# THE SAW BILL LAKE GOLD COUNTRY

## Interesting Facts About Saw Bill Lake District,

### In the Development of Which Hamilton Merchants and Manufacturers Have Been so Successful.

**How the Gold is Extracted—Wonderfully Preserved Crater of an Extinct Volcano—Gold Bricks in July—New Town of Saw Bill City—Compressor Plant in Operation at Hawk Bay—Four Hundred Miners at Work in the District.**

(From our own Correspondent.)

The World to-day presents to its readers the most complete and reliable sketch of the Saw Bill Lake district that has yet appeared in the press. The article gives particular prominence to the operations of two of the principal mines in the district, and to the people identified with them more than ordinary praise is due for the opening up of this country and the satisfactory manner in which the enterprises have been conducted.

The inauguration of the mining boom in Ontario commenced with the offer of shares in the Saw Bill mine last year, and as the time is fast approaching when the Saw Bill district will be counted as a gold producer it is fitting that in this jubilee year Ontario should have the proud distinction of coming to the front as a producer of the yellow metal. In less than two months it is expected twenty stamps will be pounding out the gold in the Saw Bill region. The Hammond Gold Reef Mining Co., of which Sir Richard Cartwright is president, is busily engaged in the erection of their ten-stamp mill, which, together with the Saw Bill mill, is expected to be in operation next month.

In addition to the principal properties mentioned, several others have recently been opened up, particulars of which will be taken up by The World later on. Besides the new wagon road from the C.P.R track to Saw Bill Lake, which is now being built, the construction of thirty miles of the Rainy River Railway is to be commenced this summer. Fifteen miles of rails are already on the docks at Fort William.

The vigorous mining operations in the district are bound to result in great and permanent advantage to Canada. The successful operation of three or four mines, like the Saw Bill, the Hammond Reef and Hawk Bay, will compel the boom, so long deferred, but which must of necessity come when the British capitalist has presented to him tangible proof in the shape of gold bricks that Ontario has vast stores of mineral wealth which need but the fertilizing touch of capital to convert it into money. The capital power of the British investor is practically unlimited. Within the last few days it was cabled that the Japanese loan of twenty-one million at five per cent. offered at 101 was subscribed five times over inside of one hour. If the attraction to the British capitalist of a five per cent investment is so great, how can we adequately measure the interest which will be awakened in Canadian mining investments when our Ontario mines are beginning to pay the large dividends which present indications seem to fully warrant. British capital has in a comparative sense done little to develop the natural resources of this country. Vast sums have been expended by British investors in Australia, in the Transvaal and other parts of Africa, with the result that Australia produced forty-three millions in gold in 1896, the Transvaal over forty-three millions, while Canada, in spite of her great mineral wealth and advantages presented by cheap labor, cheap fuel, abundant water supply, and a splendid climate, yielded in 1896 only three million seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The opportunities for development are so manifest, the possibilities so tremendous, that The World feels that Canada is on the list for a great big boom, which will be founded on the solid basis of the increased production of gold, which cannot fail to give a strong and permanent stimulation to every branch of trade.

VAST MINERAL WEALTH OF WESTERN ONTARIO.

The first real awakening to the vast mineral wealth of Western Ontario only occurred about a year ago, and to the enterprise of some of its well known business men Hamilton owes the distinction of being the first city in Ontario to successfully demonstrate the possibilities of a legitimate mining industry in our province. There are good reasons for believing that Western Ontario possesses an immense area of free milling gold ores, and there are experts of good repute and business men of experience who believe that Ontario's gold yield will ultimately reach that of any other country in the world.

The particular territory from which there is good reason to expect handsome returns lies about 150 miles to the west of Lake Superior, midway between the main line of the C.P.R. and international boundary, and is known as the Upper Seine River. On arms of this river are situated the Saw Bill and Hawk Bay gold mines, in what is now well known throughout Canada as "The Saw Bill Lake District."

