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A PLAIN TALE OF PLAIN PEOPLE

Pioneer Life in New
Ontario



THE GREAT CLAY BELT



Published by
Temiskaming and Northern Ontario
Railway Commission

Operating
Ontario Government Railway

—
Hon. W. H. Hearst, Premier

—
T. & N. O. R. Commissioners

J. L. Englehart, Chairman

D. Murphy A. J. McGee, Sec.-Treas. Geo. W. Lee
Toronto



Collection of Grain from Timiskaming—For exhibition by Canadian Emigration Department, British Isles.

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I.

In the month of August, 1912, I made up my mind to go to Northern Ontario. I left Toronto on the first of September, arriving next day at my destination. My first impressions of the country were not at all encouraging. All the good lots in the township in which I intended to locate appeared to have been already taken, or they were veteran claims, and as such not open for settlement. The lots which I examined were not at all like what I had been led to expect. The small clearings of the settlers full of stumps, their rough log cabins and the thickness of the timber on the ground brought home to me in a very forcible manner the fact that I must not expect any rosy pathway to the realization of my dreams of a good farm in this country.

A young man who was cutting wood in front of his shack was anxious to talk. He had been about two years in the country. His faith was strong; so was his sense of hospitality. Would I stay with him a few days while I looked around? I would be delighted. We sat and talked till late in the evening. I learned much from him about the country. He imbued me with some of his faith in its future, and he assured me that success lay before every man who was ready and willing to work; who was not easily discouraged and had a reasonable amount of courage and determination. That night, for the first time in my life, I slept in a rough bunk, on a bed of straw with only rough grey blankets and my coat for a pillow.

Early next morning my new friend piloted me to a quarter section less than a mile from his home, and about five miles from the railway station. We found the posts and lines, and for most of that day we examined the lot thoroughly. A brook ran through it. The soil was rich and black, the sub-soil a good clay, but it was nearly all covered with moss. My friend, however, explained that this burned off easily. The forest was composed of spruce, balsam, birch, tamarac and poplar, but spruce was the prevailing timber. Some of it was very large and tall, but most trees were quite small, running about eight inches in diameter. This, my guide explained, made fine pulpwood.

We selected a site for my future home on a ridge of higher land at the foot of which ran the brook. There was a beautiful

grove of birch and poplar. A fine spring bubbled its crystal waters from the side of the ridge, and as far as natural conditions went I was more than satisfied. Next day I hied me to the Land Agent and located for the lot. The price charged by the Government is fifty cents per acre, or eighty dollars for the one hundred and sixty. I paid twenty dollars down, and was informed that I had three years in which to pay the balance at twenty dollars per year.

That night over our pipes we talked things over. I wanted to hire Mr. Thomson, which was the name of my new friend and neighbor, but his counter suggestion was that we change work. It was getting late in the season, and it would be better for me to get to work at once. I therefore decided not to go back, but to leave it to my wife to make such arrangements as were necessary, and to come to me as soon as I was ready for her. I wrote her a long letter, telling her all that I had accomplished and advising as to what she should bring with her.

The first thing to be considered was a trail from the road to my new home. Two days of hard work accomplished this. It was only passable for a single horse and a small wooden sled.

I was not a good axeman, but I was soon to learn. My hands blistered, my back and arms ached, at night I threw myself into the bunk completely tired out, but next morning I was fresh and ready. My appetite was very good, though the food was poor and very hurriedly cooked and served up anyhow.

Monday morning, bright and early, we started work on the house. We had talked about it every day since I came. It was to be 28 feet long and 16 feet wide. Two rooms only, but, unlike the usual pioneer's shack, it was to have a shingle roof. Logs were cut and flatted. I scored while Thomson hewed. Trails were cut on which to drag in the logs, and after a week of hard work we were ready for the raising. We had previously secured a team of horses and three men to help us.

The foundation was ready. The day came, with it came the men and the team. I was surprised at the deft skill these men showed at the work. The team would bring in a stick, the men would quickly roll it up on skids, mortise the ends and drop it into place. As the logs were nearly all close, the walls rose rapidly. Before night the work was completed. Even the rafters were in place. I then wanted to settle with the men. "We may need you for a day some time," was the reply of each. Only the teamster would take anything, him I engaged to bring in the lumber, shingles, windows and doors required.

Thomson was a good rough carpenter and had a few tools, and it surprised me to see what he could do with them, or rather how he could get along without tools which seemed so necessary to me. He told me that in the backwoods the golden rule was "If you haven't got what you want, use something else," and it is surprising what you can do in the line of home-made inventions when you try.

Just three weeks after I arrived, or about the first week in October, I sent for my wife. Apart from the cook stove in the main room and a heating stove in the bedroom, there was not a stick of furniture in the house. The walls were rough and bare, the floor just plain, rough boards, but the cost had been very small. True, I owed fourteen days' work to Thomson, but in actual cash I had spent \$170.00—the stoves and payment on my lot accounted for a large share of that. Thomson told me his shack cost him about \$50.00.

I spent the time before my wife's arrival in making a little clearing in front of "The Poplars," as I determined to call our new home, subject of course to her approval. By great good luck our furniture came a day ahead, and I managed to get it all in the house before my wife arrived. I met her at the station, and we were soon on our way home. She was delighted with the house and its surroundings, "All our own," she cried, "our own home at last."

II.

I had been brought up on a farm in old Ontario, and received a good common and high school education. Then, like most of the boys in my class, went to Toronto. I secured a clerkship in a large wholesale house, where I received a fair salary and managed to save a little money, but though I got a small increase twice, promotion was slow. Five years later I married. After furnishing the little house I had just three hundred dollars in the bank. My wife was a stenographer in the office where I worked. She, like myself, was from the country, and like myself was fond of nature and of wide spaces. We never felt rich enough to go up north for a vacation, but we read everything we could get regarding it. We often talked in a joking way of going to the country and taking to farming, but we both knew that lack of capital made the idea impossible.

The summer had been hot, and Jennie's health was not good. Business was bad, and I knew that no increase of salary could be expected. I hated the city with its dust and heat and noise, I longed for the cool, shady lanes of the country, its fields and its forests, but what could I do? Could Jennie and I overcome the difficulties connected with carving for ourselves a home in New Ontario? We talked it over. She was willing to take the risk, so I resigned my position at once.

Now we were at home, Jennie was as busy as a bee. Pictures were hung, shelves were placed on the walls, a place was found for everything, and when Thomson looked in about four o'clock he fairly gasped. "Oh," he said, "but this looks like home." We sat down to tea, a happy little party.

"Oh, I forgot," cried Jennie, "I brought all the latest papers, I have often wondered how you got along without them." For some reason I was not enthusiastic. The great world and its doings seemed remote,

"Never mind them now," I replied. "To tell the truth, I have only seen one paper since I came here, and it was a week old. I do not seem to miss them."

"Now, Farmer John," said Jennie, "you are settled in your new home, what are we going to live on till you get some land cleared for crops?"

"We are going to cut some of our first crop right away," I replied. "Thomson and I are going to cut pulpwood this winter and haul it to the railway. Denning, the merchant, will take it. The price is very small, but we can make good wages all winter, and clear the land as well."

