

# TAME LIFE ON THE HOMESTEAD DIDN'T APPEAL TO THESE BOYS SO THEY SET OUT TO SEE LIFE

**Four Boys From Brightwood District, South of Entwistle Have Adventurous Experience—After Search by Community and the Royal North West Mounted Police, Two of Them Have Landed in the Juvenile Court—Started Out to go Bear Hunting.**

Tiring of life on a homestead, situated in the Brightwood district, south of Entwistle, four boys—Joe Meek, aged 16; Wm. Meek, aged 11; Raymond Laws aged 8, and Kenneth Laws aged 6—ran away from home on Sunday afternoon of last week to search for adventure.

Joe Meek, who was the leader, had been returned home less than two weeks from his last trip of a like nature, and enticed the younger children to accompany him to Edmonton on another expedition. The Meek children came to spend Sunday with Andrew Law, grandfather of the boys, and during the day, while playing in the woods, they saw a bear. Excited by the fact, they decided to go bear-hunting, but could not obtain permission to do so. Nothing daunted, they went anyway.

#### **Slept In Stable.**

On Saturday night the children slept in J. L. Stone's stable, telling Mr. Stone that they had been out fishing and had become lost and would go home in the morning. They left Stone's at daylight and headed south, and on Monday evening arrived at Wm. Pilkington's homestead at Power House, where they spent the night. During the day they broke

into the shack of John Matt, a German, who is at present interned at Lethbridge, and took a quantity of flour, groceries and clothing. Tuesday was spent in trying to get across the Saskatchewan river, as they had made up their minds to strike out for Wetaskiwin. Not being successful, they spent Tuesday night at Lester Park's place, explaining their presence by saying their father had a place east of the river and had sent for them to come out. Mr. Parks had no boat, but directed the boys on Wednesday morning to Ed. Romstead's. Romstead put them over the river, but by mistake landed them on a large island.

#### **Constructed a Raft.**

To get across the last channel, Joe Meek constructed a raft. It was very small, and only two could ride at once. After the first trip it went to pieces, leaving the two younger boys still on the island. Mr. Romstead was down at the river again in the evening and saw the boys, so went over to see what was the trouble. Joe, in the meantime, was building another raft, but Romstead put the boys over before it was finished. It was late

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evening then, but the youngsters headed off through the heavy timber in a south-easterly direction. There are no settlers for some miles in this vicinity, so they were forced to sleep under a tree that night.

Search parties looking for the boys had been out since Sunday evening, and the R.N.W.M.P. at Entwistle had been communicated with. Word of the boys being lost got to Power House settlement Wednesday night, and at daybreak Thursday morning Alvin Romstead crossed the river and started to track the children down. He came upon them fast asleep at 7 a.m., and, explaining that he was a trapper, asked them to come to camp for breakfast. They returned with him, although he had to carry Kenneth Laws, as the four days' tramp with but few meals was telling on his constitution.

The boys were kept at Romstead's all day Thursday. At four in the afternoon Andrew Laws and Joe Austor-tay arrived to claim them, and a little later Constable Thornevell, of Entwistle, got there and placed the elder Meek boy under arrest.

After breaking into the cabin of John Matt the boys were well supplied with food, but did not take time to cook it, wishing to get as far away as possible to avoid being caught. Each was carrying a pack, Joe Meek about 40 pounds and little Kenneth Laws 8 pounds. In telling about this afterwards, Kenneth said: "We took everything we could find in the shack but the stove. We couldn't carry it, but turned it over before we left."

About twenty men from Brightwood district searched for five days for the runaways. Andrew Laws, the grandfather of two of the boys, and with whom they make their home, was untiring in his efforts to find them, and was very much relieved when he ran into them at Ed. Romstead's.

In spite of the fact that they were wet almost every minute of the time since leaving Sunday evening, the boys appear to have suffered no ill effects after their experience, but the elder ones expressed their regrets at being caught. Constable Thornevell left for Entwistle with the party on Friday morning.

The two Meek boys are now in the Children's Shelter in this city awaiting trial at the Juvenile Court.