In an interesting paper by Prof. Hille, M.E., published in the April number of The Canadian Mining Review, is given a description of this locality and its wonderful gold-bearing formations. Prof. Hille states: "In a country whose formation is so old and so highly eruptive as the Seine River and Thunder Bay districts, it is not astonishing to find and see the manifold freaks which the plutonic forces have made in the formation of our earth's crust. What a role must heat and chemical agencies have played in the metamorphism of the older rocks? How many times must the first hardened crust have been remelted? What dynamic forces in altering and shaping our sphere? Pluto must have been a very busy god while he was young; but sometimes reckless, in tearing apart what he had formed as a whole, "and this he did at Saw Bill Lake."

On Steep Rock Lake, not very far south of Saw Bill, is the wonderfully preserved crater of a small extinct volcano. It is situated at the extreme point of a cape, and 150 feet above the lake, and forms the end of a chain of hills striking to the northeast. The interior of the crater is preserved by the falling in of its corona, which has formed an arch and given protection against atmospheric influence. The vent is of irregular form, and about 24 feet in diameter. The smooth walls are as well preserved as if the lava had only recently receded. Quite a number of such small craters can be seen on this lake.

In describing the Saw Bill Lake district and the great size of some of the gold deposits, special mention is made and measurements given of the Saw Bill vein and its deposits, which promise very profitable mining. The vein occurs in the intrusive granite which has played such an important part in gold deposits.

"As soon as the country is more thoroughly prospected, and a number of similar veins found during the summer, if only half the expectations be fulfilled which the owners have a right to cherish on account of the fine surface indications, there can be no doubt but that the "Saw Bill Lake region" will be one of the principal gold-bearing camps, not only in Northwestern Ontario, but also of the whole Dominion."

The district is attracting the attention of Canadian, English and American capitalists, and large sums are being spent in development there. Ten companies are now operating in the district, and when better facilities for the transport of machinery and supplies are provided a tremendous development is certain to follow.

The Ontario Government, recognizing the rich resources of this section, have commenced work upon the construction of a wagon road 33 miles in length, which will place the Saw Bill district in direct communication with the C.P.R., and thus provide a means of access at all times of the year.

Some idea of the difficulties of transportation under recent conditions can be gathered from the fact that all machinery and supplies had to be taken in over the ice and the mines provisioned until next winter. Between five and six hundred tons were taken in to the Saw Bill and Hawk Bay mines, requiring the services of forty teams for nearly two months. With the exception of the drowning of a few horses, no serious accident happened. The roads were in a frightful condition, the fall of snow being the heaviest in years, and the ice thin and treacherous.

Much difficulty was experienced in getting in the compressor plant for the Hawk Bay mines on account of the great weight of the engines. It required the combined effort of twenty men and several teams to transport it.

Mr. F. S. Wiley of Port Arthur is the Managing-Director of Saw Bill, and is also a director of the Hawk Bay mine. Mr. H. A. Wiley of Port Arthur, Vice-President of the Saw Bill mine, is Managing-Director of the Hawk Bay mine. The thorough acquaintance these gentlemen have of the country, coupled with a knowledge of the requirements for such an undertaking, has resulted so far in unqualified success to both companies, and visitors to the mines during the coming season will see two of the best equipped properties in Ontario.

Operations were commenced on Saw Bill in April, 1896, and the vigorous manner in which the enterprise has been carried on, together with the magnificent showing of the mine, has excited the admiration of every expert who has visited the property. So great has been its success that mining locations for miles around have been taken up and surveyors have been employed all winter in the district.

A town site has been laid out on the east shore of Saw Bill Lake. It adjoins the claims of the Golden Fissure Mining Company, Saw Bill Company and Hammond Gold Reef Mining Company. These three, together with other companies, now employ about 400 men. Fifteen months ago it would have been difficult to find a white man in the district.

