

INVESTIGATED NORTHERN PARTS OF MIDDLE WEST

Reports by F. H. Kitto, D.L.S., on his Expedition across Northern parts of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan carried out for Natural Resources Branch

During the summer of 1918 F. H. Kitto, D.L.S., carried out for the Natural Resources Branch of the Department of the Interior a limited reconnaissance expedition, chiefly by canoe, from Edmonton and McMurray across the northern parts of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan to Port Nelson and Churchill, on Hudson bay. Because of the interest taken in the development of the resources of the Western Provinces, Mr. Kitto's "Notes on Natural Resources of Northern Parts of Prairie Provinces" are of considerable importance, and are produced in part:—

From Edmonton I travelled to within a few miles of McMurray by rail over the partially constructed line of the Alberta, Great Waterways railway. From McMurray, on the Athabaska river at the confluence of the Clearwater to Hudson bay, my principal mode of travel was by canoe, following the old historic trade routes of the Churchill, Saskatchewan, and Nelson rivers. This expedition took me through the hinterlands of the Prairie Provinces and afforded an excellent opportunity to note the resources of such districts.

DESCRIPTION OF LAND.

In looking back over my trip and summing up the possibilities of the country traversed there are a few outstanding features worthy of special mention. True, the territory in which I spent most of my time lies in the far north and well beyond the fertile belt; yet it is not void of worth by any means and may even prove exceedingly rich.

Between Edmonton and Fort McMurray the country may quite rightly be classed as agricultural land, though north of Lac la Biche it is practically worthless in its present condition. This is merely because of its lack of drainage. As a vast reclamation project it offers encouraging possibilities. Once drained and cleared, this section should readily fall into line as highly productive farm lands. Mineral assets in the Fort McMurray region include vast deposits of tar sands which outcrop along the banks of the Athabaska, Clearwater and Christina rivers. Gas has been flowing for several years from a well bored for experimental purposes at rapids on the Athabaska river. It has also been found at several other points. Boring for oil is being prosecuted with encouraging indications. Sulphur springs occur on the Clearwater. Outcrops of coal have also been found below Fort McMurray.

The forests of this section are not of great value though a limited quantity of good white spruce is to be found along the Clearwater. At Whitemud Canyon, on this river, considerable water power might be developed. Limestone and some quartz are found here.

CHURCHILL RIVER BOUNDARY.

In crossing the province of Saskatchewan my route lay along what might be roughly defined as the dividing line between the limit of agricultural lands and the northern wastes. Though the Churchill river may be considered rather extreme as such a boundary yet generally speaking it makes a fair and easily defined limit. It is especially applicable to the forest growth of the province. Trees of good dimensions are to be found this far north, but beyond this river the forest growth rapidly becomes stunted and sparse. Irregular patches of good farming and grazing lands are to be found extending here and there to the Churchill waters. At Ile à la Crosse, for instance, the fertile belt might be said to be just giving way to northern conditions.

All along the Churchill and bordering on the numerous lakes and rivers that feed it are to be found innumerable small areas of exceedingly fertile land, usually wooded. These areas present to that restless, frontier-loving class of farmer hunters an excellent opportunity to secure an independent livelihood in a manner acceptable to their peculiar dispositions. Here they can live their wild and care-free lives in comfort and plenty. A cozy cabin is soon constructed from the rocks and logs at hand, a stable is easily added and a small clearing fronting on the water and flanked by sheltering hills is soon planted and fenced in. Here the hardy woodsman makes his home. A few cows are kept without any trouble and provide a continuous supply of milk, butter and cheese. A few pigs and some poultry yield further produce. Hay, potatoes and garden vegetables are easily raised in abundance. A team of ponies or yoke of oxen will handle the work of the small farm if it increases to proportions beyond the scope of hand power, while a dog team for winter travel and a canoe for summer completes the transport equipment. Wood and water are free and convenient. Fish and game added to the produce of the land give an abundant food supply. During the winter trapping will yield a stock of furs which are readily disposed of for cash or traded for those necessities which must be secured from outside sources. Farming, hunting and prospecting, the lover of the wilds finds in one of these many nooks a haven in which to spend his days according to his heart's desire.

WATERPOWER AVAILABLE.

Waterpower is available in large blocks at various points on the Churchill and Sturgeon-Weir rivers. About seven miles below Stanley, where Rapid river joins the Churchill, there is an excellent site for power. It is on Rapid river, a few hundred feet from its mouth. The water supply should be plentiful as this river drains the great Lac la Ronge. At present there is no near market for this power were it developed but any small settlement could easily obtain power for local uses.

Fur and fish represent two of the greatest resources of Northern Saskatchewan proven and immediately available for use. A possible industry is the raising of reindeer. The great herds of caribou might be utilized to good advantage. Meat and hides from this source should amount to vast proportions.

In minerals there is a larger field for exploration. Prospecting has been carried on for many years at Lac la Ronge and other points. The presence of gold, copper and coal has been proven and it is possible that these may be found in commercial paying quantities. The northern part of this province is far from being a barren waste.

The field in Manitoba presents several interesting aspects. About The Pas there lies an extensive area of low flat land, now too wet for agricultural exploitation but apparently lending itself to a vast reclamation drainage scheme with promise of developing into an exceedingly fertile area. It includes the valleys of the Saskatchewan and Carrot rivers as far east as Lake Winnipeg and north to intercept the limestone formation along the Hudson Bay Railway.

NEW COPPER FIELDS.

