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Newfoundland's Island of Iron.

The Story of Bell Island, That
Picturesque "Rock" in
Conception Bay.

By J. R. SMALLWOOD, Evening Telegram Staff.

PART ONE

"A little world by itself" was what I mentally characterized Bell Island, when, last week, I landed on it for the first time and spent half a week there for the purpose of gathering material for this article. The very first impression received was the undreamed of extent of what the people living thereon seem to love to call "The Rock." Having often viewed it from the bottom of Conception Bay, which was some distance away, the island appeared to be no more than a mere rock in the water. Yet it is six miles long, by an average width, of two miles, giving a total superficial area of twelve square miles. The shores of the island are for the most part very abrupt, presenting mural cliffs all round, except at two points on the Southern side of the island: The Beach and Lance Cove. These cliffs range from a hundred to three hundred feet in height, and the highest elevation of the island, inland, is 495 feet. The contour of the surface is comparatively level, or rolling. On the front, or that side facing the shore of the bay, is found the aragonite-like portion, while the bank, or that portion facing roughly out the bay, is the industrial or mining section. Intervening are marshes and growths of young fir.

There is a small landing wharf on the beach, facing Portugal Cove, and, back a little, a "slip." The land rises at a grade somewhat approaching that of Springdale Street, and two sets of rails, side by side, have been placed thereon. The passengers from the ferry-boat just step in from the wharf to the bottom of the steep grade and enter the car. This resembles an enclosed railway freight or box car, with a narrow compartment at either end for the ladies. On the ceiling there is a rail running along for the passengers to hold onto while the car is mounting the slip. As it goes up the second car comes down, both meeting about halfway. The fare on the slip are five and ten cents and the novelty of the thing makes it worth the fare. At the top of the grade, back a little, there is a "station," where everybody disembarks, the line extending no further inland. However, you are spared the walk across the island by the presence of a number of carriages which have been waiting there since the ferry put out from Portugal Cove.

The drive from the Front to the Back of the island will prove interesting. The road is covered with cinders, on account of the soft nature of the soil. The cinders, becoming crushed, make good roadbed. Practically every road on Bell Island is treated in this way. Almost across the island is the thriving township of Wabana, where are situated the mines and companies' headquarters. Shops, stores, businesses, etc., and a moving picture house, public buildings, etc., are to be found in proximity. The name "Wabana," an Indian word meaning "The place where daylight first appears," was given the location in 1895 by Thomas Cantley, whose name is closely identified with the iron mines of Bell Island.

One of the first things to perplex the visitor is the way, apparently, the two companies are mixed and overlap each other. There are the Dominion Iron and Steel Co. and the Nova Scotia Iron and Steel Co. It is days before you can succeed in knowing the different claims. When you think that you are on the Dominion claim you may really be on the "Scotia." This difficulty does not present itself to the residents of the island, and gradually becomes less and less difficult even to the casual visitor.

Of the geological nature of Bell Island, and the section of Conception Bay in which it is found, I will say but little, first because the reader would not be interested in reading it, and second because I know little about it. Bell Island, with Little Bell Island and Kelly's Island, are the remaining portions above water of a great trough of Cambrian rocks, which extended from shore to shore, filling the area now occupied by the waters of the Bay. Although the mines which are to-day being worked existed there for thousands of years, their presence—or perhaps I should say that their extent—was not popularly known, although Anaspach, in his history, published away back in 1819, mentions the fact of "an iron mine occurring at Back Cove, Bell Island." It was known around the Bay, however, that the rocks lying about the surface of Bell Island were extraordinarily heavy, and schooners used to come to it for ballast. Anchors were frequently made by enclosing the heavy "red rock" in frames of young fir trees, such as are often found in various places over the coun-

try to this day. It is said that the discovery of the real extent of the mines is due to the custom of taking rock from there for ballast. A schooner lying at a premises in this port, so the story runs, was having her ballast thrown upon the wharf. An English geologist, who happened to be standing nearby, saw in the ballast an iron ore of excellent quality. Taking some samples with him, he had them assayed in England, when their excellence was ascertained beyond doubt. The Scotia Company was the first to begin work—in 1895. To the original owners of the property the Company paid \$150,000. Four years later the Scotia Company sold out part of their claim to a (then) recently-formed company, the Dominion, for \$1,000,000. Since then both companies have been vigorously prosecuting the work of mining, and in twenty years, between them, they have exported about 18,000,000 tons—of which 12,000,000 of an average of six hundred thousand tons a year—came from the Dominion, and about six millions from the Scotia. For the first five years all mining was surface work, but for the last fifteen years it has been underground work, and seven slopes have been opened. Although such an enormous quantity of ore has been already exported from the island, the vast deposits there have been barely touched, for, as Professor Howie said, the ore bands, both on Bell Island and under water, contain the stupendous total of 3,535,549,360 tons. There is ore enough there to supply mining for generation after generation, "now and forevermore." The iron is red hematite, is of a very excellent quality, almost free from rock and very easily mined. It is claimed to be the best ore bed in North America. The ore is all in one great, wide bed, about ten to twelve feet in thickness, and beginning at about the centre of the island and running out under the water, roughly toward Hr. Grace and Carbonear. The mines, of which the Dominion has six and the Scotia one—one that runs out under the water for three miles—are all on that one wide bed, and lie parallel to each other, running out under the sea. The Dominion mines range from East to West, and the Scotia is situated between them.

As one mine is identical to another, and the system of mining is the same in all of them, I will tell about Slope No. 2, D.I.S. Co., down into which I went on Monday morning, of this week. Mr. J. MacNeil, the Assistant Manager, accompanied me and was kind enough to stay below with me for the whole morning, explaining everything in detail. To him I am indebted for this article, as without his ready information it could not have been attempted.