A charter has also been granted for the construction of a telegraph line to run south from the C.P.R., and as soon as the new wagon road is completed work will commence on this. It will not be many months before Saw Bill city is connected with Toronto by wire.

The Hawk Bay mine is 4 1-4 miles southeast of the Saw Bill, and is connected by a wagon road. In summer it can be reached by canoe. The country being a network of lakes and rivers makes it an ideal one for a canoe trip, but we would advise our readers to take a plentiful supply of fly oil. Indian guides are necessary and these can be secured at Port Arthur, together with the necessary camping outfit.

The Hawk Bay property was reported on by J. H. Chewett, M.E. and C.E., in September last. Mr. Chewett traced the vein on the surface for over 5000 feet, and the results were so satisfactory that a contract was entered into for its purchase, and mining operations were commenced in October '96. Development was necessarily slow, as all supplies had to be taken in by canoe, pending the arrival of the machinery in the winter, which is now at the mine and in operation.

The Hawk Bay mine is being operated on a much more extended scale than Saw Bill. Two steam hoists are at work sinking on two shafts 350 feet apart. When a depth of 80 to 100 feet has been reached these shafts will be connected by a drift or tunnel and the sinking continued until the next levels at 100 feet are reached. Drilling is done by compressed air drills; the mine being equipped with a Duplex air compressor, built by the Canadian Rand Drill Co. of Sherbrooke, P.Q., at a cost of $4000. It being the intention to erect a 20-stamp mill as soon as development has progressed sufficiently to supply a mill of this capacity, considerable time and labor will be saved by the use of power drills. Mr. Chewett's estimate of the value of the ore on the surface was 10 per cent. higher than his estimate of Saw Bill, and development so far has proved the ore to be richer as depth is gained, assays recently made giving results of from $15 to over $200. At $15 per ton a 20-stamp mill, crushing 50 tons per day, will show a net profit of 100 per cent. on the capital; quite a handsome return if expectations are realized.

There is good reason for believing that the shares of the Hawk Bay mine will enhance in value in a similar manner to the Saw Bill. Development is proving the mine to be equally rich, and under the careful management that has characterized these two companies the shareholders will no doubt reap very handsome dividends.

A commendable feature in connection with the Saw Bill and Hawk Bay is the capitalization, and it is a matter of congratulation to have in Hamilton two mining companies whose capitalization is on a sound business basis. Over-capitalization is undoubtedly a mistake, but it catches the investor who takes more stock in the number of shares he can buy for a dollar than the actual value of his investment. The result of this is clearly shown in the steady rise of the value of Saw Bill shares, which are now at a premium of nearly 200 per cent. These shares are expected to be worth $10 before the year is out, and I am informed it is the intention of the company to erect 20 more stamps at Saw Bill next winter. Development on other veins on the company's property is to be carried on this summer with a view to supplying ore for the increased milling capacity.

Gold bricks from Saw Bill are expected to reach Hamilton in July, and great will be the rejoicing thereat. One director has promised to put up a wine supper for the board. The solicitor of the company is reported to have erected a saw bill duck on the flag pole at his new Beach residence, and dreams that it's the duck that lays the golden egg. President Tilden wears a happy smile, and the funny men at the club who at one time had their doubts are sorry they missed the chance of buying stock at $1.

GOLD BRICKS IN JULY.

As the time is approaching when Hamilton will be regularly in receipt of genuine gold bricks, a description of the mill now nearing completion at Saw Bill and the method of treating the ore will be of interest.

The milling plant proper, including runners, sizers and ore crusher, was manufactured by Fraser & Chalmers of Chicago. The firm is the largest of its kind on the continent, and has the reputation of turning out the best gold mills in the world. The erection of the mill and mill building is being done under the supervision of one of their experts, and it is expected to be in operation about the end of June. The motive power, comprising two 40-horse power boilers and a 70-horse power Corliss engine, was supplied by the Waterous Engine Company of Brantford. The same company also manufactured the saw mill now in operation at the mines. The mill is situated between the shaft house and the lake, or about 700 feet from the mine, and the ore is conveyed from the mine to the mill by a gravity tramway, the grade being about 30 feet in 700.