Next day was Sunday, so we took a walk over our new domain. We followed down the stream for some distance, as there was little underbrush. I noticed by marks on the trees that the creek must be about four feet higher in flood than now. It crossed the railway a short distance from the station. Perhaps we could use it to float our pulpwood to market, thus saving an expensive haul. While I was considering this matter I heard a startled exclamation from my wife. She was staring at a tangled bunch of brush on the hill. At first I could see nothing, then suddenly I was aware of a huge pair of horns above the bushes.

"What is it?" whispered Jennie.

"A moose," I replied. This was the first one I had seen in the woods. While we stood there he walked out in plain sight. What an enormous animal he was! Jennie clung to my arm.

"He won't hurt you," I said, "don't be afraid," but at the same time I wished he would move along and not stare at us so. "We'll eat him, or one of his brothers this winter."

"How I wish I had a camera," said my wife with a sigh. "I suppose the meat will be very acceptable, but what a pity to kill such a noble animal."

We enjoyed our walk very much. The day was most beautiful. The trees still held much of their wealth of yellow and red and purple, and, mixed with the evergreens, they made a most pleasing picture.

I took up the matter of floating my pulpwood to the railway with Thomson next day. We examined the stream to the crossing and found only one log jam, and a day's work would clear that out. We could pull the wood out at the railway and pile it. When the time came to load it on the cars it would have to be hauled about two hundred yards. Thomson was much pleased, he had not thought of this before, and as the creek crossed the south end of his farm he could use it as well as I.

I now began my work with Thomson. He had an area of about eight acres laid out which he intended to clear. All the spruce we cut into pulpwood. An occasional tamarac made a couple of ties, but the rest of the timber was left on the ground. We cut everything as we came to it, large or small. Some days we put up as much as four cords of pulpwood, other days not two cords. I stayed to the finish. We had eighty-five cords



A settler's first attempt at house-building.

of good pulpwood and sixty-seven ties from the eight acres. This, Thomson told me, would be worth about three hundred dollars at the railway. It would net him, after hauling, over a hundred dollars. It looked good to me, for here was eight acres of good land all ready for the fire.

The next job I undertook was banking the house. We had dug a small cellar under it, reached by a trap-door in the floor. In it we kept vegetables, and it was my intention to get in a good stock later. Winter was almost here. Some snow had fallen, and the air had a twang to it that spoke of the great cold to come. So I piled the earth high around the house to keep out the frost and thought I was now ready for that dreary time I so much dreaded.

We had made the acquaintance of two or three other neighbors more remote than Thomson, whom my wife would occasionally visit. She did not mind the three-mile walk over the rough roads, but seemed to enjoy the free and independent life of the bush immensely, and it was a great pleasure to me to see the roses once more in her cheeks. A neighbor woman showed her how to knit, and she was engaged in making me heavy, coarse, woolen socks and mittens.

Then came the event for which I had been waiting and dreading. Thomson and I were to go out and kill a moose. Now, I knew nothing about hunting. I had only seen one of those great creatures at home in the woods, but I had read stories of hunters having been attacked by wounded moose, and I knew my limitations as a marksman. Thomson had borrowed a rifle for me, and with a generous lunch stowed in our pockets we set out. After travelling for nearly three miles we came to a high ridge of land. The timber was fairly open, and we could see plenty of fresh moose tracks. Coming down the hill was a well-defined path. My companion examined the ground carefully, and finally sent me to make a wide detour and come up the hill from the far side and to the leeward. I travelled for about half a mile south and some distance east, then back towards our place of meeting, the idea being that if I started a moose he would make for the thick woods, taking the path on which my friend was posted. I was strolling carelessly along the side of a slope sparsely wooded with jack pine, when suddenly I found myself face to face with an enormous moose not fifty yards in front of me. He had been lying down and had risen on hearing me, and was now standing staring stupidly at me. I wanted that moose to go down the path and be shot, but he was not in any hurry. After about a minute I remembered I had a rifle and that it was loaded. I raised it up, but I shook so I could hardly hold it. After several attempts I could steady it enough to see his head through the sights. Unintentionally I pressed the trigger. At the report I dropped the rifle. I was really badly scared. My first thought was to run, but on looking at the moose and seeing he was down I hastily picked up the rifle and sent home another cartridge. I waited. No move.

II

I went closer till I could see where the bullet had hit him fair between the eyes. I think I was crazy for a minute or two. Then I heard Thomson calling.

"Come quick," I shouted, "I've killed him, and he's such a brute." And when Thomson arrived he, too, was much excited.

"Now," remarked my companion, "the fun is all over and the hard work begins." We had to carry all this meat out on our packs, and as that animal weighed nearly ten hundred pounds we did have some work.

We built a small hut of logs for storing the meat. There was enough to last us all winter. It is very much like beef, and the one we had killed was quite fat but a little tough. The meat was soon frozen hard, and in that state kept well.

III.

In the city the last work you do before retiring on a winter night is fix the furnace and put out the milk bottle, but here no milkman calls. You must use condensed milk or go without. A neighbor, three miles distant, kept cows, but three miles is a long way to go for milk. Later we will have cows of our own, and we can wait. At night I get a couple of pails of water, make the kindling and put a big chunk of birch into the heating stove. Oh no, it is not always warm in the morning, and sometimes my teeth fairly chatter while I get the stoves going, but they soon warm the house, and we have a tank in the back of the cook stove which keeps water hot all day. Taking a bath in a wash tub is rather awkward at first, but you soon get used to it. You cannot call up the grocer or butcher over the 'phone and give your order, knowing it will arrive within the hour. No, but your meat is right at home and it did not cost anything. If you want groceries you go down to the cellar and get them. Jennie had a little trouble with her bread at first, but after a month I am sure no baker's bread or buns could excel hers. And she gloried in her skill. Her jugged hare and rabbit pie were dishes for a king, and it was surprising the number of different ways she had for cooking moose meat. She enjoyed preparing surprises for us. Thomson's usual remark was, "Well, McConkey's has nothing on this." The clear, bracing air, free from all dust or smoke, and the hard work at which we were engaged gave us great appetites. Often an hour before noon I would be really hungry.

We were now engaged in chopping a field of about eight acres on my lot. It was long and narrow, being the south-western slope of the ridge, from the top down to the brook. We piled the pulpwood just above high water. The birch and tamarac we cut into firewood. As the slope contained much birch and poplar, we did not get as much pulpwood as from Thomson's land.

One night as we were sitting before the stove my wife handed me a piece of paper containing a list of our actual expenses for the last week. To my astonishment I learned that our outlay had been only four dollars and forty cents. I would have guessed at six dollars, for it seemed to me we were living very well.

Winter came down suddenly. We had occasional light falls of snow and some pretty cold weather, but one morning, about the middle of November, when I looked out a great snowstorm was raging. All that day and night it continued. I waded through the snow knee deep to the spring and to the woodpile. I carried in armfuls of snow-covered wood. Every time I opened the door clouds of snow blew into the room. Two things I found I needed very much—a wood house and some sort of porch or entry at the door. I mentally noted that these things would be attended to as soon as possible, but I was to learn next morning there were some things I needed more. I had no shovel to clear a pathway to the spring or woodpile. Neither had I any snowshoes. I had intended to secure these early and learn to use them, but now I was almost a prisoner. Thomson dropped in about noon. He had his snowshoes and insisted on me trying them. The snow was very light and I had my troubles, but it was not as bad as I had expected. My wife was very anxious to try them. They did not seem to bother her at all. She walked away as though she had always worn them. Thomson promised to go to the store next day and get us each a pair of snowshoes, also a shovel and a sled for hauling in wood. We could still go on with the cutting and clearing. In the thick bush the snow was not so deep, but Thomson told me that we could expect from four to five feet before the winter was over. The trees were laden with snow, and as soon as one was struck with the axe it let down a shower, but it was light and powdery.

