "Centennial year is being celebrated . . . with great enthusiasm. Northerners are increasingly feeling a kinship for the rest of Canada and looking towards a future when the Northwest Territories will be a full participant in the Canadian Confederation."

The varieties of celebration and observance of the Centennial year were unlimited; some had a particularly northern flavour, others were shared with all of Canada. Many were local projects launched entirely without aid from the Centennial Commission or other government source, whereas a number were supported only by Territorial Centennial Grants. For example, a curling rink was built at Baker Lake; Centennial parks and playgrounds were created at Wrigley, Jean Marie, and Nahanni Butte; Igloolik got a garage and workshop, Resolute Bay a community hall; and Grise Fiord's project was to obtain tools for the community workshop. The projects are too numerous to permit a complete listing of them, but a few deserve special mention.

One of the most popular events, at least among the inhabitants of many communities in the NWT, was the tour of the Mackenzie River Centennial Barge, a Territorial Government project aided by a grant from the Centennial Commission. This northern showboat, consisting of two 115-foot house barges, was launched at Hay River. After visiting points on Great Slave Lake, it sailed down the Mackenzie River to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean, and then returned to Yellowknife, the new Territorial Capital.

The Barge brought to northerners exhibits depicting the industry and commerce of Canada south of the 60th parallel. Models of a city-centre complex and of several Expo 67 pavilions, of a new turbotrain, a nuclear power station, a subway, and an international airport, and a working model of a canal lock system were among the many exhibits. Also aboard were a troupe of entertainers and a real ferris wheel.

At the planning stage, local residents had been asked what they would like to see come "down North" on the Barge, and many showed a great interest in seeing a cow. As a cow would have been somewhat difficult to handle in the circumstances, it was decided to substitute a ferris wheel, which many Northern children

had heard about but had never experienced. It proved to be one of the main attractions, and a delight to the old as well as the young.

The Centennial was celebrated on other Canadian waterways by groups and individuals, but most spectacularly by the Voyageurs. Although originating well below the 60th parallel, the spirit of the North was certainly evidenced by the Voyageur Canoe Pageant in which the Yukon and Northwest Territories participated along with eight of the provinces. The ten-man crews, using the same waterways and portages as those explored by the voyageurs 300 years ago, covered the more than 3,200 miles from Rocky Mountain House, in western Alberta, to Expo 67, Montreal, in 104 days. The Pageant has been described as "the most colourful of all Centennial activities" and as "an unbelievable endurance test for any athlete." Both statements are true, yet when the ten crews, in their replicas of the twenty-five foot long canoes used by the first voyageurs, flashed over the finishing line, even those who came in last appeared to be gay and triumphant, and showed little sign of fatigue.

Mountaineering also was represented in northern celebrations; in fact, the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition constituted the largest mass assault in the history of mountain climbing. This most exciting and ambitious project was supported by the Centennial Commission, and by departments of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, but was organized by the Alpine Club of Canada and the Arctic Institute of North America.

Twelve teams of four men each and one team of four women attempted first ascents of the thirteen Centennial Range peaks in the St. Elias Range, Yukon Territory, which is surpassed only by the Himalayas and the Central Andes in height and grandeur. In addition, a peak of 15,700 feet, also in the St. Elias Range and on the border of Alaska, was conquered by an eight-man team of Canadians and Americans and named "Good Neighbour Peak" to celebrate the Centennial of the Alaska Purchase as well as that of Canada's Confederation.

Centennial flags were planted on Centennial Peak (12,321 ft.) and on all but two of the peaks which were named after the provinces and territories. Actually, by numbers, the scheduled fourteen climbs were made, as Mount Yukon was scaled three times: once by the appointed group, and twice by the Mount North West group, which discovered that the most direct route to their summit was over the top of Mount Yukon! At first attempt, they climbed over the latter but failed to reach their own goal; their second attempt was successful both in scaling Mount Yukon (10,600 ft.) again and in reaching the summit of Mount North West, which rises 10,796 ft. Despite some bad weather, rotten loose rock, a windslab avalanche, and other dangerous conditions, the climbs were made without a single serious accident.

Another truly northern event, this time in the eastern Canadian Arctic, was the search for Sir John Franklin's grave, undertaken as a Centennial project by the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry of 1 Canadian Brigade Group. Twenty-two men were airlifted into the area where Franklin's ships disappeared, and they combed King William Island and Boothia Peninsula. They found an old boot with wooden hobnails, copper sheathing of a type once used on sailing ship hulls, a few spice tins, two old Eskimo skulls, and some wooden tools. The officer

in charge of the party said: "There is nothing to be gained by any other search parties combing that area for the grave. This was the largest, most comprehensive search conducted in the North." However, it seems doubtful whether this statement will deter others from continuing the search, which is almost becoming a major outdoor sport in Canada's North.

