



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 20th March, 1936.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

I suppose you are thinking I am never going to answer your letter but since receiving it I have had a strenuous time with our friend, Grey Owl. As you are probably aware he arrived here in the custody of a lady and remained here for almost a week, then went on to Toronto and returned here on Monday, the 9th, to have an interview with the Governor General. On the following Friday, the 13th, he dined with Mackenzie King and yesterday he and I interviewed Mr. Crerar, our Minister, regarding the taking of the Mississauga picture. For your private information he did not draw a sober breath from the time he arrived in Ottawa until Ernie and Joe poured him on the train last night for Toronto.

The picture that he wants to take as you may know is a four reeler taken on the Mississauga with three or four canoes, Indians, etc. He wants to direct it and he wants to title it. As far as I can figure it out it would cost about \$10,000. He is covering a river 250 miles long which he said would take about forty-five days. Needless to say I am not very enthusiastic about it. He has had no experience in directing and at the same time appearing in a picture. He talked it over with the three prominent persons mentioned above but his conduct in Ottawa did not impress the Commissioner or anybody else and certainly did nothing that would make you feel that he could be trusted to carry out the making of this picture at such a high cost looking at it from our point of view.

I note that you say that he was wearing English dress when he visited you. He arrived here wearing a mixture and when you say he is self-possessed he is more than that. He has developed an egotism that I am afraid from now on makes him of very little value to the National Parks. He appreciates everything you did for him and is kind enough to include me in it but I have no evidence that he means it and have come to the conclusion it is only a matter of words. I quite agree with you he is a great asset to Canada providing he does not make some very foolish break either through liquor, women or temper. Miss Rotenberg, the Jewish girl, did not return to Canada with him but Lovat Dickson sent a Mrs. Somerville back with him, a lady who returned to England about two weeks ago.

- I note you -

Miss M.B. Williams,  
24 Wendover Court,

I note you speak of the Mississauga picture. His only reason for wanting to do that is to impress upon the public that he is a backwoodsman and he has no other thought in his mind at the present time. Sajo might be filmed if one could get the right people but the only thing for him to do if he intends to take this picture is to go to a professional firm as I could not talk the Department into doing it. One of the things he does not seem to recognize is that the National Parks have distributed over 200 reels of his pictures which means that there has been thousands of showings not only in the United States but in other parts of the world. I quite agree with you that if he wants a picture such as you would appreciate Hollywood would not do it as it would not appeal to North American audiences. He really does not think that he needs suggestions from anybody and he only comes back to me when he gets into a jam and believe me he finds plenty of them.

I am very interested to know how you get along with Harper Cory. He is just as peculiar in many ways as Grey Owl. His real name is W.H. Corkill. He has done a great deal to make Grey Owl known in Great Britain but apparently Lovat Dickson couldn't see it that way with the result that they are at loggerheads.

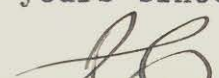
I am glad you ran away, if that is what you call it as it has been agony carrying on this last five years and I do not believe that it would have been any help to you either mentally, physically or financially to carry on and I am more than pleased after the work you did for me personally as well as for Canada that you got away and saw something different to the narrowness of a civil servant's life. I quite agree with you that the foolish, ignorant and slow Britisher has something that commands the admiration of the world and I think it can be summed up in one sentence - we believe in the greatness of our cause, the Empire and peace. I feel more strongly than ever that the British Empire does not exist for power or even trade, which is so essential, but has to play a part in the world for the good of humanity.

I did not go away this winter for which I am very pleased as the expenses allowed under the new regulations would not permit of my doing real publicity work. I am sorry that I cannot be as enthusiastic as you are over Grey Owl. There are many things I know that I cannot write to you and my constant prayer is that there will be no outbreak that would cast discredit on the National Parks and those with whom he is associated.

We are sending you a bundle of buffalo material which I hope is what you want and if it isn't let us know and if there is anything else we can do it will be a pleasure for us to do it for you.

I am sorry to say that Miss Ward has not been as well as she should have been this winter and if circumstances would permit nothing would give me greater joy than to see her join you in a little more leisure. Take care of yourself and remember me to Mrs. Herridge. With very best wishes, believe me

Every yours sincerely,



JC Campbell to MB Williams, Mar 1936

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior  
National Parks of Canada  
Ottawa

20<sup>th</sup> March, 1936.

