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Lake of the Woods Country.

Mayor Barnes, of Rat Portage, read the following paper on the resources of the Lake of the Woods district at the recent immigration convention at Winnipeg:

Mr Chairman and gentlemen, it affords me very great pleasure to be here to represent Rat Portage, and the Rainy River district at this convention, and, sir, while we have not got the lofty mountains of British Columbia with its fertile valleys, or the great fertile plains of Manitoba yet we have great advantages, some of which I shall endeavor briefly to place before you particularly our agricultural lands, mining and manufacturing.

Mining—Beginning as far back as 1878 there has been a great deal of talk about the gold mines of the Rainy River district and something of a mining boom was experienced during the years from 1880 to 1884, but owing to the state of the boundary dispute, and the difficulty in perfecting titles, mining came to a standstill for a number of years, and remained so until about four years ago, since which time there has been renewed activity, and a great many properties have been developed, and large numbers are now being developed, while there are hundreds of prospectors at work all through this great gold belt, from the Seine river on the south to away across the Lake of the Woods, and extending many miles north, and what I wish particularly to impress upon this convention and the world at large is the fact, and I wish to repeat, it is a fact without doubt, that we have valuable mines that are paying look at the Sultana mine, within nine miles of Rat Portage, with only ten stamps, and turning out on an average \$2,000 in gold per week; a mine that any Canadian can refer to with pride, for is it not one of the most wonderful gold mines that has ever been discovered on this continent, as it has nearly all its way from the top of the ground all the way down until now at a depth of 247 feet. J. F. Caldwell, Esq., the owner, had sufficient ore in sight to keep him running ten years, and is a Canadian gold mine millionaire, and he richly deserves it all. We also have the Regina mine on White Fish Bay, about 30 miles from Rat Portage. This mine is owned by a strong English company, with a capital of \$650,000, its local manager being W. G. Motley, Esq., and like the other mining managers is loth to tell the public just how much gold is being produced, but the mine has only been in active operation less than a year and is now turning out \$1,000 in gold per week. Now I have made particular mention of these mines as they have passed the doubtful, experimental and speculative stage and are to-day without the shadow of a doubt two of the very best gold mining properties on the continent, that are

in actual running order, and producing gold in great paying quantities.

The Dominion Gold Mining and Reduction company have acquired a large number of mines, also the reduction works at Rat Portage, which have been fitted up with the very best and latest improved machinery, with 20 stamps which the company not only use in developing their own properties but also run as a customs mill, where anyone having a location can get a small quantity of ore tested at a nominal expense, and thereby find out whether he has got a good or bad location without the expense of sending his ore to some distant point.

With all this gold why have not the mines been working long ago? To my mind one of the greatest reasons is that people can hardly credit us with having such a vast and rich mining country, so easy of access, to tell the average man with capital to invest. You take the C. P. R. Atlantic or Pacific express, as the case may be, with its splendid trains, get on the sleeper, where you have every luxury and convenience with dining car at hand, and get off at Rat Portage, right in the heart of the great gold belt, he is inclined to be sceptical. On the other hand if you told him he would require to tramp through the wilderness from 60 to 200 miles, and take in all his supplies on pack mules, and do a little fighting with savages to get to the gold fields, he would at once say: "I guess there must be gold there, I will go and see for myself."

Farming—Some may smile at me mentioning farming and look incredulous, but nevertheless we have in the Rainy River district thousands of acres of splendid agricultural lands. This fact has been proven beyond a doubt by the experimental farm located at Barclay on the Canadian Pacific railway, where oats, wheat, barley and all kinds of vegetables have been grown, and have yielded a large return, and all about the Lake of the Woods are splendid tracts of land, while the town of Rat Portage supplies a first-class market for all kinds of farm produce which always commands a high price. Then we have to the south of Rat Portage the great Rainy River country, easy of access, there being a good line of boats running to Fort Frances during the season of navigation beginning at the mouth of the Rainy River and extending to Fort Frances, a distance of eighty miles by a depth of from ten to twenty miles of as fine farming land as is to be found in any part of Canada. Soil is a rich, black loam, well timbered with poplar, birch, elm, ash and spruce. There is room in the Rainy River district for two million agriculturists while the whole district is dotted over with beautiful clear lakes, swarming with the finest fish which affords food for mankind for the taking, and without a doubt the Rainy River is one of the most beautiful rivers in Canada, taking its rise in Koochiching Falls

at Fort Frances and emptying in the Lake of the Woods, a distance of eighty miles, averaging about half a mile in width, yet this district has been overlooked by the settler in his mad rush to the great fertile plains of the west.

Manufactures—Rat Portage as a location for all kinds of manufacturing purposes, stands to-day unexcelled in Canada, situated at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods, about midway across the continent on the Canadian Pacific Railway, 130 miles east of Winnipeg, the commercial centre of the west, and just at the gateway of the great wheat fields of Canada, with a developed water-power equal to 40,000 horse-power—I am speaking now of the Keewatin Power Company—works which are situated in the town of Rat Portage, and are now ready to supply power to anyone requiring it. Could the situation be better for all kinds of manufacturers, such as oatmeal mills, flour mills, with the great west to supply oats and wheat, and every pound that is exported should be ground in this country, thus making our Canadian northwest known, and not allow our Manitoba hard wheat to lose its identity as a large portion now does, for every bag and barrel should be stamped flour from Manitoba wheat.

We also have an unlimited and inexhaustible supply of spruce and poplar wood for pulp and paper, while Manitoba produces great quantities of flax. The straw which now goes to waste should be made into paper. It also offers great advantages for the manufacture of implements, linseed oil, twine, etc., and for the establishing of furniture factories, foundries and machine shops, and woolen mills, and in fact any industry that requires cheap and never failing power.

Now with room on our agricultural lands for two million settlers, with room for thousands of miners with openings for all kinds of manufacturers who would employ thousands of mechanics and skilled laborers, there is no district in Canada to-day which offers and holds out such great inducements for the hardy settler, the miner, the speculator and capitalist, or one that has so much to guarantee a rich reward to those who have the grit and pluck to settle in a new country as Rat Portage and the Rainy River district.

The Game Laws.

According to recent amendments to the game laws of Manitoba, the season for duck shooting opens in future on September 1st, instead of August 15th, and the shooting of deer has been prohibited for two years. The change in regard to ducks was made to protect the grouse. Parties going out duck shooting frequently violated the law by killing grouse, and owing to the difficulties of conviction it was decided to make the close season the same for each.