A Fur Trade Journey: Samuel Hearne

A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company for the Discovery of Copper Mines, a North West Passage, & c. In the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.

By Samuel Hearne

THE NATURE of travelling long journeys in those countries will never admit of carrying even the most common article of clothing; so that the traveller must depend on the country he passes through, for that article, as well as for provisions. Ammunition, useful iron-work, some tobacco, a few knives, and other indispensible articles make a sufficient load for any one to carry that is going a journey likely to last twenty months, or two years. As that was the case, I took only the shirt and clothes I then had on, one spare coat, a pair of drawers, and as much cloth as would make me two or three pair of Indian leggings, which, together with a blanket for bedding, composed the whole of my stock of clothing...

THE weather had been so remarkably boisterous and changeable, that we were frequently obliged to continue two or three nights in the same place. To make up for this inconveniency, caribou were so plentiful for the first eight or ten days that the Indians killed as many as was necessary; but we were all so heavy laden that we could not possibly take much of the meat with us, which meant that, in case of not killing any thing for three or four days together, we were in great want of provisions...

ON the eighth of March, we could not produce a single thing to eat, not even a ptarmigan. This being the case, we prepared to fish by the side of a lake belonging to Seal River...