

Trapper-Student Completes Trip

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Tired but triumphant after hiking some 400 miles on snowshoes, Walter Koshel, 26, of The Pas, Manitoba, delivered his consignment of raw furs to Dominion Fur Action Limited of Winnipeg. He was feted briefly by government dignitaries, then set off on a round of public appearances.

The brief ceremonies on the steps of the Manitoba Legislative Building marked the end of Koshel's private Centennial project which was to retrace the steps taken 250 years ago by the Hudson Bay Company fur trader Henry Kelsey.

The diminutive Koshel at 5'7" covered the 400-mile trek in 13 days across some of the toughest terrain in the country in mostly sub-zero temperatures. The first four nights of the hike were spent in the open without a tent. The other nights he spent indoors with trappers, fishermen and at Indian settlements along the way. In all, Koshel managed to average between 25 and 30 miles a day despite some adverse weather. On a couple of days, the temperature dropped to 20 below zero and was accompanied by a 20 mile per hour north wind. Another time, his speed was cut

to about one mile per hour when he encountered slush ice on the southern end of Pelican Lake.

Feats of endurance are nothing new to Walter Koshel. When he set out, he carried a 50-pound pack which consisted mainly of dried moose meat, bannock and



tea, along with the symbolic fur package. Last year, he was named King Trapper at the Northern Manitoba Trappers Festival. To accomplish this, he packed some 650 pounds of flour on his back around a prescribed course and, as well, built up a

commanding lead in points at other energetic northern activities.

Like most men of the north, Koshel is modest when discussing his accomplishments. Asked about his ability at squaw wrestling, he admitted to having some trouble throwing "men over 200 pounds." Squaw wrestling is the name given to a popular northern sport wherein two contestants lie on their back, side-by-side, head-to-toe. They hook their right heels together and the one gaining the greatest leverage upsets his adversary. Soaking wet Koshel might weigh 160 pounds.

When asked if he would feel like making the trip again, he said he did not think so. He might, he added, if he has more time. He is presently enrolled in the teacher training course at United College in Winnipeg.

And what are his future plans in athletics? He wants to enter the 26-mile marathon in the Pan-American Games which will be held in Winnipeg, July 22 to August 7. But then that's a horse of a different color and they don't allow snowshoes either.

Scot H. Dahms