Ontario's Wealth.

Discoveries of Gold, Soapstone and Asbestos.

Director Blue on the Natural Riches of Eastern Ontario.

New Process for Recovering Gold from Mispickel Successful.

The Northern Townships Magnificent for Ranching.

[Special Correspondence of the ADVERTISER.]

TORONTO, Nov. 22.—The director of the Bureau of Mines has been busy this season looking up and gathering material for his third report, which it is understood will be chiefly devoted to the gold fields of the Province. To many people it will perhaps come as a surprise that there is gold anywhere in Ontario in workable quantities; but Mr. Blue evidently thinks there is, and he means to tell what he knows about it. In August and September he spent several weeks in the Lake of the Woods country, where many prospects have been located, and where a few mines are being worked and some gold ore is being milled. Last month he was in the country north of Lake Huron, in the valleys of the Vermilion and Thessalon Rivers, where there is much choice farming land and one or two gold mines that give promise of yielding up their treasure in the shape of bricks of bullion. This week he has got back from the Hastings and Addington country, but more particularly from that old ground of the gold hunters in Marmora and Madoc.

"Well what can you tell me of mining down east?" he was asked as he sat at his desk yesterday morning looking through a pile of letters.

"Nothing to-day," Mr. B. said; "you see my hands are full. But call to-morrow; it's a holiday, and I may have more time."

And so to-morrow it is; Canada's thanksgiving day for a fine harvest, fine weather and mercies as many as the moments of life. But the morrow's paper must come out to satisfy a people's craving for the news of the day; and so whatever other folks may do there is no holiday for the scribe.

"And what can you now tell about mining down east?" Mr. B was asked, after he had got in from doing the sham battle in High Park with thousands of other curious and interested sight-seers.

"It would be a long story," he said, "because one can't tell in ten minutes all that he has seen in a week. Do you know Hastings county? It is one of the very longest in the country, stretching back from the waters of Lake Ontario, where you have the Silurian limestones, for 100 miles or more northward into the bosom of the oldest rocks of the world. There are several ways of reaching it, but I went out from Kingston over the Rathbun's new line of railway to Tweed. And, by the way, you know that Kingston is taking quite a lively interest in mining affairs, thanks partly to the energy of Principal Grant, of Queen's, and partly to the liberality of the Ontario Legislature, and it has a School of Mines and Agriculture, which gives promise of doing excellent service to two very important industries. The school is not, as I understand, identified with Queen's College in any way; but someone must be a leader in every movement, and Principal Grant has energy and courage enough to lead half a dozen movements at once. It has begun well, and I am sure it will prove itself to be a boon to mining as well as to agriculture in the eastern part of the Province. But institutions of this kind must be given time to grow. Tweed, on the Ontario division of the C. P. R. is the present northern terminus of the Rathbun Company's railway, and it is a growing place. The line will be extended northward, for bonuses have been voted to it by the Ontario Legislature and the Dominion Parliament, and the Rathbuns have an eye on some good iron locations away to the north. But there are other minerals besides iron in the region north of Tweed, and I shall not be surprised if they do not give more traffic to a railway than the iron ores in the near future. At Bridgewater on the Scootamata River, five or six miles north of Tweed, a mill was built several years ago to grind talc and actinolite for roofing purposes; but for some time past the owners have been fighting each other in the law courts. The matter is settled now, with one of the parties out, and the mill is running again. But meantime other persons have been attracted to the district, who seem to have known more of the value of the mineral than the fighting firm of James & Taylor, and this year they have been exploiting it in a way that promises to do the country some good. I dare say you know that at Gouverneur, in York State, a large business is carried on in the mining and milling of talc or soapstone. Some ten years ago ground talc began to be used as filling in the manufacture of paper in place of French clay and other substances of like kind, and it was found to answer the purpose so much better that now more than 50,000 tons of it is so used by the paper mills of the United States. I am told, too, that large quantities are imported by the Canadian paper makers. It is also used as an adulterant in the manufacture of asbestos goods, especially the talc with fibre in it, and I have heard of one concern in northern Pennsylvania to which three or four carloads are shipped from Gouverneur every week. There were six companies carrying on business at Gouverneur, but about a year ago four of them were bought out by a syndicate of New York Central capitalists, and a company was stocked at $5,000,000 to carry on operations upon a larger scale than ever. The New York Central now controls the road on its main line to Clayton and Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence, and branch lines have been built to all the mines and mills. Some of the mines are 300 feet deep, and have been worked underground to lengths of a quarter and even a half mile. Most of the talc at Gouverneur is non-fibrous, but some of it is foliated. The latter answers well enough as a filling for wall papers; but as the scale form is preserved, no matter how fine the mineral may be ground, it does not suit at all for printing papers, as the scales flake off and clog the face of the type. Now, in the counties of Hastings and Addington there are large bodies of this mineral, and a much better variety than at Gouverneur. There are not only the fibrous, the massive and the foliated talcs, but several kinds of mineral of the amphibale group. A number of locations have been taken up in the townships of Elzevir, Kaladar and Grimsthorpe, and there is no reason for doubting that the supply is abundant. A company, of which ex-Governor Campbell, of Ohio, is president, owns some good properties in Elzevir, and on one of these a shaft has been sunk this year, which is now down 40 feet. It is eleven feet square, and the mineral is much wider at the bottom than at the top. I am not sure that I would call it a vein; it is more like part of the formation. Half a mile or less to the west a band of syenite crosses the country, beyond which are parallel bands of schist, conglomerate and serpentine, the latter cut with dykes of felspar fifteen to twenty feet in width. The useful mineral is found in the serpentine, and may be generally described as actinolite in various stages of alteration from the non-fibrous to the asbestiform. The mineral taken out of the shaft is of the latter variety, the fibers of which are fine, strong, and from half to three-quarters of an inch in length. Exploratory work on this and on adjoining property eastward seems to show that there are three veins or bands, one of which is not less than 20 feet wide, while a mile further on in the same course is a very strong outcropping of actinolite of a shorter and weaker fiber. Half a dozen Gouverneur people are exploring and taking up locations, including all the parties who sold out to the New York Central syndicate, and as soon as they are satisfied that a sufficient supply can be had they will begin the erection of a mill. No doubt their chief anxiety is to discover the fibrous mineral, as besides being suitable for all the purposes of non-fibrous talc it has a superior value for mixing with asbestos. Work on the Campbell locations has been carried on under the management of Mr. Harrison, of Bridgewater, who has made a remarkably good showing with a small force of miners."

