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BY E. O. HOHN

professor of physiology at the University of Alberta who, a few years ago, spent several months at the mouth of the Anderson River in the course of arctic research

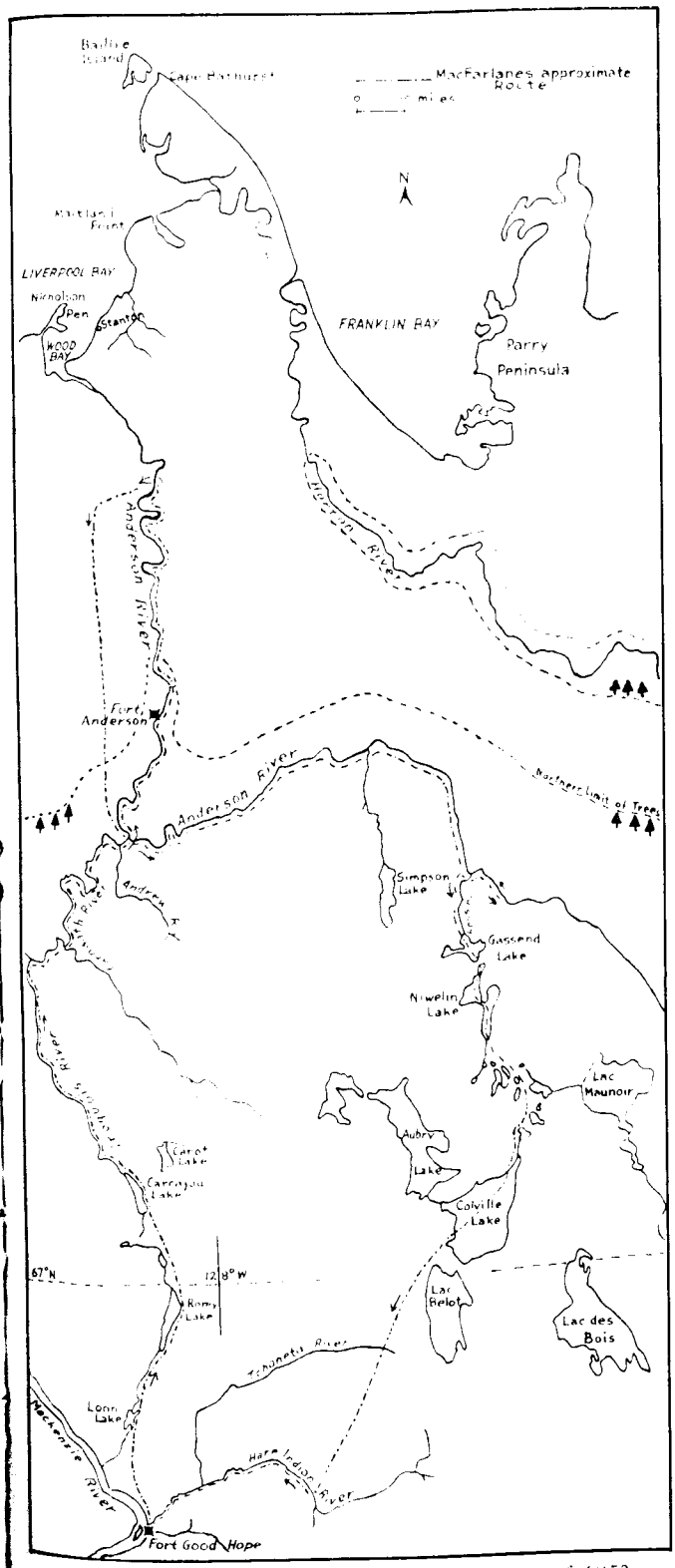
Roderick MacFarlane of ANDERSON RIVER AND FORT

SEVERAL OF THE outstanding explorers of the Canadian Arctic were employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. The names of Hearne, Thomas Simpson, and Rae come to mind in this connection. MacFarlane's exploration of the Anderson River in 1857, though the more recent contribution to geographical knowledge by an officer of the Company, is less widely known.

