

Forest By-Products

The forests of the Lake Melville region remain practically untouched. Lumber and other ordinary forest products except as already noted are not at present produced in the Lake Melville region. The single portable mill now in operation supplies lumber only for local use and much of this is still cut with the old hand whipsaws. Until the boundary question is settled and it is known whether Newfoundland or Canada has authority to grant timber concessions, it is not likely that any large attempt at timber or pulpwood production will be undertaken.

At present the forests supply only by-products in the shape of fur bearing animals. In one sense the annual fur catch may be regarded as a forest by-product. The heavy forests produce what is said to be finest grade of fur known in the north. The fur-bearing animals and the people of the region are both, strictly speaking, forest products, since neither could exist in the region without the forests.

Minks, weasels and martins, are the more common fur-producing animals. Red, cross, silver and white foxes are trapped, the last generally being found only near the coast. The otter, lynx and beaver are also present. This region is near the southern limit of the range of the polar bear which is sometimes taken on the sea coast but it, like the seal, belongs to the sea rather than to the forests.

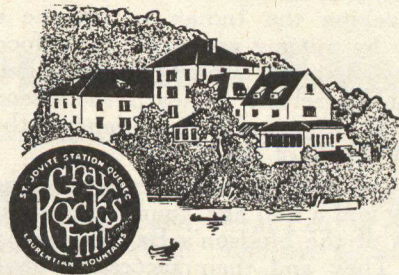
Originally the region was divided between the Indian and the Esquimo. The latter is nearly extinct in the Hamilton Inlet region and southward. The Esquimo held the narrow sea coast strip,—approximately the same narrow shore zone now occupied by the Newfoundland fisherman while all the vast interior river and lake region belonged to the Indian. When either race overstepped the time hallowed boundary between them in the old days, savage reprisals resulted. Battle Harbour is one of the names which has survived from the days when the Indian and Esquimo tried to revise the Labrador boundary with the tomahawk and the spear. From the region south of Hamilton Inlet the Esquimo has disappeared and the Newfoundland fisherman has taken his place. The Indian still survives but lives as his ancestors did, except that canvas canoes and tents have supplanted the birch bark canoe and the skin-covered teepee.

Evolution of the "Liveyere"

In Labrador, as elsewhere on the northern frontier, natural selection is producing a type of man well adapted to a changing environment. This new type will in time supplant the Indian.

In a country where elemental conditions prevail as they do in Labrador natural selection is not an academic term but a stern reality. Nature undertakes to make of every man who claims a home in Labrador either a hunter or a fisherman. For the failures starvation awaits just round the corner. The man who is a product of an environment where these two arts are not important or essential, must when he comes to Labrador, speedily acquire them unless he is able to maintain his connections with his old environment and its resources. Failure to do so means elimination by starvation. The tragic death of Leonidas Hubbard illustrates the remorseless way in which this fundamental law works in this region.

Labrador affords interesting sidelights on human relationships under the very simple elemental conditions which replace the complex web of civilization in which we live. There are no socialists and no capitalists to "grind the poor man down." Stern old Mother Nature does the grinding every few years by making the caribou



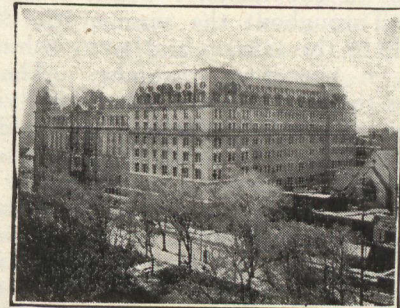
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