



Views of the new Piers and Ore-trestles at Key Harbour, Georgian Bay.

THE WAY OF THE IRON ORE

MORE than twenty years ago the village of Sudbury was located on the main line of the C.P.R.; and for a large number of years the most that Canadians knew about Sudbury was that it looked quite as desolate as any of the other forlorn little railway towns in that part of the world. Nobody ever spoke about it without regarding it as one of the last places in Canada to see anything but rocks and lumber shanty men, with an occasional diversion by way of a blast of dynamite somewhere back in the hills.

And truly if the old prophet recorded in Kipling's "Kim" had lived at Sudbury he might have asked of many a plainsman from Winnipeg—"What dost thou know of the hills?" For the hills round and about Sudbury looked as though it might need a wise prophet to say there was anything worth knowing about them, except that they were as hard as granite knew how to be, and as high as the eminences some people call mountains.

The hills are the same old hills as they were in the days when the most important thing people knew about Sudbury was that it was mentioned in the geology books as the place where all the world's nickel came from. But even that large fact did not make the modern Sudbury, although by means of nickel the trackside town got to be bigger than a conglomeration of shanties and a resort for lumberjacks. There are old-timers in Sudbury who remember when the first nickel mine was opened, and when the first sidewalk was built of slabs five feet wide and sixty feet long; but in the same breath they will tell you over and over that now, since the railways began the grand march on the rock town, they have eighteen passenger trains arriving at and leaving that town, which is now something of a city. That again is anticipating and misses altogether the story of how copper got into the calculation; copper, which has given Sudbury a suburb in the shape of Copper Cliff, where three miles away is the huge copper smelter that keeps up a population of two thousand people and provides a rival to Sudbury in baseball. Copper Cliff is about three years old; and the plant at that place cost as much money as the whole town of Sudbury is worth and much more than its assessed value. But Copper Cliff must also be set down to the credit of Sudbury.

Then came the iron—which is the story of Moose Mountain, thirty-five miles north from Sudbury; the hill one hundred and fifty feet high into whose maw you may walk and see the magnetite iron glaring black and green out of the rocks, where the United States professor went hunting moose till he discovered that Moose Mountain had something inside of it bigger and more important than anything alive or dead that happened to be on top of it. That was iron; and iron has much more to do with a railway than moose; and if it were not for the iron of Moose Mountain not half the story about Sudbury could be told.

So there was evidently something in the hills about Sudbury that made it

altogether unnecessary for the settlers to worry much about the churlish soil that had to be scratched a good deal to laugh garden truck, let alone grain. And it was only an economic fact, perhaps, but nevertheless a spectacular surprise, that within sixty days two short lines from the metropolis of Ontario and the second city in Canada should race in to that blinking little city with their first trains over the line, their new timetables, and their new ways of putting not only Toronto on two main lines west, but also Sudbury on two main lines south and Parry Sound on the same route as Sudbury.

Hence the splurge. Hence the hope of Sudbury; the merry march and clank of the railroads and the jaunt to Moose Mountain where by now there is a great, ragged hole in the hill whence come great hummocks of iron ore. The plant at Moose Mountain is not one of those palatial outfits so dear to the imagination of the British promoter; but a rough and ready wooden thing that happens to have all the insides necessary to test out Moose Mountain to the limit before it becomes needful to sink a fortune in a new and improved permanent plant. Here are crushers and grinders; the ore that comes out raw from the blasting is trundled out on a track from which the cars are unloaded into a gentle, jiggling, oscillatory crusher that cracks the hummocks of sixty-per-cent. iron as a squirrel cracks oak nuts, and sends them on down to a lower level to the grinder that pulps the stuff till it looks like a heap of ordinary nut coal; and then the ore from Moose Mountain is ready for the decks of the ore cars.

Now, Moose Mountain is still a rude, raw thing there in the heart of a rusty solitude; a coughing, black and fretful thing that makes the moose cropping on the hills wonder what is going to happen next; but it is an economic fact that spells out to a finality many miles away from the hills where the moose are. For if you follow the spur line of the Canadian Northern back you get once more to the main line of the new short route that leads

southward and away to Toronto and Parry Sound—and to Key Harbour.

Key Harbour is one of those creations that used to be read about in fairy and giant stories. It is also a place of historic interest, for it was here at the mouth of the French River that Champlain first saw Georgian Bay and the beginning of the rest of the great lakes that he thought he had left behind him down around Lachine.

"What are you going to call this place?" was asked of an official of the line. The official scarcely knew. Key Harbour is good enough just now; but in view of the history and that this is the great Champlain year, some one thought the place should be called Fort Champlain.

However, the place does very well just now without calling. It is as different from Moose Mountain as a wood-yard is different from a coal mine or a foundry. At present the biggest thing there is the ore dock and the chute and the elevator: docks on which trains may run from the big hill levels loaded with ore, and dump to the drop below where the ore that the ship-holds cannot carry away may be stored and loaded by a chain carrier and elevator.

Rather crude as yet; but nigh to half a million invested there in wood and iron to make an outlet for the ore from Moose Mountain; the ore that may also be shipped from Parry Sound—for the man from Parry Sound is on the job and he has nine reasons to one why, if there are docks and ships and train-loads of ore, they should be at the Sound, which has the finest natural harbour along the shore.

So from Moose Mountain to the smelter at Midland or Toronto or Hamilton or all, is a long swing in the imagination for the folk in the moose country; for the dwellers in the hills that for so long have been undisturbed by anything bigger than a moose. But it is all the beginning of a new way up on those hills; part of the story of brains and capital, and energy applied to the problem of making the hills shell out their contents, and the railways haul it out to the places where it meets the coal.

Coal—! Here comes a fuel man who years ago used to punch up into those granite hills for cordwood and used to wonder what would happen to the fuel trade in Toronto when the cordwood was too far away to haul at a profit. He says that meeting the coal from the United States may be necessary at present. But he also urges in no uncertain voice that it is the duty of governments to explore the hill and to see if the heights that hold the copper and the nickel and the iron do not also contain the coal that is needed to unite these into a big economic and industrial fact right on the premises—making it necessary to haul out nothing but the finished products.

With a coal find in these regions they will form Richest Ontario, giving the province which has prided itself on agriculture a stern, rock-filled district with all the material in its own dark hills for a new way for the iron.



Around the Crusher, Moose Mountain Iron Mines.