It would be the height of foolishness to go down the mines without first donning suitable clothes, so I rigged myself out in overalls, overall coat, long gum boots and the regular miners' carbide lamp. Below everything is red, and when you touch against anything that portion of you is certain to be colored by the dust of the hematite. A fact which will illustrate this is that the long rubber which I wore, a perfectly new pair, were quite red when I came up out of the mine, and although I was out several times while it was raining heavily, the color did not wash off, becoming, rather, even redder and more brilliant. Everything in connection with the mines is red. The miners' clothing, boots, face and hands, everything are red and practically everything on the Back of the Island is also red. It is the prevailing color.

So, our clothes on, and our carbide lamps lighted, we set out down the mine. Slope No. 2, which we entered, is the property of the D.I.S. Co. It is 5,200-feet long—nearly one mile. That would be as long as about from the Telegram Office up past the Station. A slope, I should explain, is simply a tunnel. It is square, or almost so, being ten feet high—the thickness of the orebed—and eighteen feet wide. This slope, opening into the ground for about four thousand feet back from the water, on the Back, runs out toward Hr. Grace, going under the water at a grade of 15 degrees or a drop of fifteen feet in every hundred feet, or a total drop, in the fifty-two hundred feet, of about 350 feet. You do not notice this grade much going down—but coming up—well, it reminded me of walking up Blackhead Road. This slope is perfectly straight. Two sets of rails are laid on the floor of it, and the ore is hauled up to the surface in a train on one track, while the other track is used by empty trains returning for more ore. A train consists of seven open steel cars, each containing 17 tons—or altogether a load of roughly twelve tons. The seven cars are coupled together, and a heavy cable is attached to the one nearest the entrance. The other end of this cable, which is more than a mile long, is coiled around the drum of a great winch on the surface. When the seven cars are to be pulled up, the winch is started and the cable, by means of an electric bell, the winch is started and the seven cars, loaded with ore, is hauled rapidly up the slope. In this way an average of eleven hundred cars a day are brought to the surface. The number varies with the force of men working below, of course. However, 1,100 cars a day is a good average. There is a safety device to provide against

accidents. If, by any chance, the cable should break or something else happen while the seven carfuls of ore are going up the slope, the cars would not dash down the track, in spite of the 15-degree pitch. On the last car there is a heavy bar of iron, always dangling behind. The bottom end of it is pointed, and the instant the cars would start backward the bar would stick into the ground (because it reaches down to it) and overturn the cars.

(Continued next issue.)

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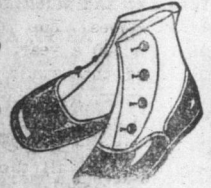
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The Founder of German Aggression.

Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke, who died on April 24, 1891, was one of the three men—the others being Bismarck, the statesman, and Roan, the organizer—to whom the German Empire owed its late predominance. Born in Mecklenburg on October 26, 1800, Moltke acquired in boyhood, during the Napoleonic wars, a lasting hatred of France; but he was far advanced in years before circumstances enabled him to gratify it. At first, indeed, nothing seemed less likely, as he began his career in the Danish army, but seeing small prospect of advancement, he exchanged into the Prussian service in 1822. Thirteen years later he travelled in Asia, and acted temporarily as confidential adviser to the Turkish commander-in-chief; but, with this exception, practically all his active life was spent on the Prussian General Staff. In 1866 the Austro-Prussian war gave him his chance, and the victory of König-gratz (Sadowa) established his fame as a strategist. Then, in 1870, came the French war, and the surrender of Napoleon III. at Sedan, together with the capitulation of Metz and the fall of Paris, caused him to be hailed as an infallible general. Errors, however, he did commit, but they were lost in the blaze of success; and for nearly half-a-century thereafter the Prussian system was regarded as Europe's model. Not did any one dare to challenge its pre-eminence for the remainder of Moltke's life, which was given to the work of perfecting the great machine by which European liberties were to be threatened in 1914. The genius that in an infinite capacity for taking pains was Moltke's, but, happily, the weapon proved less formidable in more fumbling hands, and in little more than a quarter of a century after his death his lifework was destroyed and the German Empire shattered.

From All Quarters.

The blanket was first made and used by Thomas Blanket, a poor Flemish merchant, in 1340.

In a ton of water from the Atlantic there are 31lb. of salt as against 187lb. in the same quantity from the Dead Sea.

The largest stage in the world is that of the Grand Opera House in Paris. It is 100ft. wide, nearly 200ft. in depth, and 80ft. high.

The average battleship requires a crew of forty officers and 300 men, whose salaries, together with coal and provisions for one year, cost £2105,000.

The Jewish population of the world is estimated at 15,490,000. Poland and the Ukraine each have 3,300,000, while there are 3,100,000 in the United States, 900,000 in Russia, and 900,000 in the British Isles.

Among the ancient trade secrets which the world probably never will

learn are the Chinese method of making a brilliant vermilion colour and the Turkish method for inlaying gold or silver on the hardest steel.

China had women soldiers long before they were known in Russia. During the Tse Ping rebellion in 1850, women as well as men served in the ranks. In Nanking, in 1853, an army of 500,000 women was recruited. They were commanded by women officers.

The position of Viceroy of India is one of the best-paid offices under the Crown, since the holder of office receives a monthly payment of 20,000 rupees. At the present high price of the Indian rupee this represents a comfortable stipend of over £25,000.

Fads and Fashions.

Very smart is a black flannel coat piped with white flannel and worn with a plaid skirt.

One of the prettiest new hats droops at the side and is turned straight off the face in front and up at the back—a bizarre effect.

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