

HISTORY OF MAGNESITE MINING IN GRENVILLE DISTRICT.

In the month of June 1900, Reverend W. P. Boshart in the course of a visit to Mr. Donald McPhee, lot 15, range IX, Grenville township, observed a boulder lying a short distance from Mr. McPhee's house which had a whiter and more glistening appearance than the ordinary crystalline limestone of the district. He sent a specimen of the material to Mr. W. B. McAllister of Ottawa, who took the sample to the Geological Survey where it was determined to be magnesite. Learning that magnesite was of commercial value, a search for the mineral in place was undertaken by Messrs. McAllister and Boshart with the result that outcrops and boulders of similar material were found in numerous localities in the district. Later in the season Mr. R. L. Broadbent of the Geological Survey visited these localities and collected samples which were analysed by Mr. F. G. Wait of the section of chemistry and mineralogy of the Geological Survey. The results of these analyses were published in the report of the Geological Survey for 1900.¹

Following the discovery of the magnesite, Messrs. McAllister and Boshart procured options on a large part of the territory in which the magnesite was known to occur, and made trial shipments of the material to consumers of magnesite, but the prices offered were too low for profitable operation, and no further attempts were made to market the material until the year 1907, when Mr. T. J. Watters purchased the mining rights for the north half of lot 18, range XI, Grenville township, from the Government and organized the Canadian Magnesite Company to operate the property. Later this company also acquired the mining rights for lot 15, range IX, Grenville, from Mr. McPhee, and erected a 10-ton keystone kiln on this lot for the purpose of calcining the magnesite at the mine, thus reducing the cost of haulage to the railway at Calumet, 11 miles distant. Mining operations were continued by the Canadian Magnesite Company on lot 15, range IX, in a small way, until the year 1914, when the property of the Canadian Magnesite Company was taken over by the North American Magnesite Company. Since that time mining has been actively prosecuted, both crude and calcined magnesite being shipped.

In 1915 Mr. S. Melkman of Montreal organized the Scottish Canadian Magnesite Company to mine magnesite on lots 15, ranges X and XI, Grenville township, under contract with the Grenville Lumber Company, to which these properties belonged. Magnesite mining was commenced in the month of August, 1915, by this company and has been continued up to the present. Since that time the Scottish Canadian Magnesite Company has acquired the controlling interest in the Grenville Lumber

¹ Geol. Sur., Can., Ann. Rept., vol. X111, 1900, pt. R., pp. 14-19