



GROUP AT SAW BILL GOLD MINES.

The World in presenting the series of photos of the Saw Bill country is indebted to Mr. H. Cook, the Port Arthur photographer. These views were all taken in the month of March, during the time transportation was going on from Bonheur.

EN ROUTE TO SAW BILL LAKE

The World's Young Man Makes the Trip WITH HIS INDIAN GUIDES.

What Intending Visitors to This Mining District Need to Take

To Ensure Comfort—The Start From Bonheur Station on the C.P.R.—Beautiful Scenery Among the Lakes—Postmaster General Halsey Ought to Take a Peep at it—Where a Postoffice is Needed—Another Letter From F. D. L.

Port Arthur, June 12.—(Special.)—The character of Port Arthur as a distributing point having been dealt with in two former letters, it is now in order to take up the general mining districts to which it is more or less adjacent, and first of all I shall talk of my visit to the Saw Bill Lake, or Upper Seine River country.

To the tenderfoot, used to the asphalt pavements and heavy cars of a city, the Indian trail and birch bark canoe are something of a novelty, but let not any one who has never undertaken a trip into "the woods" think that the journey into the Saw Bill region is all fun.

There is some fun about it, of course, but after a few hours' hard work you first step into your little craft and gracefully dip your paddle into the limpid waters your nose is filled with a glorious sensation of freedom, and you begin to quote something from Longfellow about the beauties of wood and lake, but after a few hours' hard work you commence to think of life with Dame Nature as a mistress is not all poetry, and by the time you have crossed the thirteenth lake, and pack on back, climbed the twelfth hilly portage, the chances are that none of the modern verse-makers have written language so aptly applicable to the occasion and your feelings.

But let us begin at the beginning. Boarding a westbound train at Port Arthur early in the evening and snatching a few hours' sleep, I had the porter put me off at Bonheur, some 150 miles on the track. It was 3.30 a.m. (2.30 Toronto time) when I arrived, and I thought that Bonheur (Good Hour) had been well named. Day was just breaking, and in the uncertain light the leading features of the place could be made out. By the side of the railway and closely surrounded on all quarters by the same sort of sparse, stunted timber, is noticeable all the way from North Bay west, stand a clump of station house, a log freight shed, a dwelling painted red, and a big water tank—just these three buildings—and they constitute the metropolis that is to be, an ancient immediate distributing point of the Saw Bill country. The station master, Mr. McTigue, and his brother are the only two men to be found, and they live in the one house, look after the local interests of the railway, and between times do all they can for the travelers who, singly or by twos and threes, drop off the trains bound for the mines.

And in passing a word or two may be said regarding the refusal of the Dominion Government to establish a post-office at this point. Bonheur is, as already stated, the distributing point for a portion of the Upper Seine country, 50 miles long and 10 miles wide, and lying between Lynx Head Falls and Lake Harold. This region has a population today of between 400 and 500 men, who remain without any other cities whatever. Every week something like 500 letters and papers arrive at Bonheur station, addressed in care of the agent, who sends them out to the different mining camps, whenever suitably happens along with the mail that way. Those who have gone into the wild lands are the men who are making our country, and the Government's refusal to establish a post-office at this point is a serious matter.

After this mid-day meal we had to cover eight more lakes, by night. Elbow, Tough, Red Point, Little Red Point, Noble, Martin, Little Saw Bill and Saw Bill, with nine more portages, three in here and there by way of variety, three of them over a mile each in length. The long narrow lakes are often beautiful in form and surroundings, and as we paddled on mile after mile along the chains brought us to War Eagle Lake, on the other side of which, to escape a "Wasa" in Chippawa, we made the last portage before lunch, which I did full justice to as I lay upon a couch of spruce larch.

The last Portages. But lovely, I lost interest in it towards the close of the day. The last two port-

neful digression, upon alighting from the train I found Agent McTigue busily engaged with his manifold duties, and I talked to him until the morning gloaming walked a brawny young Indian, who soon learned that his name was Aleck, and that he was one of three Chippewa couriers whom I had secured by wire beforehand to take me into the woods. After trying to engage him in conversation, and finding that he was decidedly un-committal, rather monosyllabic in his utterances, I asked him if he were ready to start out, whereupon he briefly observed "Kehget," which, being interpreted, means "yes." I did not then understand the remark, but as he accompanied it with a nod of the head I took it that he meant to reply in the affirmative, accordingly prepared for the journey, while Aleck went to wake up "Jim" and his brother among the "log-camps." And as I got ready I noticed opposite the station the higher end of the Government road, which Mr. Dwyer and 150 men are building and which when constructed will make the trip in the Saw Bill country only 25 miles long, instead of a rough one of something like 30 miles.

Day had just dawned as the Indians and myself set off from the little station to walk two miles down the track and through the woods to where our camp lay, and I imagine that in the gray of the morning, the red sun just rising from behind a dismal green swamp, the forest quite a picturesque group. The men plodded ahead single file in a loose line, carrying upon their backs by means of "pack-traps" heavy burdens of stuff which I was taking into the mines for friends; while I, clad in old clothes, sweater and oilskin coat, and wearing shoes that were worn and with a heavy pack-sack upon my shoulders. In the outfit of anyone contemplating this or a similar trip two essential features are the shoe-traps and pack-sacks just referred to. The former should be of strong water-tight leather, reaching to the knee, so that a man may tramp dry-shod through a swamp, and the soles should be studded with hob-nails to facilitate the scaling of rocks. And as to the pack-sack, it may be simply described as a canvas bag held in place on the back by a pair of straps passing over the shoulders, and at 2 o'clock p.m., for the election of officers and general business of the Company. By order, GEO. McEDWARD, Sec. Fort William, Ont., June 8, 1897.

Arrived at the lakeside the Indians drove a big canoe from out some brush, and piling our packs into the craft, we were soon cleaving the waters of the Mesnash Lake, which, like the other red men name it. And from this time out, to play upon the title of one of Mr. Jerome's stories, the "white man." The Indians, while they paddled, meanwhile talking among themselves in their own language, while the white man also helped to propel the canoe, but silently—because his fellow-companions either did not or would not speak much English.

Mesnash Lake is two miles wide, and after crossing it we struck a portage three miles long, and well called the "wet" portage, as for over a mile the trail runs through swampy ground, in which at every step one sinks down to his knees in mud and moss. The work is not getting over this portage with a load is pretty fatiguing on an empty stomach, and I was glad on reaching the other side to see the Indians preparing to break their fast on the banks of Gull River. Almost in a twinkling they built a roaring fire of birch bark and dry tree branches, and muttering "bunkite" (hungry), they soon had their breakfast under way. In a trying pan, Aleck cooked some bacon to a nifty, and even prepared coffee in a tin mug hung over the fire on a long forked stick. Bread and butter and marmalade completed the frugal repast in the forest glen, while the Indians near by partook of "koo-loosh, koo-loosh-wah" and "moo-tee," that is to say, corn, pork, and tea.

Then into the canoe again and off up Gull River, and through Little Gull Lake and Big Gull Lake, a straightaway paddle of 15 miles, to the height of land, which we crossed by a portage of 15 chains, carrying boat, baggage and all with us. Another pull through Surprise Lake and another portage of 12 chains brought us to War Eagle Lake, on the other side of which, to escape a "Wasa" in Chippawa, we made the last portage before lunch, which I did full justice to as I lay upon a couch of spruce larch.

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But, to return to my story after this

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