The mercury often fell to twenty below zero, but we did not mind it. We knew it would go much lower, but the house was warm and we had plenty of fuel.

The evenings were very long, but we read or played checkers, chess or cards. Thomson often came over, and sometimes brought a friend with him. Occasionally Mr. Williams and his wife or Mr. Jennings and his wife would come over for an evening. We had determined not to get lonely, but Sundays were sure long days. We were two pioneers, and were there to conquer the wilderness. It could not be done in a day, but later would come good roads, more neighbors, church and schools. The two lots lying west of my locations were veteran claims, so the prospect of immediate neighbors on that side was very small. If a man located the lot beyond he would be a mile from his nearest neighbor. These claims work a great hardship to the settler. The two lying beside me were good land and with good timber, and if open for settlement would be quickly located. But there they lay, the owners knowing little

about them and caring less. In a new country, where each man is so dependent on his neighbor, it can be readily seen what a hardship it is to have these claims scattered everywhere.

Christmas was fast approaching, and it did not promise much in the way of amusement. Jennie's sister had written promising a turkey. Plum puddings, mince pies and doughnuts were mere details. We missed the excitement of Christmas shopping, the lights and the gaily decorated streets. The turkey duly arrived, and with it came a varied assortment of presents, books and magazines. Never before had such things been so much appreciated.

Thomson was spending Christmas with us. He brought a Miss Stewart, whose home was about five miles distant. We also had Mr. and Mrs. Williams. They were very quiet people, but Miss Stewart was very lively and created lots of fun.

Dinner was a great success. Our Christmas table had never before contained more good things, and never before were we so able to do them justice. Williams told us stories of his pioneer life. He had settled first in Muskoka, and had spent twelve years trying to make more than a living among the rocks. He had finally given it up and moved to Northern Ontario. One night while living alone in his little shack he heard some soft footfalls on the floor, as the door was ajar he thought it was the cat. As it refused to "skat" for him he picked up his heavy boot and threw it in the direction of the sound. Instantly he realized the full extent of the tragedy. It was a skunk. Grabbing his clothes he fled. The odor was so bad that, as an old German said, "You could hear it a mile." The house was not habitable for two weeks, and the "perfume" did not entirely disappear for months.

"When I go out into the woods alone," remarked Jennie, "I am always afraid of seeing bears or wolves or other wild animals."

"You have no cause to be afraid," replied Mr. Williams. "A bear is usually more afraid of you than you are of him, and if he can will glide away quietly without being observed. I have lived for sixteen years in the backwoods and have only seen five bears, of which I killed two. One I met at night on a dark trail, but he considerably gave me the right of way. I never knew of anyone being molested by a bear."

"But wolves!" observed Miss Stewart.

"Of course," he replied, "if a pack of wolves came upon your trail they might take it up, and if they were hungry enough might attack you. Many stories have been told of their ferocity, but I never knew of a man being killed by wolves. Once while working on a drive in the Parry Sound District a party of us heard the cry of a pack of wolves. It is without doubt the most terrifying sound I ever heard. Soon a deer came down to the river. It was literally steaming, having been hard pressed. It walked along the shore to a place where the river was free of logs and swam across. A moment later and

the wolves appeared. They ran so close together that a blanket would cover them. We all made a dash for the logs. The wolves did not see us till they reached the shore. Then down went their tails, and like whipped puppies they ran up the hill. There they sat down on their haunches and looked us over. We then recovered our courage and ran at them with pike poles. They immediately made off."

"Another time"—

"Go on, please," we begged.

"I was working in a lumber camp," continued Williams. "One night a young man named Reid and myself went out to the settlement to a dance. It was a walk of about six miles, and though very cold the road was good and the moon at the full. The boys of the settlement did not seem glad to see us, so we left early. About half-way back to the camp we heard the cry of a pack of wolves. A few minutes later and they sounded much nearer. 'They can't be after us,' I said. 'I do believe they are,' replied Reid. We started to run, and the next mile we covered in record time, but the wolves were now close behind. 'It's the trees for ours,' panted Reid. Two birches grew close to the road and we were soon safe in the branches, and not a moment too soon either. Just as we were in place the wolves came in sight. There were eleven in the pack, led by an old brute who stood nearly a head above the rest. The leader instantly made a mighty spring at me. He did not reach me by a considerable distance, but he came about four feet higher than I thought possible. The rest crowded in beneath him, and he fell back on top of them. A free fight started at once, but did not last long. The howling, yelping and screeching was dreadful. On looking over at Reid, I saw that I was not getting all the attention. 'Go it you beggars,' he shouted, as wolf after wolf sprang at him. It was intensely cold, and if the wolves did not leave us soon we were in danger of freezing. But they did not have any intention of leaving. I was kicking my feet and thrashing my arms against the tree to keep up the circulation. The wolves, thinking that I was coming down, crowded close. 'I wish I had a stick of dynamite and a fuse,' I called to my companion in distress. 'If I have to stay here,' he replied, 'I want a fire.' This gave me an idea. I had the camp's mail, and my pockets were full of newspapers. Tearing one open I applied a match, and when it began to blaze nicely I dropped it. The wolves gave back, some even ran out of sight down the road. 'Hurrah!' shouted Reid, 'give them some more.' 'Strip some of the bark from your tree and light it,' I called over. He lost no time in acting on my advice. Soon long pieces of blazing bark lay on the road. I followed with two more newspapers. This was enough for the wolves. With howls of fear they all disappeared the way they came. We climbed down, and in a short time were at the camp."

"They would certainly have attacked you had you not taken sanctuary in the trees," I remarked.

"No doubt," replied Williams, "but then that was a very hard year on wolves. There was little snow, and the crust was as hard as ice, so the deer could easily escape them. There was much open water in the river, too, and the deer used to take refuge there. One even came to the camp and stayed all day with us."

"Are there many wolves in this country," I inquired.

"No," he replied, "I have heard them a few times, and seen a few tracks, but I have not seen a wolf here."

"Now, Mr. Thomson," said Miss Stewart, teasingly, "it's your turn, tell us some of your pioneer experiences."

"Nothing very remarkable ever happened to me," he began, "but once, yes, I did have one remarkable adventure."

"Of which you were the hero?" asked Miss Stewart.

"Of which I was the hero," he replied, squaring his shoulders. "Late one evening last summer," he began, "as I was engaged in domestic duties about my humble home, I was startled by a strange wild cry coming from the woods to the south of me. It was full of fear and loneliness."

"Rubbish!" interrupted Miss Stewart.

"You heard it, too," said Thomson, in mock surprise.

"Go on," urged Jennie.

