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WANTED, CAPITAL AND RAILROADS.

For six years a man named Von Hamerstein has been boring for oil at Fort McMurray. A few weeks ago this persistent explorer left Edmonton to make his seventh trip into Northern Alberta. Crude petroleum deposits have been located at Fort McMurray, a point on the Athabasca River, three hundred miles north of Edmonton. Hamerstein represents some capitalists, and this summer he will install two drills at the west end of Lesser Slave Lake. Fort McMurray will likely figure on a railroad map before many years have passed. The railroad, and no one quite knows which company will tap first the fertility of this immense Northland, may pay dividends from the beginning. Naturally, this will not be observable at first in the financial statement. It does not repay the railroad director to harp too much on the resources of territory over which he proposes to trail locomotives and freight cars.

Edmonton more than any perhaps has faith in this valuable and practically unexplored country. That is because the city is the doorway to existing but undeveloped resources. The area of those portions of Alberta and Saskatchewan lying north of the Saskatchewan watershed is estimated at 250,000 square miles. The trend of settlement in the United States has invariably been westward, being led by railroad construction. A similar pioneering direction has been taken in Canada. The southern portion of Western Canada is being rapidly peopled and developed. The big railroad companies, therefore, are casting their steel lines northward. As the steel of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental is laid, the eyes of the adventurous, the capitalist and the investor are turned towards these northern reserves.

The most valuable report on this country is perhaps that of the Senate committee appointed some time ago. They obtained first hand information from men who had lived, toiled and explored in a region which one day will support a large population. The fact that Hamerstein is making his seventh oil-boring trip causes one to glance again at the committee's publication. We venture to say that Mr. Hamerstein has not told all he knows. His own and other people's money to the tune of more than sixty thousand dollars has been expended in machinery and actual development for punching holes through the ground around Fort McMurray. He told the committee that this machinery was not for ornamental purposes. The banks of the Athabasca River from Lesser Slave Lake to the mouth of the Little River have been traversed, and so on back to the mouth of the Peace River, and, as Mr. Hamerstein says, "he walked every step of it." A versatile explorer, and an observant one, his evidence touched on agriculture, forestry, fish, game and fur-bearing animals. For two years he went gold mining in the Athabasca and Peace River districts, and has an apparatus for separating the gold from the sand.

Hamerstein also knows where to place his fingers on coal—a good quality of bituminous—on salt, and silver, and copper. Of late years, this explorer has devoted his attention to natural gas and petroleum deposits. Attention has frequently been drawn to the waste of natural oil gas for the past dozen years or more at the Government bore hole at Pelican Rapids. A large volume of gas was struck there by the Government boring parties, and the well has never been plugged, although there have been frequent representations made. It would be largely in the interests of the development of the resources of that country that the well should be plugged. Gas has now been escaping for thirteen years. The