The assay office is completed, and here daily assays of the ore, tailings and concentrates will be made.

The mill building will be lighted by electricity, which is supplied by a 50-light 16-candle power dynamo. At present between 75 and 80 men are employed, including carpenters and machinists.

The main shaft has reached a depth of about 175 feet, and work will soon be commenced on the third levels. A second shaft is being sunk 200 feet south of No. 1, and nearly 400 feet of drifting has been done. The ore from all the workings shows continued improvement, and is richer than at any previous time. The gold found in the quartz and pyrites is finely distributed through vast bodies of vein matter, and as the amount of free gold in the ores varies it is difficult to obtain a correct average of value by assay, unless samples are taken with the utmost care and over an extended portion of the vein and workings.

Samples are taken regularly from the different workings in the mines, and sent to the sampler, who crushes them, pans them, and estimates the gold in the pan. Great skill is required in thus estimating the value of the ore. The treatment of ores in which 75 per cent. to 85 per cent. of the gold is free milling can be carried on under favorable circumstances at a cost of from $2.50 to $6 per ton. The estimated cost of mining and milling at the Saw Bill and Hawk Bay mines is from $3.50 to $5.

The ore arriving at the highest level of the mill (the ore floor) in mine cars is discharged over grizzlies. These are heavy iron gratings, which separate the ore; the fine dropping directly to the ore bins beneath, thus relieving the breaker of ore that does not require crushing. The coarse ore, rolling down from the grizzlies (which are set at an angle of about 40 degrees), collects on the crusher floor and is fed by hand into the mouth of the breaker on the same level. From the crusher it passes into the ore bins which have already received the fine ore from the grizzlies.

The No. 5 Blake crusher, to be used by the Saw Bill Co., has a receiving capacity 9x15 inches, and is set to crush to about 1 1-2 inches. It has a capacity of 50 tons in 24 hours. The ore bins are triangular, with one vertical side facing the battery, and reaching down to the cam floor. Just above the latter are the openings (one for each feeder) through which the ore passes downward into the chutes, terminating in the hoppers of the automatic feeders, the quantity of the discharge being regulated by sliding doors. The bottoms of the bins are braced with strong beams. The bins have a capacity of 50 tons. The working capacity of a battery, with unnecessary wear and tear, depends greatly on the regular and equal feeding of the ore. This used to be done by hand, but it is now accomplished by automatic feeders, placed at the back of the batteries and discharging directly into the feed openings of the mortars. The Homestake mortars, used by the Saw Bill Co., have a feed opening 24 inches long and 4 1-2 inches wide. The feeders are the Tullock Automatic. The mortars (two in number) are solid castings, steel-lined, and weigh 6000 pounds each. Here the ore is pulverized by stamps, weighing 850 pounds apiece, five to each mortar. These stamps have a speed of about 90 drops a minute, and are lifted at regular intervals by cams keyed to a shaft placed in front of the battery. Water is fed continuously into the mortars and forms with the ore a liquid pulp which, when fine enough, passes through screened openings in the mortars on to and over silver-plated copper plates, whose surfaces are quick-silvered. The fine gold attaches itself to the silvered surface in the form of amalgam.

Amalgamation is also used to extract the coarse gold in the mortars and mercury is added at regular intervals.

The motion of the battery water, caused by the dropping of the stamps, throws with the drop of each stamp, some pulp against and through the screen. This, passing over the lip of the mortars, flows in small waves over the apron plates. During the slight interval between these waves any heavy particles of the pulp, quick-silver, amalgam, or fine gold, have a chance to settle. The plates are about the width of a mortar and ten feet long. They are set at an incline and the pulp, on leaving them, passes through mercury traps, which save the amalgam or gold not collected on the plates.