Roderick MacFarlane was born at Stornoway on Lewis Island in the outer Hebrides in 1833. At the age of nineteen he joined the Company as an apprentice clerk and sailed from Orkney to Hudson Bay in the summer of 1852. Fairly soon after his arrival in the Company's territory he was in charge of a trading post on Great Slave Lake, first at Fort Rae and later at Resolution. In 1855 he was sent farther north to some of the Company's stations on the Mackenzie River and he became manager at Fort Good Hope for the next two winters.

At that time trade with the western Eskimos had already been carried on for some years at the Company's most northern post at Fort McPherson on the Peel River. It was known from the Indians at Good Hope as well as from Mackenzie Eskimos that there was a considerable Eskimo population, possibly as many as a thousand at that time, along Liverpool Bay and the large river known to drain into the bay. Richardson had explored the coast from the mouth of the Mackenzie eastwards to Coppermine in 1826 but as he passed from Nicholson Peninsula across to Maitland Point when exploring Liverpool Bay, he missed the mouth of this river (the Anderson) and knew of it only from native reports. MacFarlane was therefore sent to reconnoitre the valley of this river, to follow it to its mouth and to investigate the possibilities of trade with its Eskimo inhabitants.

He left Fort Good Hope on foot on 4 June, 1857 with a Métis, LaPorte, and four Indians, having despatched an advance party with canoes to a lake four days march to the northeast of Good Hope. The first camp was made at Loon Lake and the second on Rorey Lake, both these lakes were still ice covered. On the fourth day the advance party was joined at the northeast end of what MacFarlane calls Canoe Lake. Judging from modern maps this was the lake now called Carcajou Lake, though there is a Canot Lake draining into the Carnwath River somewhat to the east. The river flowing north from this lake was found to be too shallow for the canoes and half a day's portage was made to a lower part of its course. The rest of that



Approximate route of exploratory expedition of 1857

day, June 9th, was spent in toilsome canoeing down a winding river only one to ten yards wide, often blocked with driftwood which had to be cut and removed in many places. By the afternoon of the next day further progress seemed impracticable as the driftwood piles were too large. Some Indians who had been encountered en route were sent ahead with the food and equipment and MacFarlane's party carried the canoes for six miles to re-embark lower down on the Iroquois, as MacFarlane named this minor river, after his steersman. Its junction with a larger river from the south, was then reached without further difficulty. The larger river was named the Lockhart by MacFarlane after a friend of his also in the Company's service, but it is now known as the Carnwath. This change was made in 1926 because James Lockhart's name was already attached to the river which drains Artillery Lake into the eastern end of Great Slave Lake. MacFarlane's Lockhart River was renamed Carnwath after the name of the country seat of the Lockharts in Scotland. By noon of June 13th the party reached the junction of the Carnwath with the river known as the Beghula which MacFarlane named the Anderson in honour of James Anderson who was then in charge of the Mackenzie River district for the Company. The Anderson River was still running thick with ice. According to a group of some sixteen Loucheux-Hare Indians found encamped here, it had only broken up on the day before. These Indians had visited the Eskimos of the Lower Anderson in April. They had had a narrow escape from a party of western Eskimos who had come to trade with those of the Anderson. The latter intervened on behalf of the Indians, with whom they had also traded, and enabled them to escape. On coming to a halt after leaving the Eskimos, the Indians missed one of their company. Since his gun and powder horn were seen in the possession of Mackenzie Eskimos which MacFarlane's party encountered later that summer on the lower Anderson, it is likely that he had been killed.

MacFarlane engaged some of the *bâtards Loucheux*, as he called them, whom he found at the mouth of the Carnwath and embarked on the Anderson in two canoes on June 14th. With him were Louis Aruihunta, his Iroquois steersman, and Jerome LaPorte, also a steersman, and seven Hare, Slave, and Loucheux Indian paddlers and interpreters. The first Eskimo summer lodges were found the next day. Landing by the chief's encampment, MacFarlane marked out a line on the beach and told his interpreter to convey to the Eskimos that he had come to open a friendly intercourse with them and that they must accept his arrangements for this purpose. One was that they were not to cross the line between the two parties.

Junction of Anderson River with the Carnwath which flows at base of cliffs in the background GEOGRAPHICAL BRANCH

The Eskimos arranged themselves beyond the boundary and were each given a present of tobacco after which the matter of future trading was discussed at length through the interpreter.

