

EXPLORES NEWER CANADA

Two men, acquaintances who had not seen each other for some time, met in Toronto one day recently. One had just returned from an exploring trip in Northern Canada. The other had been attending to business at home.

"Well," said the latter, by way of making pleasant conversation, "did you make any more discoveries this time?"

"Yes," returned the traveller slowly, "a few. Found a new river for one thing."

"Is that so?" replied his friend, still making pleasant conversation. "Not a very big one, I suppose." For you see he was one of the easterners that do not yet realize the importance of the act that our last west is just now beginning to be really discovered.

"About eight hundred miles long," answered the explorer in his quiet way.

"Eight hundred miles!" ejaculated the stay-at-home, in astonishment.

"Great Scott! Is that so?"

"Yes—and navigable for big boats most of the way."

This Toronto explorer is J. W. Tyrrell, C.E., D.L.S. Some years ago he published a book, "Across the Sub-Arctic of Canada," which told the story of a trip of 3,200 miles by canoe and snowshoe through "the barren lands." Since then Mr. Tyrrell has travelled extensively through the north, and in a new volume about to be issued by William Briggs, publisher, Toronto, he will tell us what he has learned of late of the great regions of the Dominion away to the west and north, which we have just learned are not, for the most part, barren lands at all.

The author has spent a year and a half on the desolate shores of Hudson's Bay, and he is confident that it can and will, in fact must, become a great highway of traffic. Although discovered nearly three hundred years ago the bay has remained practically unknown. It is five times as large as our great lakes combined, with a tidal coast line of 6,000 miles, but it can only be approached from the settled parts of Canada by canoes or other small boats on the streams flowing into it. A score of mighty rivers are discharged into the bay, but many of them are shallow at their mouths. The Churchill, however, is deep, and affords a fine natural harbor. Fort Churchill, therefore, is the port to be used by the proposed Hudson Bay railway.

If the local resources of the region were limited the difficulties of creating an outlet for commerce from our Western wheat fields to Europe by way of Hudson Bay and Strait would be serious, but Mr. Tyrrell points out that they are not. There are valuable animal products, such as whale, walrus, seal, polar bear, reindeer, musk-ox, caribou, moose, otter, beaver, mink, ermine, martin. Salmon lake trout, whitefish, and cod are successfully fished. Of feathered game there is an abundance. As to vegetable products, nothing can be counted on for export in the northern parts of the Hudson Bay territory, but valuable timber is found there. Nearly all the southerly part is heavily timbered with spruce, tamarack, poplar, birch, pine, balsam, cedar, elm and ash. Very large quantities of milling timber are found in the valleys of all the large rivers emptying into the southern shores of Hudson and James Bays. Agricultural development may not be expected in the North, but in the southern wooded portions there are great possibilities in that direction. At Fort Churchill hardy garden vegetables are grown, and at York, 120 miles to the south, vegetation is luxuriant. This being the case there is a large area of agricultural lands between the bay and the heights of land to the south of it. As to minerals there are large deposits of iron, mica, lignite and building stone. Gold, silver and copper have also been found there, but in unknown quantities.

From records of the Hudson's Bay Company the average dates of the opening and closing of Churchill Harbor are June 19, and November 18. And Mr. Tyrrell is of the opinion that little difficulty would be experienced in keeping the harbor open during the

greater part of November, and that, with the use of ice breakers, it could be kept open all winter. The strong tidal and river currents in the harbor assist in the breaking up of the ice. Outside the harbor a belt of shore ice forms, but beyond that the bay is never frozen. Outside the harbors the difficulties in navigation occur in Hudson Strait, where the channel at three points is only forty or forty-five miles wide. Icebergs are not nearly as numerous, however, as off the Straits of Belle Isle. And the writer believes that Hudson Strait could be kept open from July 15 to November 1, with a possible extension of two weeks both at the beginning and the close of the season.



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