



THE JUNCTION CITY THAT WAS--BEFORE THE FIRE.
Main street of Cochrane at the crossing of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the T. & N. O. Railway.



AND THIS TOWN ALSO WAS MAINLY WIPED OUT.
Golden City was the pioneer metropolis of Porcupine--before the fire.



Pioneer Porcupine Prospector on the Frederick-House River.

THE PLIGHT OF PORCUPINE

ON Tuesday last week culminated one of the most terrible disasters in the history of the Dominion. As this goes to press reports are beginning to dribble in of the horror of Porcupine. The eyes of the world are turned toward Northern Ontario, for cosmopolitan Porcupine, which only three weeks ago was linked up to the rest of the world by railway, was universal in its appeal. For almost two years, men from Alaska, from Cape-town, from California, feverishly trekked into the northern wilds lured by gold. And picturesque we thought these nomad conquerors of the wilderness. Now another act has been added to the drama of the great, new, Canadian gold camp. Thousands whose hearts a few days ago beat high with the hope of fortune within their grasp have lost all. Millions of dollars in expensive mining equipment have been licked up in the flames of a single day. And then—the fearful harvest of human life.

Across the baked rocks and scorched shrubbery of the north is the trail of death. From two hundred to five hundred—the list of the dead crept up as the stretcher-bearers, the surgeons from the hospitals, and relatives of the missing uncovered detail after detail of the tragedy. But the fatalities will total much below a hundred.

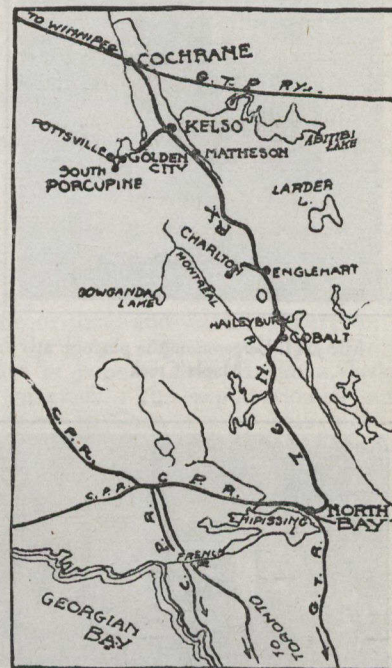
What intensifies this calamity is the suddenness of it. In Toronto, where every train of the T. & N. O. brings its complement of beard-singed men, lies a woman prostrated with grief because her husband is published as among the victims. Only a day or so before the catastrophe he had written to her of forest fires and reminded her of his absolute safety! A few hours later Porcupine was a cinder, and a telegram announced his death.

The Porcupine fire is to be attributed directly to the influence of the boiling heat which has sizzled the pavements of cities and dried to tinder the underbrush in the forest during the past ten days. All over Northern Ontario, as usual, at this time of year, there were forest fires. They had been seen in the vicinity of Porcupine, and some wary mine-owners took precautions. Tuesday came and a strong south-west wind. In four short hours towns with electric light and pavements were a mere smudge on the map. The most dramatic scenes of the fire occurred about Porcupine Lake. Here at opposite

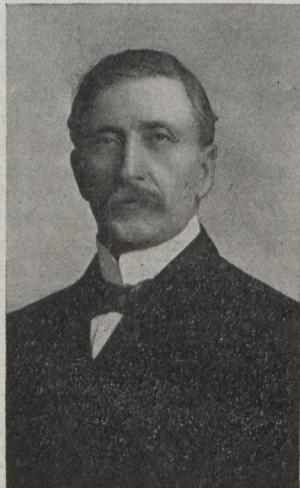
made his fight; at United Porcupine perished Manager Andy Yuille and three of his staff—and so one might go on with the story of the pit's mouth.