"I ran to the house," he continued, "seized my trusty rifle and fired a couple of shots. Instantly I heard a loud 'Hullo.' I hurried towards the cry, shouting as I went. A few minutes later I came to a young maiden, but very ragged and woe-begone she was, her clothes torn by brush and bramble. She was most pleased to see me, however, and fell into my waiting—"

"I did not," said Miss Stewart. Everyone laughed.

"So it was you?" asked Jennie.

"Indeed it was," and she continued, "I left home in the morning to look for the cow. The day was cloudy, and somehow I got completely lost. I wandered about all day. I was very hungry and tired and torn, and at the sound of those shots I nearly fainted. I knew that someone had heard me. Oh, I was glad all right. Tom took me to Jennings's place, and then went on to tell my people, but he met my father coming to rouse the settlement to look for me."

The day passed most pleasantly, and my wife remarked that night that if you have the Christmas spirit the place does not count. The winter dragged on. We had some heavy snowstorms and severe cold, but generally the weather was bright, with little or no wind, and we did not find it nearly as disagreeable as we had been led to expect. I still kept on with the chopping, as I was anxious to have my clearing as large as possible. I was now working along the creek where there was no underbrush, but the stumps were about four feet high.

I had also built a woodshed, and I prided myself very much on it. We dragged in sticks of flatted poplar and rolled them in place in the building. When the walls were completed we chinked them with moss. We then cut some cedar trees into

four foot blocks, these we split to the thickness of about an inch. We laid them like shingles on smooth poles for rafters and ribs. They made a very good roof. The door was the only part of the building made of lumber. I think that the wood house cost me in actual cash a little over a dollar. I intended to have it full of dry wood for the next winter. Green wood is a great annoyance, and no woman can make a success of cooking when her fire is not reliable. I always managed to get a quantity of dry tamarac to mix with the green wood. For some reason all of the tamarac in the country is dead. Most of it, however, is good and sound. It will not make pulpwood. White birch makes good firewood. It should be used commercially, as it is sound and clean. It is greatly in demand in England for making spools and bobbins. It is known as spool wood, and is imported in small squares.

The country is new, and, of course, has no industries. The settlers cut a few cords of pulpwood and pile it beside the track. It is sold with the bark on, and the buyer must pay freight on the bark. We get three dollars per cord here. Further south they get four dollars. A settler can make good wages at these prices if his haul is not too great. At the same time he is clearing his land, but he gives his pulpwood away. It is a slipshod business. It is not good for the settler, the middleman, the railway, nor the paper men. In the first place the settler gets a small price, but it is all the merchant can afford to pay, as the freight is just the difference between that price and the price paid by the paper men. The paper mills do not want rough wood. If the wood was rossed, or had the bark removed by machine, the paper mills would pay a much higher price for it. The railways would be hauling nothing but wood. The wood dries much lighter, commands a ready sale by contract, even for years ahead, and giving the settler a dollar a cord more for his wood. There are saw mills in different parts of the country, but no rossing mills, and this is not a lumber, but a pulpwood country. No doubt they will come in time, but just now the settler needs that other dollar.

Down on the Abitibi River at Iroquois Falls they have started a huge pulp and paper mill which will take, they say, about one hundred cords of pulpwood per day. Many of the settlers expect to sell their wood to this company, as there are many streams down which the wood could be driven to their mill at small cost. The company, however, have several hundred square miles under license, but on this they have to pay to the Government forty cents per cord on spruce, and twenty cents per cord on balsam they cut; while on the wood which they might buy from the settler there is no such charge. This should work out very much in favor of the settler, provided the company will be willing to pay a reasonable price. If so, our trouble in regard to the sale of our wood is at an end. However, we will know how it works out before another year.



Farm of S. Greenwood, two miles from New Liskeard, 1913.

One morning, early in March, while splitting some firewood, I made a false stroke and drove the axe deep into my foot. Although I felt no pain I knew that I had made a bad wound. Using the axe for a cane I hobbled into the house, leaving a red trail behind me. Jennie removed my moccasin and socks. The axe had split my foot back for over two inches. The great toe stood off by itself. Neither of us had any experience with wounds, and for a few moments did not know what to do. There was no doctor within reach, so I decided that the cut must be sewn up. We had only common needles and thread, but Jennie got the finest she had, and after dipping both in boiling water I put three stitches in the top of the wound and then it was up to Jennie to do the same with the under part. She managed it very well indeed, but started to cry when she had finished. We applied cloths soaked in antiseptic, and I resigned myself to a few weeks' idleness. The neighbors were very kind. Thomson came in nearly every day. He always filled the wood-box and the water cask. He went errands to the store, and searched the country for miles around for books and magazines. Reading matter was precious in those days. I often thought of the magazines I had thrown into the garbage can in Toronto. What a blessing they would be to the people here!

I had whittled out a pair of crutches and by their aid could hobble around the house, but it was fifteen days before I could put my foot on the floor. Early in April I was walking with a limp, but could not wear snowshoes. The sun was warm and the snow was soft during the middle of the day. Spring was on the way.

As soon as the ice went out I secured Thomson's help, and we threw all the pulpwood into the creek, after having placed booms across it near the railway. It took us three days' hard work to handle the seventy-five cords, some of the piles we just dumped into the water. It floated down nicely, and with pike poles we dislodged any stick that had caught on the sides.

We pulled the sticks out of the water with pike poles, but in piling them we got very wet, and I can assure you that the water was not warm. When I had loaded the wood there would be two hundred and sixty dollars coming to me, and in the meantime I could get goods at the store and have them charged against my account.

The snow had gone; the days were warm, but the nights were cool. I was impatient to get at my clearing. The ground dried rapidly. I had a large garden ready to plant, and my wife had laid out a lot of flower beds as well.

Even before coming to the country I had heard of the black flies, sand flies and mosquitoes, with vague hints of deer flies and moose flies of great size and ferocity. The people living in the country said little about them, but Thomson once told me that for a couple of months they would make my life a misery. We had screens ready for the windows and door and

a huge canopy to cover the bed at night in case any of the pests got into the house. We had fly oil in plenty and recipes for making more. One day I felt something behind my ear. I brushed it with my hand and saw blood on my fingers. The black flies were here. Neither Jennie nor I had ever been bitten before, so we suffered the full effects. Williams told me that they bothered him very little, but on us they raised great lumps which were both painful and irritating. They seemed to be particularly fond of my ears and my neck. They literally swarmed around us. The fly oil was some good, but it did not seem to stay on long enough. Then they would crawl into your clothes. You worked with one hand and fought flies with the other. At night we anointed our "bites" and crawled under the canopy to safety. There is only one thing to be said in favor of the black fly: he will not bite you in the house, nor at night. He leaves that to the mosquito, and of these I have nothing at all to say in their favor. They are utterly degraded. They come in the house on your clothes, you cannot keep them out, and they will bite you at all times and places. In doing our gardening we made fires, which we banked with rotten wood. This smoke was one thing they could not stand. No wonder, we could hardly stand it ourselves. Jennie went on a visit to Mrs. Williams, wearing a large veil over her hat and well tucked in around the neck. She found that in their clearing the flies and mosquitoes were very few. She was told that as the clearing became larger the little pests would be less troublesome. The first year was always the worst, and that after a few seasons the bites are not so bad, as you become somewhat inoculated with the poison. That by the latter part of July they would be gone. This cheered us up somewhat.