The amalgam which has collected on the apron plates is removed by heavy whisk brushes; and at stated times the mortars are emptied and the amalgam removed. The amalgam is freed from the excess of quicksilver by wringing in a chamois or canvas bag in water. The balls of hard amalgam thus obtained are locked up in a safe and kept for retorting (that is, removing the remaining quicksilver). The gold is then melted into bars or ingots of 50 to 100 ounces, and is then ready to be sent to the mint.

The above roughly-described process in a well-arranged mill is the cheapest in use for gold extraction. Usually, however, gold-bearing ores contain other minerals (as in the case of Saw Bill and Hawk Bay) termed sulphurets. As these can be profitably worked after concentration it is necessary to have perfect dressing machinery. The most perfect machine known is the Frue vanner machine, or concentrator. Two of these machines are used to each battery of five stamps, the pulp, after it leaves the silvered plates, being divided equally between the two machines. The cost of this treatment of the sulphurets is very little. The machines are automatic, require little power, and one man can attend several. From one to five tons of sulphurets are obtained from 100 tons of quartz, the value of the former running in some cases as high as $500 per ton. The subsequent treatment of the sulphurets is by chlorination, that is, they are roasted and exposed to chlorine gas, and the chloride of gold formed, dissolved in water and precipitated. The cost of treatment varies from $5 to $10 per ton.

The mill building and water used in milling will be heated by steam in the winter. Duplicates of all wearing parts of the mill are on hand, together with three sets of forged steel shoes and dies, for the mortars. When crushing commences the mill will be kept running night and day, commencing at 12 o'clock Sunday night and shutting down at 12 o'clock Saturday night.

NUGGETS.

Saw Bill Lake is eight miles long and about the width of Hamilton Bay. A small steamer is being built to ply between the several mines in the district.

The Saw Bill and Hawk Bay mines are practically under the same management: John H. Tilden, Hamilton, President of the Saw Bill, being also a director of Hawk Bay; F. S. Wiley of Port Arthur is Managing Director of Saw Bill and a director of Hawk Bay; Frank C. Bruce, Hamilton, President of Hawk Bay, is also a director of Saw Bill, and H. C. Beckett, Hamilton, Vice-President of Hawk Bay, is likewise a director of Saw Bill; H. N. Kittson is secretary-treasurer of both companies; Wm. Southham and Thos. W. Lester are directors of the Saw Bill Company and Hugh C. McLean, the well-known publisher of Toronto, is a director of Hawk Bay and a large shareholder in Saw Bill.

All machinery and buildings at both Hawk Bay and Saw Bill are insured against fire.

Indian couriers convey the mails twice a week from Bonheur to the mines.

The wage list to miners and other employes in the Saw Bill Lake district is about $600 per day. The important bearing which such an industry has on Ontario's welfare should not be under-estimated.

It is estimated that at least 2000 miners will be at work in the Saw Bill district in the year 1898. These men receive from $1.50 to $3 per day.

Location 620, south of the Hammond Gold Reef, is being developed by the Eastern Mining Syndicate. The property shows evidence of great merit.

Operations are being carried on upon location 75, north of Saw Bill Lake.

To the west of Saw Bill, on Clear Water Lake, an English syndicate, with a capital of $80,000 sterling are operating two claims known as the Golden Twins.

A model shaft house is erected on No. 2 shaft at the Hawk Bay mine. It is a credit to the management. All their buildings are of the most substantial character, with accommodation for 75 men.

Both hoisting engines were running at Hawk Bay when I visited the property in May. They appear to be working well, and, together with the compressor drills, the development should proceed rapidly, at the rate of from 35 to 40 feet per month in each shaft.

A $10,000 employes' accident policy is carried by the Hawk Bay and Saw Bill Companies.

Visitors to the mines are not permitted to go down the shaft or into the workings on account of the danger and necessary loss of time entailed.

Saw Bill City, surrounded by a populous mining industry, should be a lively town.

