

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN ONTARIO BY THE MINING INDUSTRY

By J. C. Ross, Editor Journal of Commerce.

It is a far cry from the struggling uncertain days of the Cobalt of 1905 and 1906 to the Cobalt of to-day. In the few years that Cobalt has been in existence, it has made good. The hundreds of mines, prospects and claims have dwindled to a score or more of carefully managed, dividend-paying properties. To date, Cobalt has produced upwards of \$100,000,000 in silver and paid back to shareholders almost \$50,000,000 in dividends. From the small district known as the Cobalt Area, mining activity has extended until to-day Porcupine, Gowganda and a number of other places far removed from Cobalt, give evidence of a great mineralized Hinterland.

Up to a few years ago, Ontario was regarded as an agricultural province. Some attention was paid to lumbering and to fishing, but the great basic industry was farming. It was with the idea of extending the farming area and tapping the great Clay Belt of Northern Ontario that the Government commenced the construction of the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway. While constructing this road, one of the employees, a blacksmith named La Rose, discovered what proved to be silver about one hundred miles from North Bay. This later became the La Rose mine and the centre of the Cobalt camp. The discovery of silver was followed a few years later by the discovery of gold at Larder Lake, Swastika and Porcupine, and other places, and silver at Gowganda, South Lorrain, and Montreal River. The discoveries of these mineral areas added a new basic industry to agriculture, lumbering and fishing. In the decade from 1902 to 1912, the mineral production in Ontario increased from \$13,000,000 to \$47,471,000. Last year, the silver produced in Canada, which is practically all from Northern Ontario, amounted to \$19,425,000. The value of the Canadian nickel—also a Northern Ontario product—was \$13,452,000. The value of the gold produced in Northern Ontario was \$1,788,000. To-day, there are over 11,000 men engaged in metal mining in Northern Ontario who receive in wages an average of about \$800 per year. The amount of ore shipped out, the freight furnished the railroads, the establishment of smelters, concentrators and other features associated with mining, have all tended to make Northern Ontario an important factor in the economic and industrial life of the Province.

From an investment standpoint, Cobalt has been the surprise of the world. In the early days when veins were found on the surface and outcroppings occurred in the most unexpected places, the impression prevailed that this was but a surface camp and that it would not maintain values at depth. After several years of mining, many of the companies are yet making important discoveries on their properties. Altogether, Cobalt has paid out in dividends almost \$50,000,000. Nipissing alone has returned to shareholders over \$10,000,000, while Crown Reserve, Coniagas, Kerr Lake and La Rose have paid in the neighbourhood of \$5,000,000, and several others have paid out over \$1,000,000 in dividends. There has been taken out of the Cobalt camp over \$100,000,000 worth of silver, making it one of the most important silver producing areas in the world.

Farther north, Porcupine is making a very creditable showing as a gold producing district. Hollinger,

the most important mine, has paid out over \$1,000,000 in dividends during the past year. Other gold mines in the Porcupine district are making satisfactory progress, although expenses connected with the mining and milling of the ore are so heavy that it takes time to achieve results. Gowganda is looked upon by many mining experts as a promising district, but owing to the fact that this section has been without roads, development has been exceedingly slow. Some companies have found very valuable ore and it will only be a question of time until Gowganda becomes a heavy producer.

There is no reason to believe that the minerals of the North Land are confined to the three or four districts now being worked. Practically the same rock formation occurs throughout large areas of Ontario's Hinterland and traces of valuable minerals have been found in many outlying parts. Eventually the whole of Northern Ontario will become more or less of a mining district. As new railroads are built and the country opened up, areas, now inaccessible, will be more thoroughly explored and minerals found.

Metal mining in Ontario will doubtless continue to be an important industry. Any falling off in the production of minerals from the Cobalt and Porcupine districts will be offset by fresh discoveries in other parts of the Province. Already reports of new discoveries are being made in districts far removed from the present beaten tracks. Railroad development will doubtless open up many new mineralized areas. It was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway that gave us Sudbury with its nickel and copper mines. The building of the Algoma Central gave us the Helen mine, while other discoveries around the Lake of the Woods, Michipicoten, Seine River, Bruce Mines and many other parts of the country, as well as the great discovery of the Cobalt and Porcupine camps, have all been the result of railway construction. To-day, the National Trans-Continental Railway across Northern Ontario is nearing completion. Other roads are being projected through the new district of Patricia and other parts of Ontario's Hinterland. In a recent report, Thomas W. Gibson, of the Bureau of Mines, says: "The only key to the future is found in the past, and in the vast area of pre-Cambrian rocks yet unprospected in Northern Ontario—to which was added the principality of Patricia—it can hardly be doubted that many more deposits of mineral wealth will be found."

Any mining district which, in the course of a half dozen years can produce \$100,000,000 worth of silver and pay back to the stockholders \$50,000,000 in dividends, cannot be ignored. Cobalt has added a new industry to the life of Ontario. It has created a market for the farmers of the great Clay Belt. It has attracted the world's attention to the Ontario Hinterland and advertised it more quickly and thoroughly than would have been possible by years of ordinary advertising. It has attracted immense sums of money to itself and kindred industries in the Dominion. It has furnished traffic for the Government railway and made what was once regarded as a foolish venture a profitable enterprise. Ontario and Canada owe much in an industrial and economic sense to the mineralized area known as the Cobalt and Porcupine districts.