

Mining in Northern Manitoba

By J. A. Campbell, Commissioner of Northern Manitoba

"Northern Manitoba" is now beginning to have a really definite meaning to the people of Canada as a vast territory of immense possibilities, just in the initial stages of its development. What has already taken place in the way of development is merely a minute indication of what may be counted on in the future. This Northern hinterland having an area of 178,000 sq. miles was added to Manitoba in 1912, thus putting that province on an even footing, as to extent, with the other Western provinces, and only the future will show whether this equality holds good in other respects.

This extension of territory means much to Manitoba. Hitherto the most inland, it is now to be reckoned with as one of the Maritime provinces; and the province which has given its name to the best wheat in the world and which heretofore has been looked upon as devoted almost exclusively to the production of that wheat, must henceforth take an important place amongst the mineral producing areas in Canada, particularly in the output of copper and gold.

This country, which is looked upon and spoken of as "Hinterland" is really at the front of the province, for it was by way of Hudson Bay, through this region that the first settlers came to the Red River Valley in 1812. Before many more years have passed the wheat and farm products of the successors of these pioneers will pass out through the gateway by which they came. This means of export (and of import also) is the Hudson Bay Railway, extending from The Pas to Port Nelson and now almost completed.

Among other benefits, the construction of this road is directing the attention of the people to Northern Manitoba. It has become known that this immense area is not a vast stretch of rock, water and muskeg which has been the general opinion regarding it hitherto, but that there exists there natural resources of great richness and variety. While investigation as yet has been only of the most general nature, it has shown the existence of hundreds of thousands of acres of good agricultural land, great stretches of valuable pulp wood, a vast network of lakes and rivers abounding in fish of the finest quality, and an unknown area, hitherto merely scratched, in which there have been made discoveries of mineral wealth of such promise as to put Manitoba in a prominent position as a mineral producer.

Mineral Area.

Until very recently the known mineral area has been practically confined to that lake and river district stretching from Lake Athapapuskow and the Saskatchewan boundary on the west to Wekusko or Herb Lake on the east, a distance of approximately one hundred miles. This, roughly speaking, forms the base of an inverted triangle, the apex of which is The Pas, the westerly side being the Saskatchewan river, and connecting lakes, and the easterly side the Hudson Bay Railway.

Lake Athapapuskow is reached by Ross Navigation Company steamers, which give regular summer service from The Pas to Sturgeon Landing via the Saskatchewan river, Cumberland and Sturgeon Lakes. From Sturgeon Landing to Lake Athapapuskow, a distance of sixteen miles, a road has been constructed by the Manitoba Government which is of very material benefit for the hauling of machinery, supplies and other freight.

There is an alternative canoe route here, via Sturgeon and Goose rivers and Goose Lake, connecting with the terminus of the government road at Lake Athapapuskow, by a three mile portage.

The other end of the district at Herb Lake is still more easily reached. This is by the Hudson Bay railway from The Pas to Mile 82. From there a Government road, locally known as the "Gordon Highway" runs to McKay's Landing at the south end of the lake, a distance of eleven miles. Mining properties already discovered commence at a point about five miles north of this landing, and run to the northern end of the lake.

As might naturally be expected, mineral discoveries in this district were first made at each end of the mineral area, as being most readily accessible, and these also are the points where active development work and mining operations are now being carried on.

The Great Sulphide Property—Flin Flon Lake.

It is less than three years ago, August, 1915, since this great body of ore was located and thus was demonstrated the fact that copper must henceforth be taken into consideration as one of the important mineral resources of the North. Thomas Creighton was the original discoverer. He was one of a group of six prospectors sent out to prospect in that district by certain Toronto capitalists and mining men known as the Hammill-Currie-Fasken syndicate. Ten claims were staked and steps taken immediately to find out the quality and extent of the orebody. By stripping and trenching it was learned that it is approximately 2,000 ft. long. The body is narrowest at the north end and widest at the south end where it enters the lake, being there about 300 ft. wide, a vast deposit of solid sulphide. Sampling and re-sampling indicated that at normal values the ore would realize about \$10 to the ton in gold, copper and silver, the copper content averaging 1¼%.

This discovery attracted wide attention and during the succeeding two years prominent capitalists engaged in mining operations, and mining engineers from New York, Boston, San Francisco, as well as from eastern Canada, visited the property. Various propositions were submitted to the original owners, who held out for a figure and terms which were thought to be somewhat excessive and onerous for a new property. No sale outright has yet been made, although others have become interested in the property and it is now in the control of a syndicate which includes these along with most of the original owners. This syndicate is under the management of John H. Black, of Toronto, well known in connection with various Northern Ontario enterprises.

A few months after the discovery a contract was let for diamond drilling this property. A complete drilling outfit, supplies and equipment were taken in during the winter and camp established on the lake shore. On March 26th, 1916, two drills were started on the work and continued until July 15th, 1916. Further contracts were let subsequently and these drills have been almost constantly employed for a period of nearly two years. \$200,000 has been spent in this and other work of investigation in the same connection.

This big expenditure has been amply justified. Investigation has borne out the original estimate, and the