Thomson and Williams now came to help me burn my fallow. A light breeze was blowing, and along the windward side we travelled making fires as we went. Yellow tongues of flame shot up to the tree tops, while huge billows of black smoke went rolling over the forest. It did not seem possible that we could stop such a mighty conflagration, but I had been careful to leave an open space all around, and the brook was on the side towards which the fire was sweeping. Williams assured me that it would not run in the bush then as it was too wet.

In three hours the field was a blackened mass, with small fires burning here and there and dense clouds of smoke hovering over it. They told me that it was a good burn. "And how many flies and mosquitoes think you," I asked "also perished?"

"You'll be safe for a while," laughed Thomson; "in clearing up this fallow you will have fires going everywhere, and they will not trouble you in the smoke."

I had a hard struggle with that fallow. The want of a horse made the work very difficult. I had to roll all the logs into piles so that they would burn, and some of them were quite large and had to be moved some distance. As the piles burned down I rolled them together again in a new place so

as to burn off the moss till all the logs were consumed. Jennie used to laugh at me when I came in from work, I was as black as a sweep. When all the refuse and moss was burned off the field was not much to look at. Stumps and roots everywhere, but the bare soil was exposed, so that no plowing was required. I laid out nearly two acres for potatoes. These we "spotted" in with a hoe. I first scratched holes, then my wife dropped in the sets, after which I covered them. It was very hard work, but we finished it at last. The balance of the field I sowed with timothy and covered the seed by dragging a rough tree top over it. It was certainly a crude harrow, but it did the work all right. Now my planting was over for the season.

I had succeeded in knocking quite a hole in the forest, and though it was full of stumps and roots now, I knew that in a couple of years I could easily remove them. In the meantime crops would grow and I could gather them. Grubbing out green stumps is hard and unprofitable work, and there is no great advantage in doing it. On my fallow for the next year I could sow grain or hay. Of course it has to be cut with a scythe and gathered with a hand rake. These are primitive methods no doubt, but you know that it is only for a couple of years when the stumps will require very little effort to remove.

I owed to Williams about ten days' work, and he was anxious for me to return it. As his place was over three miles distant they invited Jennie to come over for a visit. We did not even lock the door when we left. It had no lock on it.

The first job we had was stumping a field. It had been chopped and burned three years before, seeded down and cropped. The stumps came out easily. There was not one in the field that gave the team any trouble. We rolled them into piles and burned them. The spruce, balsam, poplar and balm of Gilead do not seem to root deep as do the pine, hemlock, birch, elm and ash of Southern Ontario. It took us just three days to clean up five acres ready for the plow. To see an old farmer wandering along behind a plow you would think that it was just a matter of keeping awake and turning at the end of the field. Williams laid out the furrow, plowed around a couple of times, then asked me to come and take hold. It did not seem to be the same thing after I got it. It would run out entirely. I had to back up and start again. Then it would take a sudden charge to the right or left. The horses plodded steadily on, so I could not blame it to them. After I had gone around a few times Williams squinted his eye up the field and remarked that it looked like the coast line of Scotland. I kept at it, however, and in a few days' time I found that it was not so hard, and that I could run a fairly straight furrow. I stayed with Williams a week longer to help him finish his planting. Mornings and evenings we had a few flies and mosquitoes, but during the day they did not bother us at all. For the last few days Thomson was with us, too. We had discussions nearly every evening about the country and its needs. Williams



Farm of O. Prevost, Chamberlain, 1913.

maintained that the greatest mistake that the Government had made, apart from veteran grants, was in not giving to the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway a large area of land on each side of the track. I was opposed to railway grants, and in this case, as both the railway and the land belonged to the people, it would be like taking something out of one pocket and putting it into the other. Williams referred to what the railways had done in the West, the settlers they had brought in, their efficient agencies in the old country. And this land is far better for a settler, he maintained, than any of the West. He told us that after he had left Muskoka he had taken a trip out there, but the lack of forests, the dreary stretches of country, and the high winds, together with the amount of capital required for a start, had discouraged him. Then your only crop is grain, if it fails you fail. No, this was the ideal poor man's country. All it needed was proper advertising, and when people knew it as it was they would flock in. And there was room for them. Every new settler was a help to the others. Closely settled communities meant good schools and good roads, churches and telephones, lower taxes and better social conditions. Of course there were failures here as there was in every country, we had no place for a lazy man. Settlement was proceeding too slowly, and he placed the blame on the Government. Such efforts which were now made did not amount to much. What was needed was a well-organized campaign, and the railway would conduct it better than would the Government.

Thomson thought that the cause of the slow settlement of the country might be attributed to the ignorance of people regarding it. They were afraid of the cold and of the forests. Many people thought that we were only a few miles south of Hudson Bay, and that the cold in winter was almost unbearable. They do not know that we are further south than the town of Winnipeg, and that sheltered by the woods we do not have the fierce winds which sweep over the prairies of the West. We have plenty of fuel, and the air, though cold, is very dry. And the clearing of the land is not what our fathers had to contend with in old Ontario. Those huge pine stumps stand for centuries, and it requires dynamite to remove them. Here we have nothing like that, the trees are small and the roots do not go deep into the ground.

I could see that each might be right to some extent. There were many people in the country who were not satisfied, but in every case that I knew of it was not the fault of the country. Some were located on poor land. The country is not all good, but how any man with good eyesight would pick a poor lot when there was so much good land I could not understand. Some had not used good judgment with their work. Then the lack of roads was a great drawback. The Government had promised us a road this year, but so far nothing had been done. So many were required, for new settlers were coming into the country all the time, and most of them were ahead of the roads,

One man came in with a team of horses, a lot of farm machinery, and loads of household furniture. He could not get his stuff to his location. His horses ate their heads off the first winter, and he spent all his money in building a fine house in which to put his furniture. The man is now poor. Another man who came to the country with about one hundred dollars, but who knew how to manage, is now comfortable. In many cases of which I know, the man with little money had experience, while the man with money rarely had it, and it has been abundantly demonstrated to me that the knowledge of what to do and how to do it counts for far more than dollars and cents in making a start in this country, and I could understand Williams' statement that this was the ideal "poor man's country." In my case I had been fortunate in having the advice of others, who were practicable and experienced men, and we all worked together. Williams told me that in some communities there was no united effort, no changing of work, each man for himself and jealous of his neighbor. I am sure that this feeling would do more to retard the progress of a new settlement than anything else.

Jennie and I went home on Sunday, and we were much surprised at the growth of our garden, not only of the vegetables but of the weeds. We were in continual fear of frosts, but though on several occasions the mercury went down pretty low we escaped. The sun was always shining when we woke in the morning, and we retired in the twilight. Occasional showers gave us plenty of moisture, and, as Miss Stewart said, the vegetables must have growing pains, they stretched up so fast. I have known hay to grow an inch in twenty-four hours, but I think the weeds grew even faster than that.