MacFarlane describes these Eskimos as tall and well formed, lively and good humoured, with smiling, open countenances "tho' it must be confessed, rather troublesome in their deportment" they pilfered when not watched continuously. They wore trousers of caribou skin with the hair towards the body, an inner shirt similarly arranged, an outer caribou skin shirt with the hair outside and a hood trimmed, as is still customary, with a wolf or wolverine fur fringe. They had neatly made, watertight sealskin boots. Some of the men had "tolerable mustaches and imperials" and the labrets customary among the western Eskimos until the early 20th century. The women wore a similar dress but theirs was ornamented with beads and their outer coat had a short tail which was passed between the legs and tied up in front. Like the Mackenzie Eskimos they dressed their hair in side or top knots, a fashion which did not appeal to MacFarlane. The married women were lightly tattooed. These women looked decidedly better and cleaner to him than most northern Indian women and he describes their expressions and behaviour as amiable. The few old people he saw seemed to be well looked after and all showed the utmost affection for their children. Later, familiarity with the Anderson Eskimos lowered MacFarlane's initial opinion of them considerably. When the Oblate missionary and traveller Emile Petitot visited Fort Anderson intending to set out for a stay among these people he reported that MacFarlane warned him they were "sea bandits, who looked on theft, violence, deceit, unbridled libertinism and even murder as virtues in which they took pride, while their womenfolk were shameless courtesans".

The Anderson Eskimos were armed with bows and arrows tipped with iron, bone, or walrus ivory. Every man also had a spear, a long and a short knife, and a prong used for darting at wild fowl. Only the chief had a gun, traded from Good Hope Indians. By trade with the Indians these Eskimos had also obtained their knives and iron or copper kettles. Their houses consisted of poles set nearly upright covered with half dressed sealskins, with a floor covering of caribou skins and sleeping robes of the same material. Their umiaks were made of walrus or bearded seal skins and they also had sealskin kayaks.

Of their seasonal hunting activities he observed later that they hunted caribou mostly during the southward migration of the animals in the fall when they shot and speared a great number at favourite water crossings. A hunter would mark his own animals by inserting one of his arrows in the carcass which was then allowed to drift down the river to be reclaimed by his family as it floated past the lodges. Caches of caribou meat placed on blocks of ice and protected from wolves and wolverines by more large ice blocks, were constructed in early December along

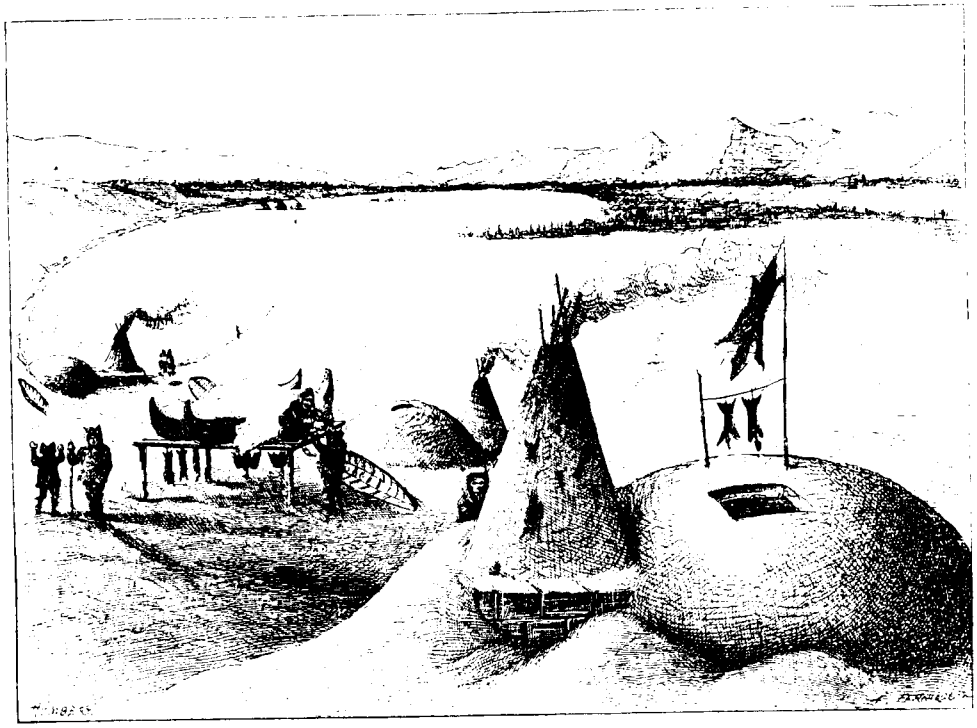
the lower Anderson. After this the people returned to their winter homes at various places along the coast. In March, when the seals had young, the families moved out on the sea ice for the sealing and lived in snow-houses. Petitot describes one of their igloos on the Anderson in his entertaining book *Les Grands Esquimaux*, published in 1887. With two men cutting the snow blocks and a third setting them up in the style of a snail's shell and sealing the cracks, the snow-house was built in less than an hour. With three knife cuts a door was made and while a smaller shelter wall was built outside, a platform was being arranged inside, covered with bear and caribou skins, where three people could lie or four sit—and six actually crowded in. Beside the door was set a stone lamp, blackened and shaped like a little boat. The doorway was closed tight with a snow slab, the only air admitted coming through the porous snowblocks. Petitot and the head-man were given the outside places on the sleeping platform, the other men between them. The Eskimos then set the example of stripping off all their clothes, but Petitot and his Loucheux Indian interpreter were more restrained although, having removed his outer clothes, the priest found he had to take off his shoes and go barefoot, so stifling did it become in the airless dome with the guttering seal-oil lamp and the heat of the malodorous bodies. Petitot felt that he was walled up in a sepulchral hovel where he could not breathe.

