

7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

At Nelson House, in order to do some building, they had to go up the river some ten miles and pick out a log here and there before they got enough to put up a house. There is a great deal of timber that would be fit for pulp wood. The black spruce which grows to 8, 9 and 10 inches, covers practically the whole ground. Where it has had thirty or forty years' growth it gets up five or six inches through, and it is a very peculiar timber. The yearly growth is very small. It is packed very closely together, and it would make excellent timber. It would yield more fibre than the average stock.

There have been a great many fires up there. Timber of large enough size to saw into deals and boards, such as are used in building, is confined to within a very few miles. The missionary priests at Albany go to church at the mouth of the Winisk, and the church is constructed from lumber that they sawed from trees cut a few miles up the river. In the swampy portions of course, it is entirely black spruce and tamarack, and generally small size, 6 to 8 inches. A very great deal of it would make pulp wood, and on the drier ridges of boulders and gravel there are white birch and poplar, but these are not of any commercial value. The northern limit of white pine is found just about the Albany river. The northern limit of spruce is reached at Winisk lake.

FISHERIES AND GAME.

All the larger lakes of this country abound in very good whitefish. The lakes within convenient distance of the Saskatchewan have already been commercially fished. It is extraordinary how far they have been able to haul those fish out. In the winter season they haul them one hundred miles. There are two companies carrying on the fisheries. One has headquarters in Winnipegosis, and the other at West Selkirk. One of them is the Dominion Fish Company, and he thought the other the Northwest Fish Company. They have privileges from the Dominion government, and they fish under license, it being in the territory outside of Manitoba and the new provinces, which has not yet been assigned to any other province.

The companies hope this winter that the new railway will reach the Pas and one of the companies is putting an extensive plant in the lakes near the Pas hoping to send out the fish by rail, but they had already fished those lakes and hauled their fish in the winter all the way down to Winnipegosis and across Cedar lake, over 100 miles. Chicago is the market. The principal fish are whitefish and lake trout.

There are many other lakes in that country which contain valuable fish such as the witness described. Split lake, for instance, is about 30 miles long by three to eight miles in width. If that country were opened up by railways there would be a considerable business in exploiting the fisheries, because the sturgeon is valuable. They would get the sturgeon on the Lower Nelson and part of the Churchill. The companies put on steamers on these various lake expansions on the Nelson, so that they reached down to within a few miles of Split lake, and marketed sturgeon in that way. They put tramways on all the portages. They ran that way for a couple of summers, but the distance was too great and it did not pay.

The larger lakes have a very good whitefish and sturgeon. The head of the Adawadskit was particularly full of sturgeon. Going out Mr. McInnes' party was short of pork and stopped one day to get supplies. In one night's fishing the Indians caught so much sturgeon that they had enough to carry them for 150 miles to the Hudson bay post. One of the sturgeon was three feet long.

At the mouth of the Winisk the Indians were catching speckled trout and whitefish in very large numbers. In fact the Indians of all that interior country live on fish. They smoke and dry them to a limited extent, and late in the autumn catch them before the larger lakes are frozen over, when the temperature is low enough to freeze the fish. They catch enough to put by for the winter. The fish are sent to Chicago frozen. It is only in the winter season they have that trade at all. They fish the