Thomson and I decided that we would both need a stable before long, and that we might use some spare time now in hewing logs. I wanted a cow and one horse. Thomson wanted a horse, when heavy work required it we would have a team. This plan worked well, and was a very economical arrangement. For hauling wood, fencing, and in fact ordinary summer work I could do very well with one horse. I built my stable to hold three or four cows and a team of horses. The lower part was well built and chinked. The roof was of cedar, and with the loft full of hay it would be nice and warm. I then built a small addition to the side of the house for a spare bedroom and cut a door through connecting it. Jennie was very proud of her guest chamber, as she called it, and she certainly made it look very nice at small expense. Many a time on looking at my wife I was glad that I had decided to come north. No one would recognize in the robust and rosy-cheeked woman the frail invalid of a year ago. She was full of life and spirits, and loved to be out of doors. Her garden certainly did her credit, though she often expressed regret that she did not have more people to whom she could give flowers, lettuce and radishes.

Haying came on sooner than I expected; armed with a scythe I went to work under Thomson's direction. By noon I was very tired, but had not accomplished much. In time I learned this as all else, and could swing the scythe properly and not drive the point into the ground nor a stump. When the hay dried I built it into small stacks, and when the job was done Williams came with his team, and with Thomson's help we built it into a big stack, after filling the loft of the stable. Williams estimated that I had about thirteen tons, worth in the stack about two hundred and fifty dollars.

About a mile distant to the west of me lay a beaver meadow about thirty acres in extent. This was covered with what is known as beaver hay. Cattle will eat it quite readily. I cut and saved about eight tons, intending in the winter to cut a trail and haul it home on the snow. I got a quantity of good hay from this meadow each year, and it helped out the winter feeding very much.

The arrival of our cow, "Betsy" by name, seemed to mark an epoch in the history of our new home. Now we had all the milk and cream we wanted, and butter of our own making. The cow was accustomed to pick up most of her living from the bush, but at milking time she was always rewarded with some fresh vegetables or tops, and she was never late for the ceremony. Jennie made a great pet of her. I had to fence in the potatoes and the garden, and next year will have to fence everything.

I had realized on my pulpwood, and had some of my original capital left, little more than enough to pay for the cow and horse. Cash to a certain amount is needed even in a country like this, but every acre cleared and rendered productive, every new building and every new fence, every head of stock, is so much added to your capital.

It was now a year since I first arrived in the country, so one evening we sat down at the table to see what we had made in the year. We passed many jokes as to values, but finally arrived at the following:—

Nine acres of land cleared, not stumped, at	
\$20 per acre	\$180 00
House, stable, wood house and tools.....	475 00
Hay, potatoes and vegetables	400 00
One cow, named Betsy	55 00
Cash	240 00
	<hr/>
	\$1,350 00
Cash brought in	500 00
	<hr/>
Increase in one year	\$850 00

I thought the value of the land should be higher, as it would produce more than twenty dollars per acre per year. Then there

was the balance of the farm, with easily seven cords of pulpwood per acre, which if we had that dollar a cord would stand us at about one thousand dollars, and Jennie wanted to add a few hundred thousand for health she had gained, the matter of values did not appeal to her as much as the fact that we were well settled in our own home. "I love every log in it," she cried, "and we built it all ourselves, and everything is so quiet and peaceful here."

"Now that the flies and mosquitoes are gone." I interrupted.

"Yes," she replied, "and before it gets dark take the gun out and see if you can't get a rabbit for dinner to-morrow. I just long for a stew." So did I.

"Hallo! Thomson, you look particularly cheerful to-day." I remarked, as that worthy came into my clearing with a happy smile on his countenance.

"Heard the news?" was his laconic reply.

"Must be something good by your looks, let's have it."

He sat down on a stump and very deliberately lit his pipe before replying.

"It's come," he said at length. "There is a gang of road-makers at the railway. They have tools and tents, and are going to make this so-called road into a regular graded highway, good at all seasons of the year. Some of the five millions are coming our way at last. They are to begin work at the station, and do as much as they can this fall. They should get to my place at least. It is their intention to run along the concession past my lot, then a side road south to you. And lastly I have hired with them at a daily rate of remuneration, to wit, two dollars and three meals and lodging in a tent if I so desire. I suggested to the foreman that you might consider a similar proposition."

This was good news indeed. At present horses could haul only a light load on this road in dry weather, when it was wet they sank in some places to their knees. It had been originally intended for winter use only. If it was made into a good road it would mean more settlers at an early date.

"How about potatoes and vegetables," I inquired.

"Get in early and avoid the rush," he replied. "You are the only man around who has any to sell."

"Guess I'll take the job for a while," I decided. "That two dollars a day looks all right."

"You will start work to-morrow then," said Thomson. "Call for me on your way out."

I worked for eighteen days on the road, and collected thirty-six dollars in wages, and sixty-two dollars in all for potatoes and other vegetables, making ninety-eight dollars hard cash, which with our cow and garden, and some game occasionally, would keep us in provisions for over six months.

I would have worked longer on the road, but I wanted to get to work clearing more land as soon as possible. I had also my potatoes to dig, and it would be necessary to enlarge

the cellar to hold them. This proved to be a very difficult job, as I had to carry all the earth up a ladder, then out of the house. But those potatoes, I sure had some crop. I could not measure them at all accurately, but we estimated that with what I had sold, the two acres had produced about three hundred bags, and, owing to the stumps, they were not planted nearly as close as otherwise they would have been. And still the cellar was not large enough. I sold one hundred bags to Denning for one hundred dollars, and he was to draw them himself. Thomson helped me to dig, and I paid him with potatoes. Jennie remarked that she had never seen so many in all her life, and wondered what we could possibly do with them.

"Next spring," I told her, "they will be worth from one dollar and a half to two dollars a bag." I had paid the latter price for the seed, and by great luck had planted them on the sunny southern slope, so we missed the frost which caught several fields on low, flat land.

I was now ready to start on my new fallow. I intended to try to cut eight acres during the fall and winter. But first I must have a horse, and as Thomson had his work it would be necessary to hire a man to help me. I had the greatest difficulty in finding a team suitable, but at last Thomson got one which pleased us both, so he took one horse and I the other. Then it was necessary to have single harness as well as double. I also sold Thomson enough hay to keep his horse during the winter.

On our way home with the team we met a young man who informed us that his name was Jones, and that he had located the lot north of mine, and that he wanted to hire someone to help him build his shack. He was a sturdy, well-built fellow from old Ontario, and we soon found that he knew what he was about. So next day Thomson and I went to help him, telling him that he could pay us back in work later. He was quite particular about the house, and we learned that he was engaged to marry a girl down in Ontario as soon as he was ready for her to come north. The house was built much after the plan of mine, and we soon had it ready for the shingling. In the meantime he boarded with us. I then hired him to help me with my clearing, paying him a dollar and fifty cents per day and board. I found him to be an excellent workman.

I had made all arrangements to start chopping next day, when Thomson came over and asked for my help for a few days. He had hired another man, and was going to build a house. He smiled very sheepishly as he told me this.

"So it is coming off at last," I said. "Well, I must congratulate you, old chap," and I shook his hand.

"What are you two shaking hands about?" asked Jennie, suddenly appearing on the scene.

"You are to have a new neighbor," I told her, "Miss Stewart is moving up this way." Jennie shook both his hands. She was delighted, for the two were her best friends.

