

SOURCE OF THE GOLD

During the early days of mining in the river, many years of time and many thousands of dollars of money were spent in searching in the mountains and on all the upper branches of the river for the lodes from which the gold was supposed to have been derived, but without favourable result.

As early as 1861 Dr. Hector, commenting on the reported discovery of gold in the Saskatchewan, states, "There is no trace on that side of the axis (of the Rocky Mountains) of the ancient rocks from which it must have been derived," but he has no suggestion to offer as to whence it was derived.

When Dr. A. R. C. Selwyn, then Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, descended the river in 1873, he recognized that the gold was not derived from the mountains at the source of the river, and that the search for coarse gold and 'mother lodes' in that direction was hopeless. As a forlorn hope he suggested that it was washed out of the boulder clay which had been transported across the great plains from the Archean peneplain far to the north-east. The problems of glacial transportation were not then understood as they are now, and the drift was supposed to have been transported by water and icebergs, whereas we now know that it was carried by ice moving over the land.

At the present time no one would think of urging that the gold in the Saskatchewan and the other streams flowing from the mountains was derived from the till or boulder clay, knowing that the upper portions of these streams, flowing through parts of the country which had been near the border of the ice-sheet, where the quantity of till derived from the Archean peneplain was very small, were rich in gold, while the lower portions of those same streams, flowing through thick beds of till nearer the source of supply, and consequently richer in such heavy metals as gold, contained no gold. If there had been gold in the boulder-clay it would have been more abundant in it near the source of supply, and where the streams in their lower portions flowed through thick beds of this boulder-clay they would certainly, in case the gold had been derived from the boul-