

to prevent and no effort should be spared that will tend to keep this possibility from becoming a reality.

Examining a map, such as Fig. 1, upon which the outline of the Clay Belt is marked, it will be seen that this Belt, which consists of most fertile land, stretches almost half way across the unsettled area which at present divides the Dominion. The speaker, therefore, regards the work of the commission in opening up the Clay Belt for settlement as possibly the most important national work now in progress in Canada.

Other organizations are also active in this work of development; the Algoma Central Ry. is building in from the south and west; the National Transcontinental Ry. and the Canadian Northern Ry. are traversing the Belt from west to east. The next work of importance would, therefore, appear to be the establishment of an outlet to

point and does not lie in an extreme corner of the possible confines of civilization. If on Fig. 1 a half circle is drawn with the harbor as centre it will be found that, without very material change of radius, Winnipeg, Port Arthur, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec can be reached, and it may reasonably be expected that in the not-distant future a commercial centre of some importance will exist near the harbor, and that this centre will transact business directly and independently with each of the cities that have just been mentioned.

A journey from Toronto to Moose Harbor after the completion of the railway extension will not be an arduous undertaking. The distance can readily be run within 24 hours, and, as a matter of illustration, the run may readily be compared to the present journey from Montreal to Chicago, or from Toronto to Port Arthur; in each

case the distance between the points mentioned is rather greater than the distance from Toronto to Moose Harbor will be, this distance being roughly estimated at 670 miles.

The enterprise of extending the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway to the Bay must be regarded as one of colonization and development; it is not possible to prove from statistics of present traffic that the undertaking will be a commercial success, the simple fact being that no traffic at present exists, although there is every reason to believe that natural resources abound from which an important traffic can be created.

The tributary district to the railway will consist not only of the Clay Belt, but also of the

well-defined area of clay lands lying along the shores of James Bay, and geologically known as the Coastal Plain. The soils of this Plain bear much resemblance to those of the Clay Belt, and their development presents in a larger degree the same problems that have to be dealt with in the development of the Clay Belt. Where satisfactory means of drainage exist, the growth of the various species of northern timber proves the fertility of the soil, but the geologists regard the whole district, and particularly the Coastal Plain, as being of very recent creation, placing the period of its elevation above sea level at not more than 10,000 years. The drainage system is, therefore, quite imperfectly developed and large areas of land are buried under muskeg and

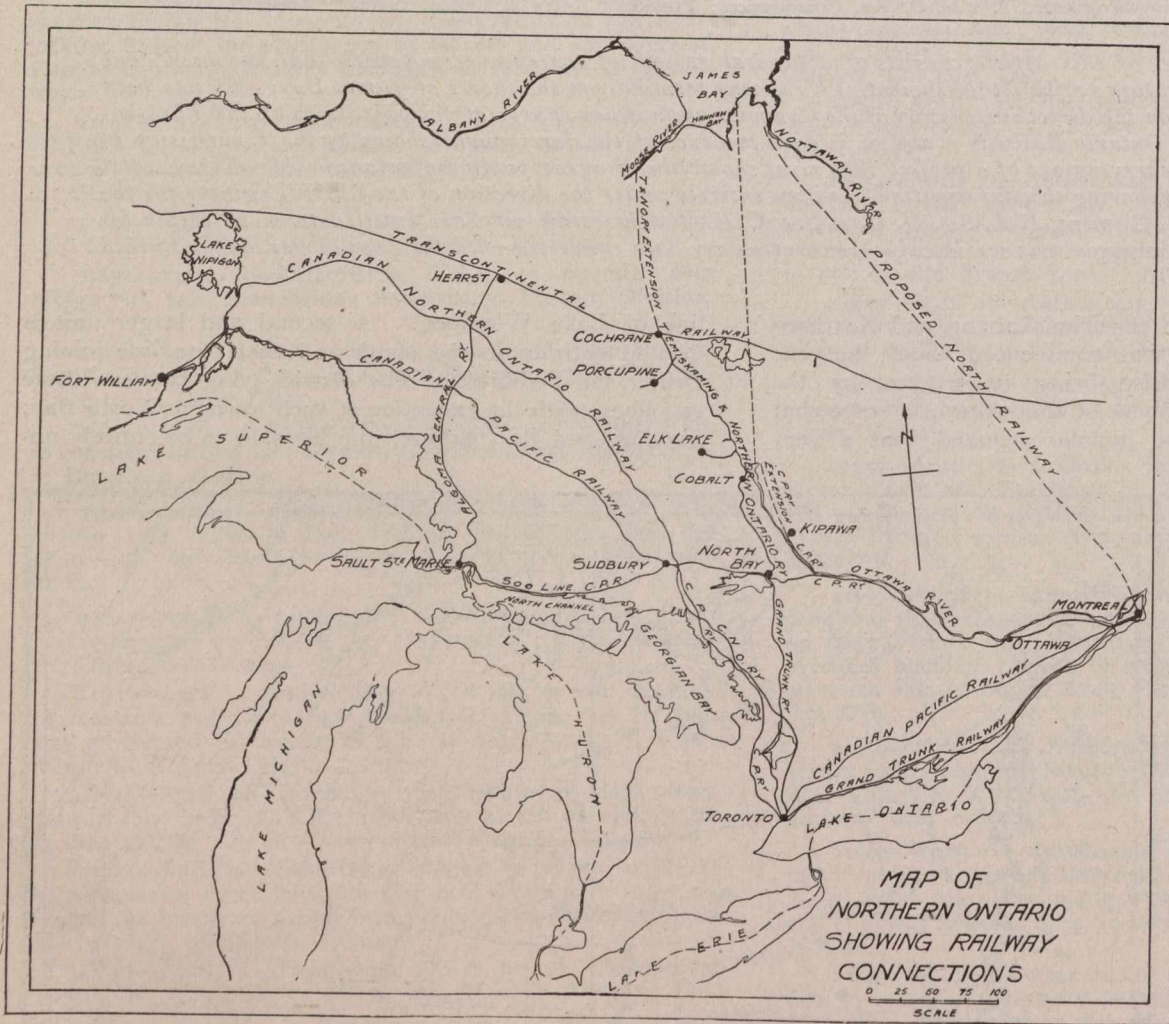


Fig. 2.

the north and the establishment of a rail connection with the only ocean coast line within the confines of the Province of Ontario. With such an end in view the commission has directed the carrying-out of the investigations that are discussed in this paper.

The most attractive location for the proposed terminal so far as present information goes, is at the mouth of the Moose River, as shown in Fig. 2, and this point may be referred to as Moose Harbor. It may be remarked that by far the larger portion of the Clay Belt is drained by the tributaries of the Moose River and that the natural movement of traffic will be along the line of these tributaries with a natural point of concentration at the harbor. Geographically speaking, Moose Harbor is not an isolated