With four at work on the job Thomson's house soon went up. Directly it was furnished the great event came off. We were invited, and all went in the wagon with Mr. and Mrs. Williams. It was a real backwoods wedding, about twenty guests being present. The ceremony took place at eleven o'clock in the morning, as, owing to the condition of the roads, many could not go home after dark. We all stood under a large poplar tree in front of the Stewart home. Jennie said that it was the prettiest wedding she had ever seen. The tables were set outside in the shade of the trees, and Williams was called upon for a speech. For dry humor I do not think I ever met his equal; the minister in his turn said that the last speaker had certainly missed his calling. We drank the health of the happy couple in spring water. It would puzzle an outsider to know how such a dinner could be secured in the backwoods. There was no dancing, and most of the afternoon was spent in talk. It was not often so many neighbors got together.

A matter of great interest to all was news, heard by most for the first time, the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company would buy all the pulpwood put into any driveable stream flowing into the Black River; that they would pay three dollars per cord, that they would take it in the log, and not require it to be cut into four-foot lengths. It was also said that the Company would pay one dollar per cord advance to anyone who was in need of the money to carry on their work. To me it would mean about fifty cents per cord increase in price, to many others it would mean a dollar a cord, and to others it would mean the selling of wood that they would otherwise have to burn in their fallows. Consequently there was much enthusiasm, but to the man living four miles from a driveable stream it meant nothing, as the haul would be too great to give any profit on his work though he might make wages. It was a great thing for the settlement.

We all drove home late in the afternoon. Jennie and I walked from Williams' place, and saw the bride and groom safely home. There was no honeymoon, they began work at once. No one but a man who has lived like Thomson for nearly three years could properly appreciate the comforts of a real home presided over by a capable woman who was a first-class house-keeper.

After a lot of trouble I found the owner of the veteran lot lying west of mine. I could buy it for three hundred and fifty dollars. It seemed a lot of money, but I could drive the stream running through it, and I could easily make a dollar a cord profit on the pulpwood. The lot was worth to me at least fifteen hundred dollars, to say nothing of the value of the land. I had contracted with the agent of the pulp company to place one hundred cords of wood in the creek. He agreed to take it there when he heard that I had driven out my wood last year. I secured an advance from him, and with this I was able to buy the veteran lot.



Farm of H. Hackford, Chamberlain, 1913.

After many delays Jones and I at last started work on the new clearing. The horse was a great help. I wondered how we had managed without him. We piled the wood in dumps along the creek. We took all the spruce and balsam for pulpwood, the birch and tamarac logs we pulled out of the fallow for firewood, but the poplar and other timber we left on the ground. Jones thought it a great shame to see good poplar logs twelve to sixteen inches in diameter burned. He said that it was the best cooperage stock he had ever seen, but at present I could not help it. There was no market for poplar. We also took out a lot of poles for fencing. Most of the eight acres we chopped was low, wet land, heavily covered with moss, but I had seen this land cleared, and when the moss burned off it soon dried. It had a gentle slope to the creek, which was about three feet lower than the banks, so I knew that the drainage would be all right, and so it proved to be.

We had hardly finished the work when we were called upon to help another new settler build his house. A man named Scott had located the lot immediately east of mine and south of Thomson. He had a wife and three children, the eldest a boy of twelve. As two families had just settled on the road farther east we were now quite a thriving community. We had made it a rule that every new arrival was to have all the assistance possible in getting located, so Thomson, Jones and myself went over to assist Scott. He built on the bank of the creek, and quite near to my house, so we had near neighbors at last. For some reason we seemed to have got together a very desirable lot of settlers. All around me were good men who were determined to succeed, and who were capable and experienced, and all we wanted now was the good road extended and the settlement would grow rapidly.

Jones could not succeed in hiring anyone to help him cut pulpwood on his lot, and Scott had no better success, so they decided to change work, week about on each place. I also went with them and took the horse, which counted for a half day. Then they were to help me later. I had over thirty cords of pulpwood yet to cut to make up the amount agreed upon, but this I intended to cut from the veteran lot close on the creek, and by cutting only pulpwood we could finish in a few days.

Scott was a great hunter, and one day suggested that we build a smoke house, kill a moose, and cure the meat. He told us that smoked moose meat was very good eating. None of us knew anything about curing meat, but we were anxious to learn. So the smoke house was built, but the moose did not want to come and be smoked. We had seen one on several occasions, but now as we wanted one none came around. At last we took a day off for a hunt, but failed to secure anything. However, two evenings later Scott shot a fine moose. We divided it among five families, most of three shares we cut up and hung in the smoke, after leaving it a couple of days in pickle. After curing, this meat kept well.

I had purchased a shot gun and always carried it with me, as partridge and rabbits were very plentiful. We were rarely without this game during the autumn and early winter. Of partridge we never seemed to tire, but we varied this diet with moose meat and bacon or pork. Fresh eggs were a great luxury.

On my way to Thomson's one morning along a trail he had cut through the bush ~~to~~ his house, I saw a bear coming down a ridge towards me. It had not noticed me, so slipping a couple of buckshot cartridges into the gun I waited till it was quite close, then fired. The charge struck it in the neck, killing it almost instantly. I was very much elated. I got Thomson, and together we carried home my prize. It had a most beautiful black coat, which I decided to cure for a rug, and it certainly made a beauty. The animal was very fat, and both Thomson and Scott assured me that the meat was good to eat. But the carcass after skinning so resembled a human being that Jennie objected to eating it. We removed a large quantity of the fat and gave the meat to the others. Next day being Sunday we had been invited over to Scott's for dinner. The steak was delicious, and Jennie remarked that he must have got a young moose. He replied that he had forgotten to tell us, but this was bear steak. I made up my mind that if fortune ever sent another bear to my gun that I would not give it all away.

Winter was here again, but we had little snow; so the work of clearing went on as usual. With the help of my two neighbors I soon finished cutting my hundred cords of pulpwood, and twenty cords more. I then quit for the year, as I had much other work to do. The woodhouse was not full of dry wood as I had intended, but now we cut a large quantity and piled it in. With Scott's help I made a rough sled, and rigged it so that Jennie and I could drive out during the winter. They were building a church at the railway, and were to have services every Sunday. It meant a drive of about five miles, and the winter roads were always good.

Thomson was offered a job of hauling pulpwood, which we agreed to accept, as it would give work for the team. It would last about a month. He would board at home, attend to the horses, and give me a dollar a day for my share.

The first autumn we were in the country I had frequently seen mink along the creek, but I had no traps nor time to attend to them, but this fall I had set out a few, and six fine mink was my reward. I sent them to Toronto to have them dressed and made into a stole for my wife. She was very proud of it when it arrived, but, oh, how she wished she had a muff to go with it, so I promised to do my best to supply the muff next year. Fur-bearing animals seemed to be fairly plentiful, beaver particularly so, but the law prohibits their capture or sale. I saw frequent traces of otter, and judging from the tracks, bear must be quite numerous, though they are rarely seen. Of the large animals moose are the most common, red deer quite scarce.

Rarely one is shot. With moose, deer, partridge and rabbits, no one need want for meat during the autumn and winter months, for you have a most pleasing variety of game. The so-called rabbits of this country are really hare. They are much larger than the English rabbit, and they do not burrow.

