

*Nepigon Bay Route.*

Among the many schemes recommended for opening the North-west Territories, the head of this bay has been suggested as a point of departure, chiefly on the ground that it affords an excellent harbour, and that, by its adoption, the distance to be navigated in Lake Superior would be somewhat shortened.

It is not, however, without its objections, and a conclusive one will be found in the fact that it is too far to the eastward of the line which it is proposed to open to render its adoption in any way expedient. It would, in fact, involve at the outset a land road of ninety or a hundred miles to reach the nearest point beyond the water shed, without any compensating advantage. Moreover Nepigon Bay, being completely land-locked, is said to be very late of opening in the spring, and the access to it is reported to be so intricate as to require light-houses and beacons to render it safe. Whereas, Thunder Bay is remarkably easy of access, and has been for many years approached, night and day, without the occurrence of an accident.

I may further state that a road from Nepigon Bay, to connect with the proposed line west of the water-shed, would pass over a region as yet unexplored and only known to be exceedingly mountainous and rough, and, as it would run in a direction transverse to the valleys, more than one mountain range would have to be crossed and several considerable rivers bridged.

---

 THE LAKE REGION.

Westward of the Height of Land, on the streams tributary to Rainy Lake, there is a section of country remarkable from the fact that a very considerable portion of its area is occupied by lakes. Those on the various routes which have been followed, are set down on the annexed map, but these give only a faint idea of their number. Every river and rivulet has its lakes. Go in whatever direction he will, the explorer, on passing over a mountain range, is sure to stumble on a lake. The Indians, with their little canoes, seem by means of these lakes to travel in almost any and every direction. So numerous are they that it would be difficult to say whether the country would be better described as one vast lake with ridges of land running through it, or as a land intersected by water. On ascending any of the bare rocky bluffs frequent in the country, mountains are seen stretching away in tumultuous and broken ridges to the horizon, with lakes gleaming from every valley which the eye can reach.

Such a region is but ill adapted for railways, but nature has made up for the deficiency, by providing such means for canals as exist in but few regions of so mountainous a character. Between the hills and mountain ranges, there are long reaches of tranquil water which could be connected together by means of lock and dam, with but little excavation. The country, however, in its present state, is not in a condition to admit of such projects as either railways or canals, but, even if it were, the very primitive and moderate way in which I propose to open the communication would still be necessary, as a preliminary step, to render the different points accessible.

A very marked characteristic of the region is that the streams are not subject to sudden or considerable floods, and this is a feature which the engineer, who was to provide for water works of whatever description, will look upon with unmixed satisfaction.

This very favourable circumstance is due, primarily, to the lakes which serve as reservoirs, rising slowly during freshets and subsiding gradually when they have passed. It is in part produced, also, by the character of the country which is, in general, densely wooded.

The rain fall is excessive, and as a consequence the streams carry a very heavy volume, as compared to the area which they drain.

The lakes are everywhere studded with wooded islands, and so sheltered that the smallest canoes are rarely wind-bound.

The first considerable sheet of water westward of Height of Land, on the route which it is proposed to follow, is

*Lac des Mille Lacs.*

To render this Lake accessible from Dog River, all that is required is a road of ten