Petitot's sketch of the chief of the Anderson Eskimos

When the sealing was over a gradual return to the meat caches was made, some fox trapping was done and after the spring breakup the people trekked farther up the Anderson in their umiaks (large skin boats). An old man was generally steersman while one woman would pull on the dragline tied to the bow, with four to six dogs pulling ahead of her. After a few days of trading at Fort Anderson, they would return to the coast for further seal and some walrus hunting. The Anderson-Liverpool Bay Eskimos generally managed to secure one bowhead whale each year. For fishing in the river they used nets made of caribou sinew.

After a few hours MacFarlane's party continued downstream on June 15th accompanied by the chief of the Eskimo settlement and camped by the river after meeting several other small Eskimo parties from whom some fox skins were traded. The following day a large Eskimo camp was found. The people here were friendly too but explained that the Eskimos on the coast to the north were not "too good". MacFarlane's interpreter gave him to understand that these were also Anderson River Eskimos who acknowledged the chief of the large camp, who himself was quite co-operative. MacFarlane therefore decided to proceed as far as the mouth of the river as originally planned. In the evening, fifteen kayaks overtook his canoes. Most of the kayakers wore coats of mountain goat or sheepskins and they were in fact Mackenzie Delta Eskimos. Their intentions towards MacFarlane's party were clearly hostile from the start. These natives were soon joined by others and MacFarlane was eventually forced to make for shore and abandon his canoes. The encounter is best described in his own words, taken from his account "On an expedition down the Begh-ula or Anderson River," published in the Canadian Record of Science, Vol. 4, 1890-91.

"Determined to go forward at all hazards, especially as from the banks of the river here being muddy and nearly level with the water, covered with ice and no driftwood—in short, utterly unfit for any defensive purposes, I could not land: well knowing however that the Esquimaux would never resort to extreme measures while we kept on the water, so long as we did not allow them to lay hold of our canoes. With my own canoe we always made our way; not so, however, with LaPorte's,



An illustration from Father Petitot's book "Les Grands Esquimaux" after his watercolour of an Eskimo village at the mouth of the Anderson River

despite order after order given him to keep them off he would or could not, and it was therefore necessary for us to protect him in addition to opening up a road through the kayaks before us. Guns were again presented [by MacFarlane and his men] which had now the effect of making the Esquimaux, if anything, more troublesome than before. Seven guns were held up to intimate to us that they were as well armed as ourselves, and such of them as had none dipped their bows in the water and arranged their arrows before them. These appearances, though certainly indicating hostile intentions, were, I suspected, made at present with the view of adding to the fears of the Indians, and they had the desired effect. The latter now became anxious to be put ashore so as to return overland, of course leaving everything. This I could not agree to, and therefore continued on.

