

THE COMMERCIAL IN N. W. ONTARIO.

RAT PORTAGE—THE SARATOGA OF THE WEST.

Rat Portage, the Saratoga of the west, is so well known to our readers as a summer resort, that it would be hard to say anything new about its attractions, but the vast commercial resources of the surrounding district are, possibly, not so widely known.

The towns of Rat Portage and Keewatin are about three and a half miles apart with Norman, which is now incorporated with the former, about midway between them. All three places are very prettily situated on the shores of Rat Portage bay at the lower end of the Lake of the Woods. Rat Portage is the largest and most import-

ant portion of the timber is cut along the Rainy river and its tributaries, although some is got from the Lake of the Woods districts. The logs are driven down stream to the mouth of Rainy river where they are boomed and rafted and brought the balance of the distance by tugs. The sawn lumber is all pine, the tamarac and cedar being used for ties, posts and telegraph poles, some the cedar poles being 55 feet in length. This company gives employment to nearly 1,000 men. Last winter it had seventeen logging camps besides two or three tie camps running. The Keewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing

firm is kept so clean that the opportunity of being shown over it should not be disregarded. In connection with the mill there is a repair shop and also a barrel factory. The wood used for making these barrels is poplar, which is said to be very well suited to the purpose.

A third industry at Keewatin is the reduction works of the Ottawa Gold Milling and Mining Co. This is a 20-stamp mill, giving a capacity of sixty tons of ore a day, and, like the saw and flour mills here, it is also run by water power. At Rat Portage the Dominion Gold Mining and Reduction Co. also have a 20-stamp mill. A visit through one of these plants is full of interest as showing the manner in which the gold is extracted from the quartz. After being crushed and pounded, or "stamped" almost to a powder it is run on to slanting tables, covered with quicksilver, which attracts and retains the free gold. The concentrates, or refractory ores, are then separated from the worthless material and are treated either by



Keenora Beach, Lake of the Woods.

ant of these, possessing a large number of flourishing business establishments. It is the supply depot for the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River districts, as well as an important divisional point on the C. P. R. It is a well built town, a large proportion of its buildings being of brick or stone, some of them being particularly handsome. It has a good electric light, and telephone service and a water-works system has recently been constructed. Keewatin and Norman have each several good stores.

These towns have long been known as the greatest lumbering centre between the great lakes and the Pacific. The Rat Portage Lumber Co. has mills at Rat Portage and Norman with a capacity of over eighty million feet for the season. Owing to a shortage of logs this year on account of the low water, the mills have lost considerable time, and under the most favorable circumstances for the balance of the season the cut cannot exceed forty million feet. The princi-

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Co., own the saw mill at Keewatin, which has a capacity of about seven million feet for the season, running about 140,000 feet a day. This company employs about 160 men and is thus one of the chief feeders to the town.

Another important industry at Keewatin is the large flour mill of the Lake of the Woods Milling Co. This mill has a capacity of 3,000 barrels a day, and the grain elevator adjoining it has a storage room for 600,000 bushels. By means of a short canal, an excellent water power has been secured. The machinery at present installed gives 2,000 horse power, which is only about half of the force available. This is one of the largest flour mills in Canada, and is kept running the year round, the flour being shipped away as soon as manufactured. As would be supposed, the old machinery is constantly being replaced by the newer patterns, and the whole estab-

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A large export fish business is done by the Norman Fish Co. From the 15th of May to the middle of July last twenty-five carloads of fish and about 150 kegs of caviare were shipped.

Previous to 1894 the Lake of the