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## AGRICULTURE IN THE SLATE RIVER VALLEY

**A Bright Future for the Valley is Assured. The Rapidly Growing Twin Cities Provide an Unlimited Market for Farm Products.—Comments on General Conditions with Special Reference to What One Man is Doing. Written by a Special Farm and Dairy Correspondent.**



J. R. Hutchison, B.S.A.

AGRICULTURE, the greatest of all Canadian industries, must always command the attention of all engaged therein, and outsiders as well, they being so largely dependent upon agriculture for their own prosperity. This article seeks to enlighten its readers on conditions in the Slate River Valley with some forecasts as to its future; special reference is also made to J. R. Hutchison, B.S.A., the proprietor and manager of "The Valley Farm," in order that others may be encouraged to grasp the opportunities in this, or other sections of New Ontario, that await them.

As one leaves the older and more settled parts of Ontario travelling westward by train along the northern shores of lakes Huron and Superior, he is impressed with the vast amount of waste land visible from the train. Much of this is not fit for agriculture though it has given evidence of being rich in mineral wealth. Here and there a clearing or a farm in this vast area reminds one of an oasis in a desert. Western activity, as it is often termed, becomes apparent not until the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur are reached.

### THE TWIN CITIES.

Fort William is wonderfully active. It has doubled and trebled its population during the last few years. It is a center of commerce. Situated at the head of navigation and possessing the lake termini of the three Transcontinental Railways, C. P. R., G. T. P. and C. N. R., Fort William has the essential features to ensure the successful operation of every kind of industry.

The city has 35,000 H. P. Hydro-electric power developed and 100,000 H. P. in reserve. Its elevators have a capacity of 14,250,000 bushels; its total elevator capacity—receiving grain and under construction—is over 60,000,000 bushels. Fort William handles practically all traffic between eastern and western Canada.

As we look upon these cities of extensive and

rapidly increasing population, we are bound to ask ourselves, "Whence is their source of farm produce supply?" The most productive center of agriculture, in the immediate vicinity of Fort William and Port Arthur, is the Slate River Valley. This Valley is situated almost directly west of the city of Fort William. The Valley proper is made up almost entirely of the township of Paipoonge, though it takes in a small portion of the northern part of Blake township. It is in every sense of the word a Valley, it being surrounded on the Southwest and North by a somewhat broken range of hills. These abound in minerals and are the natural home of moose and red deer. The small lakes in these hills, or mountains



A Comfortable Farm House in the Slate River Valley, Thunder Bay District.

The average traveller passing through Fort William on the G.P.R., gains the erroneous impression that there is practically no agricultural land in the vicinity. Considerable valuable land is situated in the Slate River Valley, back of this city. The adjoining article, by a special Farm and Dairy correspondent, deals with the agriculture of this district.

as they are locally termed, abound with fish, mostly trout. The Kaministikwia River passes through the northern part of the Valley. The Kakabeka Falls is on the "Kam.", only 10 miles west of Slate River station. It is from these falls that the electric power is produced for the twin cities. The falls themselves and the rapids above are a beautiful sight. They are surrounded by parks and are a very popular summer resort.

### SOIL IN THE VALLEY.

The Valley has a most excellent fertile soil, which is free from stone. The soil varies from a light sand to the heaviest clay. Much of it has a clay sub-soil with a cover of sandy loam on top. The township of Paipoonge alone contains about

40,000 acres of land suitable for agriculture. The medium or lighter soils seem to be the best suited to the climate. Owing to the comparatively short season the lighter and warmer soils mature the crop more quickly. Of the 40,000 acres there are about 33,000 under cultivation. Much of the land is not hard to clear. The more easily cleared and the best located properties however, are held by speculators who do not reside in the locality. Up to the present the farmers have made a practice of selling practically all their farm produce such as hay, and grains, thus robbing the soil of its natural fertility. The excellent market in Fort William has been largely to blame for this.

During the last couple of years farmers have been paying more attention to the dairy industry. In order to put the dairy business on a better basis and to carry it on more extensively a number of farmers have formed themselves in a co-operative association with a distributing depot at Fort William. This Slate River Valley market depot in the city is well equipped and has done quite an extensive trade in ice cream, butter and cottage cheese, besides carrying on a retail milk trade.

### RETURNS FROM THE DAIRY.

Some idea of the profitability of the dairy may be gained from figures given in the following, which are those from the Valley Farm owned by J. R. Hutchison. The exact weight of milk produced by each cow is recorded on the Valley Farm, tests for fat being made several times during the year. A complete outfit of Babcock testing apparatus is kept for the purpose. The Simplex Cream Separator is used. Skim milk is all fed on the farm and cream sold in the city. The following figures for June, July and August, will give the reader some idea of the market value of dairy products in Fort William.

Number of cows	.....12
Amount of milk during June	.....10,467½ lbs.
Cream sold for	.....\$227.50
Amount of milk during July	.....10,319 lbs.
Cream sold for	.....\$224.50
Amount of milk during August	.....9,176 lbs.
Cream sold for	.....\$209.00

Mr. J. R. Hutchison purchased 1,000 acres of what is now called "The Valley Farm," three years ago. It is nine miles west of Fort William. The farm was not cleared and had no improvements. Mr. Hutchison has now under cultivation 150 acres. The Kaministikwia River runs through the farm giving an abundance of pure water besides greatly adding to its beauty. The