"Is there any good farming land in the district?" Mr. B. was asked.

"Well, no and yes. It is as rough and rocky as land can be; yet there are patches and pockets of rich soil on which good crops are grown. The bottom lands especially are very rich, and farmers who take up a few hundred acres generally get enough of these to grow all the crops they want. But the natural pastures are wonderful. What the settlers call winter grass grows abundantly on the rocks, and they tell me that cattle thrive upon it. It grows under the snow all winter and is as fresh and green as fall wheat when spring comes. Some farmers own large herds of cattle which they turn out into the woods in early spring to see no more until they are rounded up at the beginning of winter, or even late in December, when they are almost fat enough for the butcher. Cheese making is a live and profitable industry in the district, and some farmers sell the milk of twelve to twenty cows. Mr. Smith, who lives on the line of Elzevir and Kaladar, told me that he milked fourteen this year, and that next season he will have twenty. He was a farm laborer in Cambridgeshire, but now he owns a farm of nearly 500 acres, grows all the crops he wants to, and grazes cattle and sheep over hundreds of acres besides his own. 'I tell you what is wanted in this back country,' he said, 'is ranches. If farmers would only take up a lot of 500 or 600 acres and stock it with cattle and sheep, they would soon grow rich selling milk, beef and mutton. Cattle and sheep make flesh night and day, and for most of the year their keep costs nothing. And you can't get anywhere a finer quality of beef and mutton than we grow out here.' I quite agree with Mr. Smith, and indeed I often urged upon Mr. Drury and Mr. Dryden the wisdom of encouraging the ranch system throughout Northern Ontario."

"Is there gold in those townships?"

"I think not, although a discovery was reported some time ago in Kaladar. There are lots of deer, though, as you may suppose, where there is such good pasturage in the woods. And there are wolves, too. A few years ago the woods were howling with them, and in some parts there are a good many yet. Hunters say that farther back they often come across the carcasses of deer killed by wolves. I could tell you some good wolf stories—but it's mining news you are after."

"Another day. But there is gold in Hastings?"

"Yes, and a great deal of it, if one may believe half that one hears from the enthusiastic prospector and the sanguine real estate miner. Madoc and Marmora, in Hastings, and Belmont, in Peterboro, are the gold fields, and a quarter of a century ago there was a first-class boom in gold mining there. But some of the richest finds were in veins of mispickel ore of sulphur, arsenic and iron, and there was no way then known of treating this ore to take more than half the gold out of it. At the Deloro mine methods were tried which cost, some say, half a million dollars; and although there was enough gold to pay handsomely if only it could be won, the works had to be shut down, and the mines and the mill have been idle for several years. But if all I have heard be true, the fault was owing, perhaps, as much to crass stupidity as to unsuited processes."

"But hasn't the difficulty of treating this ore been overcome yet?"