North of The Pas is found Manitoba's new copper fields which promise to produce a crop of considerable magnitude. Lying adjacent to the copper fields are rich gold areas which further tend to augment development in this direction. Between Norway House, at the north end of Lake Winnipeg, and Piquitoy, the halfway point on the Hudson Bay railway, lies an area offering possibilities in agricultural development and mineral production, in addition to being a heavy producer of fish and fur. About Cross lake gardens thrive exceedingly

well. Easterly at Knee and God's lakes, in the vicinity of Oxford House, extensive gold fields have recently been discovered.

More agricultural land is found along the Hudson Bay railway, a particularly promising clay belt lying between miles 130 and 230. The forests of the northern part of this province do not include many large or valuable species of trees but nevertheless contain great quantities of pulpwood, ties, poles and cordwood. Waterpower is found in almost unlimited dimensions, the Nelson river alone being capable of developing two and a half million horse-power. Grand Rapids, on the Saskatchewan, also offers an attractive site for power development, while the Churchill, Grassy, Burntwood, Hayes and other rivers have many good sites. The resources of Northern Manitoba are both extensive and varied.

WHALES IN HUDSON BAY.

Coming to Hudson Bay one cannot but be struck by the opportunity for obtaining great quantities of oil from the numerous "white whales" to be seen at almost any hour frolicking in the shallow water of Nelson and Churchill harbours. I counted a hundred of these in less than an hour which exposed themselves near our tug as we steamed up the Nelson roadway on the morning of August 31. Seals are fairly plentiful, polar bear reported scarce, white foxes numerous and caribou still plentiful though being badly harassed by wolves. An Arctic salmon, found about Churchill, is a fish of more than ordinary delicacy.

The northern Laurentian portions of the Prairie Provinces are full of promise and their natural resources are worthy of careful administration and judicious protection.

TWO CLASSES OF FOOD DEALERS UNDER CONTROL

Many now Applying for Licenses which are not necessary

Only two classes of food dealers now remain under license by the Canada Food Board. These are millers of all classifications and packers whose turnover is about \$750,000 annually. The announcement is made in view of the fact that the Food Board has already received large numbers of applications for the renewal of public eating-place licenses, which expire on May 31, and some applications from cannery, whose licenses will expire on June 15, while many general retailers and small grocers continue under the erroneous impression that their licenses should be renewed.

Port Colborne Tender.

Sealed Tenders, addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tender for repairs to breakwaters at Port Colborne, Ont.," will be received at this office until 12 o'clock noon, Friday, June 20, 1919, for the construction of repairs at two points on the eastern and two on the western breakwaters at Port Colborne, Welland County, Ont.

Plans and forms of contract can be seen and specification and forms of tender obtained at this Department, at the offices of the District Engineers, Equity Building, Toronto, Ont.; Shaughnessy Building, Montreal, Que.; and at the Post Office, Port Colborne, Ont.

Tenders will not be considered unless made on printed forms supplied by the Department and in accordance with conditions contained therein.

Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered bank, payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works, equal to 10 per cent of the amount of the tender. War Loan Bonds of the Dominion will also be accepted as security, or War Bonds and cheques if required to make up an odd amount.

NOTE.—Blue prints can be obtained at this Department by depositing an accepted bank cheque for the sum of \$20, payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works, which will be returned if the intending bidder submit a regular bid.

R. C. DESROCHERS,

Secretary.

Department of Public Works,

WEEK'S HOMESTEAD ENTRIES IN WEST

There were 250 Entries for Week Ending May 13 against 60 in 1918

Reports regarding homesteads entered and general immigration in Western Canada have been received from the Winnipeg Branch of the Department of Immigration as follows:—

Homesteads.—During the week ending May 13 there were 250 homesteads entered for, including 87 soldier grants. During the corresponding period last year there were 60 entries.

Immigration.—During the month of April there entered Western Canada from the United States 4,075 persons, with cash \$1,322,188, effects \$522,572; last year, 3,552 persons, with cash \$1,518,755, effects \$564,055. Nationality: British, 104; Canadian, 186; American, 3,365; French, 1; Russian, 34; Scandinavian, 303; others, 88. Occupations: Farmers, 1,400; farm labourers, 474; labourers, 63; mechanics, 142; railroaders, 30; clerks, 57; domestics, 58; miners, 21; women and children, 1,706; unclassified, 124.

Tenders for Dredging.

Sealed Tenders, addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tender for Dredging, Cobourg, Ontario," will be received until 12 o'clock noon, Wednesday, June 4, 1919, for dredging required at Cobourg, Ontario.

Tenders will not be considered unless made on the forms supplied by Department and according to conditions set forth therein.

Combined specification and form of tender can be obtained on application to the Secretary, Department of Public Works, Ottawa. Tenders must include the towing of the plant to and from the work.

The dredge and other plant which are intended to be used on the work shall have been duly registered in Canada at the time of the filing of the tender with the Department, or shall have been built in Canada after the filing of the tender.

Contractors must be ready to begin work within twenty days after the date they have been notified of the acceptance of their tender.

Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered bank, payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works, for 5 per cent of the contract price, but no cheque to be for less than fifteen hundred dollars. War Loan Bonds of the Dominion will also be accepted as security, or War Bonds and cheques if required to make up an odd amount.

By order,

R. C. DESROCHERS,

Secretary.

Department of Public Works,
Ottawa, May 27, 1919.

B.C. Lumber Shipments.

During the week ending May 16, 605 cars of lumber were shipped from various British Columbia mills, against last year 738 cars, according to figures supplied the Department of Immigration and Colonization.

Oil Reports in B.C.

Very encouraging reports are being issued in connection with boring operations for oil being carried on in Burnaby and Pitt Meadows, B.C., states the weekly letter of the Winnipeg branch of the Department of Immigration and Colonization.

Be a W.S. Stamp collector.