"About 9 p.m. we arrived opposite to a large encampment, from which some thirty or forty canoes were seen putting off, which caused the others to close around us, and thereby almost drove us on shore. Extricating ourselves with much difficulty we managed to go on a little farther and were about twenty yards from the left bank when the new arrivals approached, seeing whom, six of the Indians suddenly got out of the canoes and made for land on a batture which extended for some distance from the shore. The Iroquois and I immediately jumped out, dragged the canoes to land, and with some trouble I succeeded in making the Indians turn back. They were ordered to re-embark, but refused. Seeing that they would not, I ranged them in a line along the beach with their guns presented, so as to prevent the Esquimaux from landing. The beach at this place was low and flat, the mud knee deep, ice in large sheets, with snow and water immediately in the background, not a stick of driftwood and the position perfectly untenable. . . .

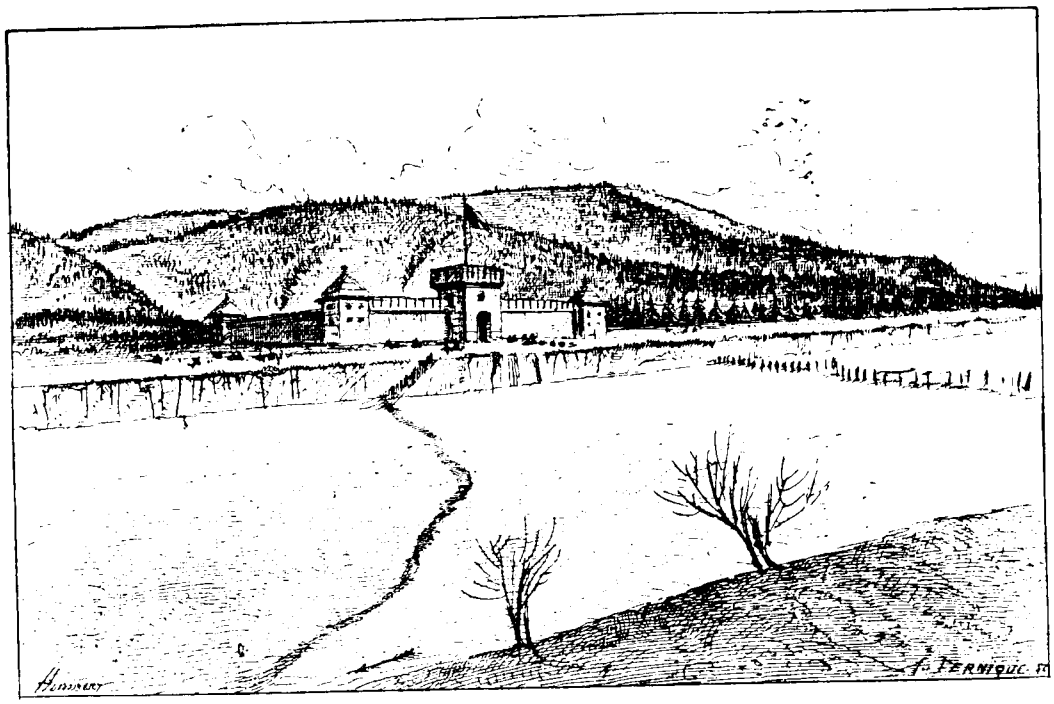
"Finding that with these crews I should never be able to get back with the canoes, even if they had agreed to remain, I at length very reluctantly consented to accompany them, and we accordingly set out with all the property, leaving behind only what was too cumbrous to be carried."

MacFarlane now led his party several miles to the west of the river and was able to see the sea ice of Wood Bay from a hilltop. After this they turned southward until the early morning of June 17th when camp was made. It was difficult here beyond the treeline to find wood for a fire but they gathered enough sticks to cook part of a caribou one of the Indians killed. Seven days walking through deep snow brought the travellers back to the Indian camp at the mouth of the Carnwath River. Here MacFarlane procured an old rickety canoe and paid off most of his party, as the canoe could not carry all of them, and sent them back to Good Hope overland, with the furs and unused trade goods.