The topography of the Hawk Bay Company's property is well adapted for economical mining. The shaft houses on the vein are in 60 feet above the level of the river. A gravity tramway will convey the ore to the mill.

The mill building at Hawk Bay will be erected this summer.

The cost of a two-weeks' trip to the Saw Bill district is about $100.

The compressor plant at Hawk Bay started up on May 6th, the date upon which the first meeting of shareholders was held.

In addition to the vein now being developed at Hawk Bay several other veins are reported to have been discovered on the company's property.

The development at Hawk Bay has so far opened up over 7000 tons of ore.

Dynamite for blasting purposes is stored about a mile from the mines. It is directly under the charge of one man, and no other employe is permitted to handle it. It is exploded in the mines by an electric battery, which is operated from the surface. From eight to 15 dynamite cartridges are set off at once, and the mine is cleared of men at stated periods when this gentle force is in operation.

Over five hundred tons of rock excavation was necessary for the foundation of the mill at Saw Bill. The company have had a saw mill at work at the mine cutting the necessary lumber for the mill building and tram. The mill is situated on an ideal site about 600 feet from the shaft house, and ore from the present workings, and the Hammond Reef, which crosses the Saw Bill property, will be conveyed to the mill by a gravity tramway.

No. 2 shaft at Hawk Bay is now down over 60 feet, and the vein at the bottom between seven and eight feet wide, in rich ore, showing copper pyrites, galena and free gold.

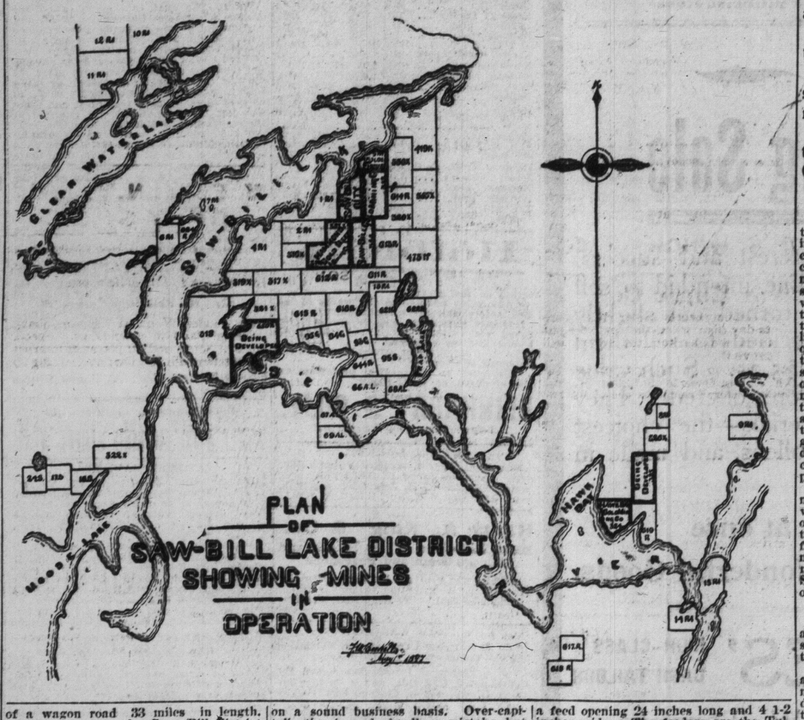
The Golden Fisher Mining Co. has a shaft down over 60 feet on Location 5 R M, adjoining Saw Bill.

The Hammond Gold Reef Mining Co., also adjoining the Saw Bill, are developing with a staff of from 50 to 60 men.

The Wampum Gold Mining Co.'s property is said to be showing up well.

The Kabasgong Gold Mining Co. are developing on Location 361 X, southwest of Saw Bill Lake.

A Hamilton syndicate are expending ten thousand dollars in testing the merits of a property adjoining the Hawk Bay Mine.





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