

in the warm spring sun as I ate my lunch and read my mail. I marvelled at a daring poplar tree below me that arched its trunk recklessly over the eager, grasping waters, and watched endless flotillas of foam-boats dart past with the restless current.

The return to camp was not just a repetition of the ride out. Rather it was another act in a continuous drama, a new page in Nature's voluminous notebook.

As I passed through a long-deserted logging camp, a lithe, brown form streaked across my path. A weasel. A cock Spruce grouse, or Fool Hen as it is aptly called, primed unconcernedly from a moss-upholstered stump. Chirping boisterously, a pair of chipmunks played tag along the crumpling walls of a roofless bunkhouse. The forest was gradually reclaiming its own here. Soon there would be little sign of this logging site where men in the Hungry thirties had labored for a tithe of today's bush wages.

I tugged a twig from a heavily-needled, grey-barked Balsam fir and its strong, musky scent clung to my hands. Sleek, grey-plumaged Whiskey Jacks, or more formally, Canada jays, were common along the trail, as were busy little Downy woodpeckers, and ever-cheerful Brown-capped chickadees. Once, upon a high poplar ridge, I thought that I glimpsed a browsing elk.

I dismounted at a swift, gurgling creek and searched for the sight of trout in its deep, spruce-shadowed pools. No luck, but I routed a lone Mallard drake, and discovered a neatly chiseled stump that some beaver workman had left as proof of his industry.

Shadows were deepening through the woods when I wandered into camp. I was hungry and a bit stiff from riding so far bareback. It was a trifling price, however, to pay for such an absorbing, wonderful journey.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

THAT Bill Moncur, Box 182, Boissevain, Man., is an enthusiastic archaeologist and is very interested in building up his collection. He would like to purchase Indian relics, old guns, etc.

Jet-Propelled Robin

By Ed Reid, Edmonton, Alta.

I am not too sure if birds have heard that jet propulsion is the coming thing or not, but after watching the antics of a robin last summer I am beginning to wonder!

It happened this way. A firm believer in the old fashioned rain barrel around the house as a precaution against flash fires, I installed one last year under the eaves near the kitchen window. And it wasn't long before Mother Nature responded with a real downpour (quite common last year, you may remember) that filled it right to the top.

Birds weren't long in discovering the rain barrel and it soon became popular as a drinking fountain. Thinking that some might come to an untimely and "watery" end, I soon devised little "life rafts" of shingles upon which they might alight in safety and drink to their heart's content. The birds soon caught on and we all had lots of fun watching them through the window.

Imagine my surprise one day when I looked out to see a robin perched on one end of a raft, propelling himself at a great rate around the rain barrel.

How did he do it? Apparently he had discovered that by standing on one end of the shingle, his weight lowered his tail to the level of the water, and by a simple process of vigorously propelling his tail backwards and forwards, he was able to "speed-boat" himself around the barrel in great style — and mighty pleased with himself too!

Perhaps he was just a transient in our neighborhood, or once was enough for his adventurous spirit, because we never had a repeat performance from our jet-propelled robin.

Ducks Here All Winter

A. L. Brokopsky, Lucky Lake

We have had Mallard Ducks here all winter. I saw about 200 in one flock, on January 28 and again on February 3 and on March 5. Later on in March I saw 19 again. They were at the exact spot every time — about 12 miles south of Riverhurst, on the west side of the Saskatchewan River.