With the Iroquois steersman, LaPorte and two Indians he embarked on an exploration of the upper Anderson River working upstream by tracking, which was made difficult by ice on the beach. On the 29th, he sent home two more of his crew keeping only the Iroquois and one Hare Indian. Rapids, requiring a portage, were met on the 28th and 29th and a six-mile portage became necessary on July 3rd, by which time the canoe had become so leaky that constant bailing and frequent repairs were needed. Next day MacFarlane decided that owing to the

poor condition of the canoe and the fast flow of the river, it was unwise to attempt to work further upstream and that a return towards the Mackenzie should be made via a tributary which joined the Anderson from the south-west. MacFarlane named this tributary the Ross River. This name does not appear on present day maps, but it is probably the stream draining Gassend Lake into the Anderson. On July 6th a lake, probably Gassend Lake, was reached and by a portage, another ice-covered lake with only a central lead of open water, apparently Niwelin Lake, was reached on the 7th. Next day a further portage brought the party to another lake.

This was deemed to be in the hunting area of some of the Hare Indian bands and a large fire was lit. The fire was soon answered by smoke to the east. An hour and a half of walking brought MacFarlane to a camp of six Hare Indian lodges by a small river. Further portages and paddling on several less ice-encumbered lakes brought the party on July 10th to Colville Lake which MacFarlane named. While crossing this lake the canoe sprung a leak and only hard paddling saved the crew. The boat finally sank in four feet of water and was taken ashore and repaired. The river leading from this lake to another a few miles to the west, presumably Lake Aubry, could not be ascended with the canoe and the decision to return to Fort Good Hope overland was taken. Three long days of marching over hilly country brought the party to the Hare Indian River on July 13th where a raft previously used by Indians for crossing it was found. While rafting downstream the next day an Indian canoe was noticed on the shore. It was repaired and made a fairly fast descent of the river possible. Fort Good Hope was reached, after a severe thunderstorm with torrential rain, late in the evening of July 14th. The two parties sent overland from the Anderson were found to have arrived safely a few days earlier. Apart from a few fish traded from Indians during the latter part of the journey the travellers had lived off the land, at first largely on caribou and moose; after leaving the Anderson River no deer were seen but rabbits and partridges were numerous and there were some geese.



Fort Anderson, from a sketch by Petitot in 1865. Track made by dogteams crosses the frozen river and row of poles on right were for setting fish-nets

MacFarlane reported on the results of his trip to his superior at Fort Simpson where he spent the winter. He was again in charge at Fort Good Hope during the next year and made two trading journeys to the Eskimos of the lower Anderson and Liverpool Bay during the winter, covering about 1,800 miles on snowshoes. Similar winter

GEOGRAPHICAL BRANCH

Anderson River some 55 miles below Fort Anderson and (below) at the mouth, seen from the high west bank

E. O. HOHN

journeys were made again in 1859. On the basis of his reports on these ventures, Chief Factor B. R. Ross agreed to the establishment of a trading post on the Anderson.

MacFarlane therefore made a summer journey to the upper Anderson River in the following year, to find a locality where timber suitable for building could be cut and rafted downstream so that the post could be set up within reach of the Eskimo population of the lower part of the river.

In April 1861 he travelled from Good Hope to his "lumber camp" on the Anderson. From there, with two Loucheux and six Company servants (a hard-working group consisting of a Norwegian, a French-Canadian, two Iroquois from the Montreal area, and two Saulteaux from the Red River) he rafted down river immediately after the June break-up to the spot selected for building. Fort Anderson was built on the left bank of the river at about latitude 68°30′. Living entirely off the country on deer, fish, birds, rabbits, and Labrador tea – the men worked well and the construction was finished before winter set in. It was a substantial establishment surrounded by a square palisade about fifty-five yards long with a twenty-foot-high bastion at each corner. A raised gallery inside the palisade connected the bastions. The entrance was through a massive gate tower. Within the palisade stood the master's house opposite the gate tower, along one side was a house for the employees and on the other a storehouse for furs and another for the trade goods. All these buildings were constructed from large squared timbers. Petitot, to whom we owe this description of the fort, also mentions a large cage holding several live eagles within the enclosure, which indicated MacFarlane's great interest in natural history.

