

Haul Road

This sad story and my recent close calls left me ever mindful of how dependent a rider is on the bike's engine in these parts. The further north you ride the more the bikes turn into BMW's, especially the GS models. I did see one Harley riding in the mud. I heard stories of a Goldwing and another Harley on the Haul Road that did not have happy outcomes. One of the purposes of my trip was to make the most out of my R1150RT, one of the few motorcycles you could depend on to bring you safely through a ride of 10,000 miles.

This pleasant dream was shattered when the engine suddenly died, as I rode up a hill about 20 miles west of Fort Nelson. I coasted to the shoulder. With coaxing I got it restarted and continued up the hill with the bike coughing and lurching. I didn't think I would get far. But by great luck the hilltop had a scenic overlook with parking area and concrete bathroom. The late afternoon weather happened to be sunny.

I removed the right fairing. The shock cord was still there but now the entire

pulley had fallen off the butterfly shaft and was dangling by the throttle cable. I pushed the pulley back on its square shaft but it fell right off again. The square hole was now oversized due to vibration.

The bike was dead, the nearest dealer was 1,000 miles ahead in Edmonton AB, it was too late to call, and there was no cell phone service anyway. The pulley simply had to be fixed somehow. I found a Pepsi can, flattened it and pierced holes top and bottom and threaded cable ties through them. Then I replaced the pulley on its shaft and slipped the Pepsi can outside the pulley and strapped the can to the throttle body. Now the pulley could turn and operate the shaft without falling off. I re-attached the shock cord as return spring, and the engine ran again! Throttle control wasn't smooth, but I figured I could make 1,000 miles this way so I continued riding late into the night, into Alberta.

Thursday morning I stopped in a small town about 200 miles before Edmonton. First I called ahead to the dealer there, Argyll Motor Sports, and ordered a right

Right: At the tire shop at Trail's End BMW, George (left) uses only hand tools. **Below:** Hot Springs at Liard River BC make a refreshing pause

throttle body, which they could possibly obtain via Fed Ex by the next morning. Then I found an auto parts store and bought some JB Weld, a miracle epoxy for metals that has a high temperature rating. I glued the pulley back on its shaft with this for extra security, and applied some grease to the Pepsi can which was holding up pretty well. It was afternoon when I finally got under way. The bike seemed to be running well enough.

But a few hours later the bike died again on the open road. Once again I coasted to the shoulder and removed the right fairing. All looked "normal," that is, the Pepsi can and shock cord were still

