

Joking apart, however, it is really sad to see one of our Canadian writers hold himself up to ridicule in an English magazine, and we look forward with some interest and a large amount of apprehension to the coming publication of the Geological Survey.

### A VISIT TO LARDER LAKE.

A visit to Larder Lake is education—rapidly and comprehensively education. Heaslip, an inhospitably small station on the T. & N. O., is the starting point for what is probably the better trail of the two. At Boston the other trail begins.

After a good frost one walks from Heaslip to Tomstown, three miles, over a well-laid and level road. From Tomstown to Wendigo, where the alternative of a canoe route is offered in summer, the first few miles are execrable in soft weather, passable in frosty weather, and must be delightful after the snow flies. Settlers, mostly Englishmen, have taken up small farms along the road. The soil, slayey or gravelly, as one may choose, is remarkably fertile.

Wendigo, seven miles on, we found in a state of inter-seasonal quiet. Long rows of canoes (we counted forty at least) were stacked in frames for winter storage. We were told that already the smaller lakes were frozen over and that one sharp night would close the whole route to Larder. A water power of not inconsiderable dimensions exists here.

The trail from Wendigo to Tremblay's (Half-way House) is, for the most part, over clean gravel ridges. The walking, even when the rains descend (and descend upon us they did) is excellent.

From Wendigo on to Fitzpatrick's Bay on Larder Lake the road measures eight or nine long, heavy miles. From the bay a paddle of four miles takes one to Larder City.

For reasons various and apparent Larder City is sitting on her heels. Transportation is almost out of the question and will be until snow comes. The only symptom of mining near the "City" is to be seen on the Harris-Maxwell claims. The lake shore is dotted with empty camps, prospecting shafts and test pits.

Larder Lake is a deep and unquiet body of water. In its cold waters the lusty lake trout, the predatory pike, the piratical pickerel, multiply surprisingly. These hardy fish are firm of flesh and make sweet eating. Of wild duck we saw many. Through the long trails over the hills we disturbed dozens of partridge.

We also came upon signs of certain beasts of prey. The track of the wild cat was not hard to read. Winter-staked claims, discovery posts cunningly hidden by ambiguous legends on the corner posts or placed merely on an outcrop of country rock, or not placed at all, these are signs which he who runs may read.

There are two errors that obsess the average prospector in the Larder Lake district. The first is that quartz, of

itself, constitutes a valuable discovery. The second is that a vein or dike must improve to the deep—usually in a geometric ratio. Neither conclusion is sound; indeed both are baseless.

All generalizations regarding mineral deposits should be received with a full appreciation of possible exceptions.

Whilst it is true that Larder Lake is yet far from being a proved mining district, we have not and we do not make this statement with the intention of injuring the district. Incalculable harm has been done already by newspaper advertisements and reading notices. A totally false impression has been created in the public mind. It has been announced that the district is an enormously rich one. This is false. But brokers and promoters have used the daily papers all over Canada to create this impression and, with the help of the various champions of the people, they have obtained money from thousands of poor folk under false pretences. A little common business sense upon the part of the daily newspapers would have obviated this. The least investigation would have elicited the truth about Larder Lake. But investigation was not made and the readers and subscribers of our powerful dailies find themselves betrayed.

Of the thousands of dollars subscribed by the public to develop Larder Lake mining claims by far the greater part has been divided between the newspapers and the promoters. This is a cold, irrefutable fact.

It is obvious that in common justice the newspapers must be held as parties to the crime. They constituted the only medium through which the promoters could appeal to the public. Had they denied the use of their columns to the wild catters Larder Lake might now have been a thriving camp, producing gold bricks instead of tragedies.

The end is not yet. When the story of fraud, waste, theft and incompetence is complete we believe that Toronto newspapers will revise their code of morals. No logic can justify a participation in the fruits of knavery.

This, however, is a digression. We feel strongly upon the subject.

We wish to conclude with an expression of opinion as to the present and future of Larder Lake.

What Larder needs, more than anything else, is a group of strong, competent mining engineers who will be free alike from the pernicious influence of promoters and from the hampering interference of directors.

Up to the present there has been (with one or two notable exceptions) no evidence of clean, intelligent mining. Stores have been wasted. Machinery has been transported over summer roads at paralyzing cost. Materials of construction have been ordered at any price and with no reference to the especial needs of the mining property. Much of this has arisen from the fact that wild cat companies do not care to employ reputable professional men.