MacFarlane remained in charge of this post for five years, from 1861 to 1866. This was probably one of the happiest periods of his life, for without neglecting his business and besides trips to Fort Good Hope and Fort Simpson, he made an annual summer trip across the barrens to the shore of Franklin Bay to collect birds and eggs for the Smithsonian Institution. He is reported to have collected over 5,000 specimens of birds and eggs for this museum, including specimens secured for him by natives. He also collected mammals for both the Smithsonian and the Geological Survey of Canada.

Petitot arrived at Fort Anderson in March 1865 eager to make a stay with the Eskimos of the lower Anderson. MacFarlane described them to him in the terms already quoted and did his best to dissuade Petitot from a visit, alone and unarmed, with these people. However, when he found the missionary set in his intention he lent him a dogteam and sled, gave him provisions and sent the Loucheux Indian Alphonse Sida-Jen, locally better known as "General Bottom" with him. Petitot, ably supported by the "General", who could interpret, had no trouble with the Eskimos.

In the fall of 1865 there was an outbreak of scarlet fever at Fort Anderson which resulted in the death of about a hundred and fifty of the local people. In June of the following year, because of the death of so many of the Eskimo and Indian hunters and the difficulties of transportation between Fort Anderson and the Mackenzie, the district superintendent ordered the Fort closed.

Soon after the closing of Fort Anderson MacFarlane was made the Company's superintendent for the Mackenzie and later for the Athabasca district. He became a chief factor and received Queen Victoria's Arctic Medal

for his exploration of the Anderson River and the recovery in 1862 of dispatches to the British Admiralty given to an Eskimo at Cape Bathurst by McClure of H.M.S. *Investigator*.

After a period of service in British Columbia he was put in charge of the Cumberland district (the lower Saskatchewan River region). In 1894 he retired and settled in Winnipeg, where he died in 1920. MacFarlane published two valuable reports, one on the birds, the other on the mammals of the Mackenzie district. Both are largely based on the observations and collections he made while living at Fort Anderson. He also contributed a section on wildlife to C. Mair's book *Through the Mackenzie Basin*, and his work as a naturalist is commemorated in the scientific names of several northern mammals.

It is surprising that no remains of Fort Anderson exist. Petitot, writing ten years after its closure, already refers to it as a ruin, and Dr J. R. Mackay, a geographer of the University of British Columbia, who surveyed this area in 1955, found only a small unoccupied trapper's cabin at the site. A low level flight over the district in which the fort was situated failed to reveal any ruins. The disappearance of the fort may have been due to fire, or perhaps its timbers were used by natives or later white residents.

The further history of the Anderson River valley and the adjacent coastal areas is one of gradual depopulation. The surviving Anderson Eskimos travelled to Fort McPherson for trading, until more northern posts were opened at Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk. The Hare Indians who in MacFarlane's day lived in the upper part of the river valley, have disappeared but were succeeded in the first half of the present century by a few white trappers, some of them married to Eskimo or Indian women. The last of these trappers retired to Aklavik in 1955.

On the coast the Hudson's Bay Company maintained its Baillie Island post (actually on Cape Bathurst) from 1916 to 1938. An R.C.M.P. station at Maitland Point was in use from 1935 to 1938 when the buildings were taken over for a short time by the Company. In 1937 the Roman Catholic mission and trading post Stanton was built on the beach of Wood Bay and five Eskimo families had log houses there. The next year a government owned reindeer herd in connection with which several Eskimo families were employed, was brought to the mouth of the Anderson River but the reindeer and their herders were transferred to the Tuktoyaktuk district after the war. Finally, in the spring of 1955, the Stanton mission was closed too and its personnel and the Stanton Eskimos moved to Tuktoyaktuk. When I summered at the mouth of the Anderson six years ago, there was said to be a German-Eskimo family near Cape Bathurst but they too had moved away. At present the personnel of the D.E.W. Line site on Nicholson Peninsula are the only residents in the Anderson Valley-Liverpool Bay area. ◆

Indian village at Fort Good Hope sketched by Arthur Price in 1951