Another feature of the calamity is that it descended at the boom time of Porcupine. Population was flocking in, the railroad to Golden City was not two weeks old. Porcupine had passed the trail stage. This meant a great deal to the Dominion and Ontario. At last we had real gold camps, not the myth of a prospectus. The Government helped generously. Millions from Uncle Sam and from Europe were put into the Porcupine ground. Now much of the work has to be done again. Fortunes have to be made over. Already the rebuilding has commenced. Relief funds have started up in Ontario towns and throughout the country. If ever Ontario had an opportunity for philanthropy now is the time. To citizens of the world to whom she was merely the name of the jumping-off place to gold, she became known intimately as a vast province.

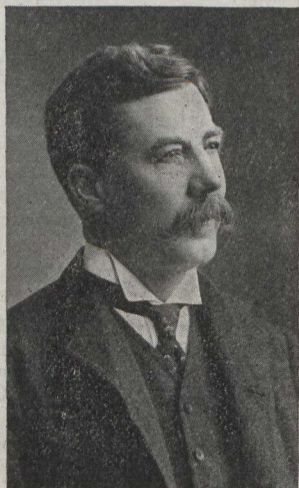
Men who live at the fringe of civilization look calamity squarely in the face. To them life is often but a gamble. The citizens of South Porcupine and Golden City and Cochrane built their towns next door to the forest. They were willing to take the chance. With the present catastrophe in mind, it will be a question for the government to decide what policy in the future shall be pursued to ensure the safety of the mining towns of the north. They may consider how far town back-yards must be removed from the inflammable forest. They may discuss the efficiency of the college youth on a vacation as a fire-ranger. It would be wrong to say that Porcupine is no more. A mining camp which is worth a cent cannot be downed. Porcupine is already rising from her ashes. Money and boundless optimism are loud with hammers, merchants whose stock has been destroyed are keeping the wires to Toronto hot with orders for more goods. The spirit of reconstruction is at work. The rotundas of the big Toronto hotels are filled with little knots of mining men all quietly planning for the future. Talk to these men and they will tell you sagely that it's a poor wind that blows nobody good. A bigger, saner, safer Porcupine, that will be the ideal of the reconstructionists. So it was with the Fernie Fire of three years ago and the great fire of Toronto.



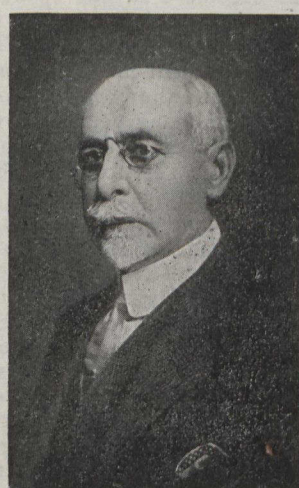
THE TRACK OF THE GREAT FIRE
Showing the location of five towns altogether or partly destroyed.



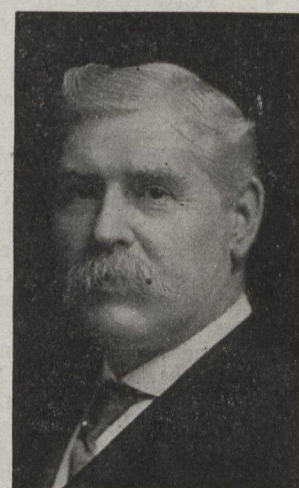
HON. FRANK COCHRANE
Minister of Lands and Mines
After whom a fire-swept town was named.



MR. ALEX. LAIRD
General Manager Bank of Commerce
Chairman of General Relief Fund for Ontario.



MR. J. N. ENGLEHART
Chairman T. & N. O. Ry. Com.
Chief of the supply distribution to the stricken mining centres.



MR. R. S. GOURLAY
President Toronto Board of Trade
Energetic in raising relief funds for Porcupine sufferers.

At the mines individual incidents of heroism there were many. Among them was the act of "Bob" Weiss, manager of West Dome, who, with his wife and child, stuck by the property of their company and smothered in the shaft. A great deal of the tragedy centres about the mines themselves. At Bay Dome there are rumours that 200 men perished; at West Dome the giant Weiss