

THE MISTASSINI REGION.

By A. P. Low, *B. App. Sc.**(Read January 10th, 1890.)*

For several years past an exciting controversy has been carried on in the public press as to the size, shape, and position of Lake Mistassini; and a number of writers on the strength of hearsay evidence, aided by brilliant imaginations, have indulged in many extravagant statements in regard to this "Great Inland Sea of the North-East," some affirming that it equalled, if indeed it did not surpass, Lake Superior in size, and that in comparison with it our other inland lakes were mere ponds.

This evening I propose to give a brief statement of the known facts about Mistassini from observations and measurements made by different members of the Geological Survey Staff, and at the same time to outline the route followed, to and from the lake, by the last expedition sent out by the Government.

Before entering upon this, a short historical summary of previous explorations may prove interesting to some present.

Although rumours of a great body of fresh water, larger than any south of the height of land, seem to have reached the French trading in the Saguenay country, soon after Champlain's arrival in Canada, it was not until 1672, that Père Chas. Albanel, a Jesuit missionary, visited the lake. He had been sent overland to Hudson Bay by authority of the French Governor, to visit the posts of the Hudson Bay Co., then but a short time established in the southern part of the bay.

The route followed on this occasion was up the Saguenay to Lake St. John, thence by the Ashouapmouchouan River to its head, across the height of land, and through lakes Chibougamoo and Obatogoman, large bodies of water feeding the Notaway River, which flows into James Bay. From here by short portages into Lake Wawaniche, and so into the S.W. Bay of Mistassini.

Père Albanel, from his account recorded in the "Relations des Jesuites," appears to have passed up this bay to the end of the point separating it from the S.W. Bay, and from there crossed the mouth of