My dear M.B.,

I suppose you are thinking I am never going to answer your letter but since receiving it I have had a strenuous time with our friend, Grey Owl. As you are probably aware he arrived here in the custody of a lady and remained here for almost a week, then went on to Toronto and returned here on Monday, the 9<sup>th</sup>, to have an interview with the Governor General. On the following Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, he dined with Mackenzie King and yesterday he and I interviewed Mr. Crerar, our Minister, regarding the taking of the Mississauga picture. For your private information he did not draw a sober breath from the time to arrived in Ottawa until Ernie and Joe poured him on the train last night for Toronto.

The picture that he wants to take as you may know is a four reeler taken on the Mississauga with three or four canoes, Indians, etc. He wants to direct it and he wants to title it. As far as I can figure it out it would cost about \$10,000. He is covering a river 250 miles long which he said would take about forty-five days. He has had no experience in directing and at the same time appearing in the picture. He talked it over with the three prominent persons mentioned above but his conduct in Ottawa did not impress the Commissioner or anybody else and certainly did nothing that would make you feel that he could be trusted to carry out the making of this picture at such a high cost looking at it from our point of view.

I note that you say that he was wearing English dress when he visited you. He arrived here wearing a mixture and when you say he is self-possessed he is more than that. He has developed an egotism that I am afraid from now on makes him of very little value to the National Parks. He appreciates everything you did for him and is kind enough to include me in it but I have no evidence that he means it and have come to the conclusion it is only a matter of words. I quite agree with you he is a great asset to Canada providing he does not make some very foolish break either through liquor, women or temper. Miss. Rotenberg, the Jewish girl, did not return to Canada with him but Lovat Dickson sent a Mrs. Somerville back with him, a lady who returned to England about two weeks ago.

- I note you -

Miss. M. B. Williams,

24 Wendover Court,

[pagebreak]

I note you speak of the Mississauga picture. His only reason for wanting to do that is to impress upon the public that he is a backwoodsman and he has no other thought in his mind at the present time. Sajo might be filmed if one could get the right people but the only thing for him to do if he intends to take this picture is to go to a professional firm as I could not talk the Department into

doing it. One of the things he does not seem to recognize is that the National Parks have distributed over 200 reels of his pictures which means that there has been thousands of showings not only in the United States but in other parts of the world. I quite agree with you that if he wants a picture such as you would appreciate Hollywood would not do it as it would not appeal to North American audiences. He really does not think that he needs suggestions from anybody and he only comes back to me when he gets into a jam and believe me he finds plenty of them.

I am very interested to know how you get along with Harper Cory. He is just as peculiar in many ways as Grey Owl. His real name is W.H. Corkill. He has done a great deal to make Grey Owl known in Great Britain but apparently Lovat Dickson couldn't see it that way with the result that they are at loggerheads.

I am glad you ran away, if that is what you call it as it has been agony carrying on this last five years and I do believe that it would have been any help to you either mentally, physically or financially to carry on and I am more than pleased after the work you did for me personally as well as for Canada that you got away and saw something different to the narrowness of a civil servant's life. I quite agree with you that the foolish, ignorant and slow Britisher has something that commands the admiration of the world and I think it can be summed up in one sentence - we believe in the greatness of our cause, the Empire and peace. I feel more strongly than ever that the British Empire does not exist for power or even trade, which is so essential, but has to play a part in the world for the good of humanity.

I did not go away this winter for which I am very pleased as the expenses allowed under the new regulations would not permit of my doing real publicity work. I am sorry that I cannot be as enthusiastic as you are over Grey Owl. There are many things I know that I cannot write to you and my constant prayer is that there will be no outbreak that would cast discredit on the National Parks and those with whom he is associated.

We are sending you a bundle of buffalo material which I hope is what you want and if it isn't let us know and if there is anything else we can do it will be a pleasure for us to do it for you.

I am sorry to say that Miss Ward has not been as well as she should have been this winter and if circumstances would permit nothing would give me greater joy than to see her join you in a little more leisure. Take care of yourself and remember me to Mrs. Herridge. With very best wishes, believe me

Ever yours sincerely,

JC