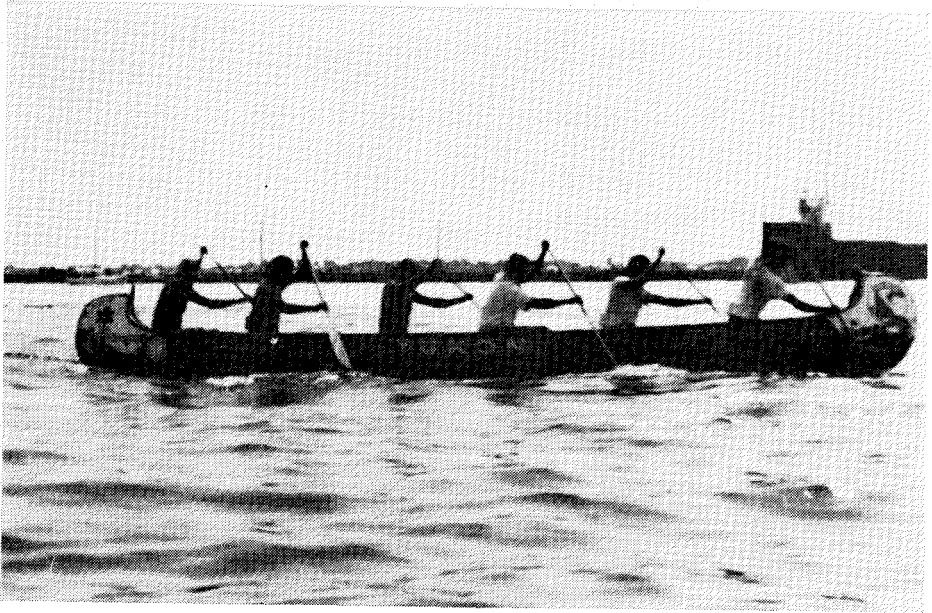
The Muses also had a part to play in the celebrations. Concert and theatre groups, the Canadian Opera Company, choruses, and popular folk and sing-along artists toured various parts of the North. A 130,000-word history of Yellowknife was written by the Rev. Ray Price as a community project, and Dudley Copeland, author of *Ookpik the Ogling Arctic Owl*, received an award from the Centennial Commission to write *Livingstone of the Arctic*. This illustrated book tells the story of the experiences and adventures of Dr. Leslie Livingstone, whose concern for the Eskimo did much to increase government interest in their health and welfare.

Eskimo art flourished in 1967, as the demand for Eskimo sculpture increased, and Eskimo carvers designed a mural for the interior of the Canadian pavilion at Expo 67. On the west coast of Hudson Bay overlooking Whale Cove, a whale's tail was built out of concrete flecked with slivers of soapstone; it can be spotlighted at night to serve as a beacon for small boats and ships.

To celebrate the Centennial, many southerners went north and many northerners went south. A novel trip was made by a party from Inuvik who drove from Tuktoyaktuk, on the Arctic Ocean, to Expo 67 in a Model A Ford. But one group travel program is of particular interest. Housewives in Ottawa, assisted by government authorities, organized a visit of 100 Eskimo children from Frobisher to the national capital. The children stayed in Ottawa homes, and some 70 of them were taken to Expo 67 in Montreal. Their delight with Ottawa and the pleasure that Ottawa took in their visit resulted in a memorable highlight of the year. The letters from these children, and indeed from thousands of children belonging to youth groups, show how much is achieved in national spirit when young people are able to see the broad regions of Canada.

Even the North Pole was included in the Centennial picture. On 6 May 1967, a group of seven scientists and surveyors were landed on the sea ice seventeen miles from the North Pole, in a position where it was estimated that they would drift close to the Pole while carrying out astronomic, gravity, and hydrographic measurements. The group, attached to the Polar Continental Shelf Project of the Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources, Canada, were flown from Alert in a twin-engined Bristol Freighter aircraft of Wardair Canada Limited of Yellowknife. The landing was made on wheels, without previous ground reconnaissance, and the party camped on the drifting ice for eight days, during which hydrographic and gravity surveys were carried out, precise measurements were made of star altitudes, and a sonar transmitter was dropped 4,200 metres to the ocean floor to serve as a fixed point of reference.

As a Centennial gesture, the flags of all nations participating in Expo 67 were taped to the sonar capsule before it was lowered into the sea. The sonar transmitter is expected to have a battery life of two to four years. Its exact co-ordinates will be published as soon as they have been calculated, and it is expected that the



The Yukon *Voyageur* crew approaching the Lachine rapids.
(Photograph courtesy of K. and J. Chartrand.)

transmitter will be used as a reference in future experiments in the area.

Thus, many projects, started in celebration of Canada's Centennial of Confederation, will continue for years, and in some instances will be lasting memorials of the great occasion.

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