

II.—Memorandum Regarding the Country Between Sudbury and Port Arthur

By J. H. White

The line of travel was from Sudbury to Port Arthur and to Sault Ste. Marie and northward on the Algoma Central. The method adopted was to note what could be seen from the train, and to stop off at possible sources of information. The only information of any value was that furnished by Crown timber agents and lumbermen. From Sudbury to Port Arthur on the C.P.R. there are but few operations located, since most of the drainage is towards James bay. In consequence, information of a definite character regarding the region north of the railway could not be obtained. More success was met with regarding the southern portion.

The region under consideration is a portion of the Laurentian shield surrounding Hudson bay. In general the rock is Laurentian gneiss and granite covered with a very thin soil, with some later pre-Cambrian areas from Sudbury westward to Sault Ste. Marie, between Michipicoten and Missinaibi, from east of Heron bay to Port Arthur and around lake Nipigon.

It is a country characterized by the monotonous uniformity of its physical features. It consists of a plateau broken by low hummocky hills and ridges rising at most only a few hundred feet above the general level, the valleys being occupied by lakes, muskegs, and streams.

(1) FROM SUDBURY TO PORT ARTHUR

From Sudbury to Port Arthur, generally speaking, the country along the railway has been burned at one time or another for the entire distance of 550 miles.* Not much has escaped except the spruce swamps. The burned areas have been partially recovered by temporary stands of poplar, white birch and jack pine, either pure or in mixture. But to a vast extent the country has been burned so repeatedly that there is nothing left but bare rock.

As to the amount of destruction north and eastward from the railway little is known. In many cases the fire has not run back over five to ten miles; but in many others it has run back in streaks between waterways for great but unknown distances. In 1891 fire swept from

*See "Fire Losses in Ontario" by J. F. Whitson.