"I hope so. Indeed, I am almost confident that it has, but one can never be sure until a good test has been made. The Carter-Walker process has been tried for the first time out of the laboratory in the village of Marmora. The inventors are Philadelphians, but the credit of building the first mill belongs to Canadians. Messrs. Allan and Keith, of this city, and Mr. Wylie, of Carlton Place, are the principal men in the company formed to try the process, and I think likely they know more about it now than the inventors themselves. I could not hope to make it clear to you without going into long details, but in the main the process consists in grinding the ore to a fineness of 50-mesh, roasting it to drive off the arsenic and sulphur in a furnace of ingenious construction, and running the charge of roasted ore through a heated chamber, where it comes into contact with mercury in a volatized state. The mercury thus finely diffused amalgamates with the gold in its passage through a water-jacketed section of the chamber, and the amalgam is caught on the plates in the collecting vats into which the ore so treated is discharged. The mill has been running about five months, and it is claimed that 85 to 90 per cent. of the gold in the ore is being won. This is a great improvement on any other process hitherto tried on mispickel, and as the arsenic is also saved the officers of this enterprising company are confident that they have solved the problem within economic limits.

"Is there no free-milling ore in the district?"

"O, yes; there are several good properties, some of which have only been recently discovered. One of these is in Belmont, and is held by Mr. Carscallan, M.P. I went over it last Saturday, and I think it is valuable; certainly it is very well veined, and several thousand dollars of gold have been taken from it. One of the veins is nearly 40 feet wide. There is a prospect of this location being taken over and worked by a strong company of New York capitalists. Fine shows of gold have also been found on an adjoining lot, owned by T. D. Ledyard, of this city, who is now at work exploring it by sinking shafts and pits. Some specimens are very rich in free gold."

"There is lithographic stone in Marmora?"

"Yes; lots of it, and I think much of it is of excellent quality, too. You may see the beds of it outcropping with the limestone on either side of Crow River, in the village of Marmora; but there the beds have been too much disturbed by a granite upheaval, and besides there is too much flinty matter in the stone. But farther up the river, and along the south shore of Crow Lake it is of fine texture, much of it quite free from silicious matter, and there is little or no disturbance of the bedding. This last is an essential condition, for lithographic stone is almost as brittle as glass. At two quarries mills have been erected for sawing and planing the stone, and samples sent this year to New York city are reported to have given good satisfaction. Both of these quarries are owned by New York people. Within the last few weeks a Detroit syndicate has got an option on a quarry that is nearer the village and are now opening it with encouraging prospects. The top layer is two feet in thickness, the stone is light in color, the texture is fine and uniform, and, except on one edge, there is hardly any appearance of the baneful flint lines. Altogether I think the prospect of building up a lithographic industry is quite hopeful at Marmora, and as America is almost wholly dependent on Bavaria for lithographic stone you will readily see what a valuable industry it may become. But I have talked enough for Thanksgiving Day; let us have some turkey."

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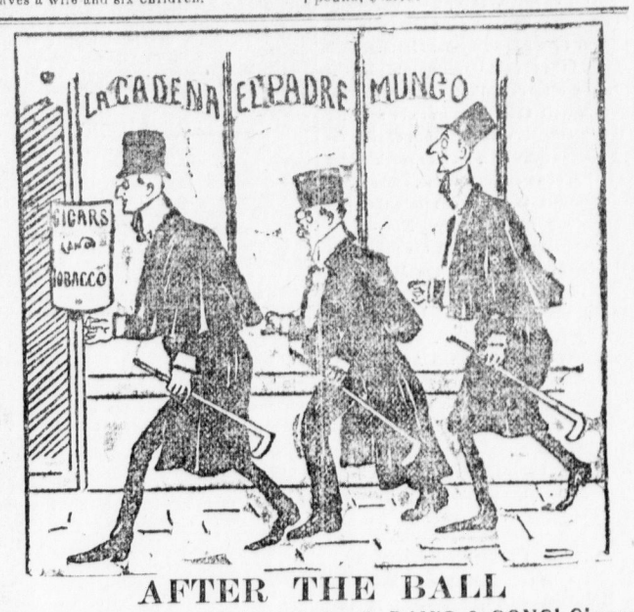
Two Countrymen Walk Off a Ferryboat Into the Water—Both Drowned

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I., Nov. 29.—Two countrymen named Wood and Trainor were drowned here at Southport ferry last night. They were drunk, and thinking the steamer was at the dock walked into the river. The bodies were recovered. Trainor leaves a wife and six children.

Cause of Hay Fever.

A Kansas editor says hay fever is caused by kissing grass widows. He has recently recovered from a sever attack of the distemper, and may be credited with a proper diagnosis of his own case, but it does not affect all men that way.

A Roman mite was 35-100ths of a cent; a farthing was 68-100ths; a penny, 13.75c; a pound, $3.75.



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