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Geology of Matachewan District, Northern Ontario.

INTRODUCTION.

ECONOMIC HISTORY.

Matachewan district received its name from the old Hudson's Bay Company's trading post, Fort Matachewan, a place of some historical interest. The district has sprung into prominence in the last two years through the discovery in it of bodies of valuable gold ores.

Some prospecting for gold was being done in Matachewan district as early as 1909, but at that time the discoveries of silver around Gowganda and Elk Lake had so focused the attention of prospectors on silver that the possibilities of gold occurrences were overlooked by the great majority, and as Matachewan district contains none of the large sills of Nipissing diabase which had become known as the source of the silver ores, the district received very little attention. Two or three years later, after the discovery of gold in Porcupine, a gold claim was taken up by Mr. H. Minard near the forks of Montreal river, and a considerable amount of development work was done; apparently, however, without finding workable bodies of ore, as the project was discontinued some years ago and has not since been resumed. Much staking was also done in the western parts of Midlothian and Montrose townships by prospectors entering the country from Porcupine by way of Grassy river, and the remains of their work still visible show that in some cases at least the claims were carefully examined. All of these claims, however, have been abandoned for several years.

The recent discoveries in Powell township were made in 1916 by J. Davidson and S. Otisse. The report of the finds was followed by a rush of prospectors into the new field, and within a short time most of Powell township between the forks of Montreal river and the west branch had been staked. Prospectors failing to locate near the original discoveries carried on exploration mainly to the east and north, and during the summers of 1917-18, a large number of claims were recorded in Cairo, Alma, and Baden townships. Discoveries of gold have been made on many of these claims, but so far as available information goes, no large bodies of ore have yet been found. Prospecting has been greatly hampered, however, by lack of labour, due to enlistment and the demands of the munitions industry. The Ontario government, recognizing this, has generally granted extensions of the time limits normally allowed for doing the assessment work necessary to hold claims.

LOCATION AND AREA.

Matachewan area lies in the district of Timiskaming, in the neighbourhood of north latitude 48 degrees, west longitude 81 degrees, and about 35 miles northwest of the town of Elk Lake. It is bounded on the west by Niven's base-line, the boundary between the former districts of Nipissing and Algoma, and on the south by the northern boundary of the Gowganda area mapped in 1908-10 by W. H. Collins of the Geological Survey. It includes about 430 square miles, most of which lies west of Montreal river.

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