One thing we had missed very much during the last summer was ice. In hot weather it was difficult to keep milk, butter or meat. I now had a horse, and there was a small lake about a mile distant. Plenty of sawdust could be had at the sawmill, but it was quite a long haul. I built a small ice house, roofing it with tar paper, then I cut a rough road to the lake. When Thomson had finished his job we hauled enough sawdust for us both. The same sawdust does from year to year, and will last for a considerable time. The initial expense is small, and in five days we cut and hauled enough ice to do the two houses, and we have never been without it since.

Christmas was here again, and we were all looking forward to it, but I will go no further. We were now well settled. Our health was of the best. We had kind neighbors near us. We had a good comfortable home, and had no doubt at all as to our future success. We had a great and unbounded faith in the country, and though it is very hard for people to settle far from the roads, the Government is doing great work in pushing these forward. The quicker more roads are put in, just that much quicker will the country settle up. Looking into the matter a little I find that during the last two or three years about three thousand five hundred actual settlers have located in the country. They would take up something over half a million acres of land. A very large number of these settlers are from Southern Ontario, and this shows pretty clearly that the tide of immigration to the West has at last turned.

This is only the beginning. The country will soon become known, and the call of the North will reach not only the farm and village in the country, but the store and factory of the city, for it has abundantly proven to me, that a man from the city with health, courage and ambition can succeed in this country. He will have to endure hardships, fight flies and work hard, but his neighbors are always ready and willing to help him and to advise him as to what to do and how to do it. He has no boss to tell him that his services will not be required after this week; no landlord to threaten him with eviction if his rent is not paid by a certain date; his fuel costs him only the work of cutting it. There is an abundance of good water, and game is plentiful. If he settles within a certain area, he has a ready sale for his pulpwood at a good price; he has to cut it in the process of clearing, and if he is on a driveable stream within his area, all he has to do is to pile his wood on the bank to be measured, and dump it when required. Ten cords per acre is not a very high estimate for much of the land, and large areas far exceed this. Ten cords gives the settler thirty dollars per acre, as the

product of his first crop, and when you consider, that with his garden and some game, two hundred dollars a year will keep him and his wife in provisions, you will readily see the advantage the settler in Northern Ontario has over any other in less favored places.

PIONEER LIFE IN NEW ONTARIO

By JOHN N. LAKE

To a person from old Ontario the push and pluck of the settler in New Ontario is a tonic well worth inhaling or imbibing—that is, you can take it as hot air or you can imbibe it as a stimulant. Certainly, no careful observer can fail to notice that the greater part of the people are under forty-five or fifty years of age; few grey hairs are seen amongst them, but virile, energetic and optimistic characteristics are shown.

It has been my good fortune to visit several times a small portion of this interesting section of our Province during the past three years. My first visit was soon after the great fires of 1912, when I pushed through to Cochrane and found the town in ashes. The people were not like the disconsolate of old, "casting ashes on their heads" in their despair, but were planning how best to secure temporary comfort while rebuilding, which has now been accomplished to some good extent.

But my objective point being Uno Park (which I had passed on my way north), I soon returned to that station on the T. & N. O. Railway. Here I found three fine settlements—one at Uno Park, another at Milberta, five miles directly west, and the third at Hanbury, five miles east of Uno Park.

Success of the Pioneers

The new settlers had been in from ten to fifteen years and already in many cases had large clearings and good buildings equal to their requirements. I saw fields cleared of stumps, fenced with wire or timber; crops in good condition; in some cases fairly heavy stocks of cattle and horses; besides everything to make their families comfortable, and many stretches of good roads, with churches and good schools convenient.

Take an example: An old acquaintance of mine from Oxford county had located near Milberta eight years before with quite a family, including two stalwart sons. In that time they had cleared up ninety acres, fenced it with wire, built a frame house worth \$1,500 and a new bank barn, 40 x 88 feet, which he said was none too large for his crop. He had a good herd of cattle and several fine horses, and plenty of water and wood. Adjoining this farm I saw in bloom the finest field of timothy that I had ever seen in Ontario.

Social Life Not Neglected

This month I made another trip, my objective point being east of Uno Park to Hanbury neighborhood, which brought one near the boundary of Quebec Province. I found a section fully equal to the Milberta and Highland section, with a slightly different character of soil. The clay seemed closer to the surface. A tenderfoot like myself might think it was not so good as Milberta, but the residents said they had equally good crops as the other, and certainly the neighborhood looked prosperous. The country was well cleared in every direction, and you could see for miles. Three churches grace this district. The Presbyterians and the Anglicans each have a small church in which service is held once each Sunday, while the Methodists have just completed a fine church, 26 x 40, with a large porch, stone basement, with concrete floor and a fine furnace. The walls of the church are covered with tongue-and-groove sheeting inside and out, this being clapboarded over tar paper, painted outside and covered with beaver board on the inside. The walls are finished in an old rose colored stain; the ceiling covered the same way, finished in quarter-cut oak stain and well varnished. The church cost about \$2,000, including \$750 furnished from Toronto, and only \$200 of debt. I am told this is the finest and most comfortable church in New Ontario, outside of the large towns.

I had the pleasure and honor of preaching anniversary services in this church twice, and of presiding at a very successful entertainment on the Monday following. Supper was furnished in the basement from 6 to 8 p.m., and then followed solos, duets and readings, with short addresses from Rev. Mr. Farmer, Presbyterian minister, and Mr. Magladery, the new M.P.P. for that district. The talent was all from the neighborhood and surrounding country—none more than five miles distant.

Let me say that I have been at hundreds of entertainments in churches in the last sixty years of public life, and never saw a better or more complete entertainment arranged or carried out by local talent in any neighborhood or village in older Ontario.

Crop Prospects Are Good

The season has been very dry and crops are short, but a good heavy rain on the 4th and another on the 7th of July have put heart into the people again, and prospects are now encouraging. You ask: What about the winter? I am told it is about the same as in the northwest. I know the northwest of some years ago, and believe the temperature about the same, with this advantage for New Ontario—the timber sections break the force of the wind and it is not so uncomfortable. Further, I fancy a man with a family and only a few hundred dollars can make a start here easier than he can on the prairie. If he can handle an axe he can carve out a home and build his



Clearing—Geo. Males—near Uno Park. (See page 36.)



Geo. Males' home after the fire. (See page 36.)

house (one good enough for many years) at a cost about equal to that of a large single-board shack on the prairies. Water can be secured at from 15 to 25 feet, and in the winter work can be had in the lumber camps, or at clearing for his neighbors or himself, and there is no danger of getting lost in a blizzard or missing the trail.

What One Man Has Done

A picture is presented of a clearing three months old about five miles north of New Liskeard. George Males, an energetic Englishman, a bricklayer and mason, with a wife raised in Toronto, and five children, made the clearing in three months, starting in on May 15, 1899. The cut shows his patch of potatoes to the right, the shanty he erected, and about ten acres of clearing. All this was swept away by fire the following year, the family escaping with only the clothes on their backs, and his quarter section being nearly all burned over. This, however, was not all loss, as it enabled him to clear more easily the greater part of what he owned.

The second picture shows the house he immediately erected near the site of the shanty, and shows also the improvements made in the next few years. He has now a well-improved farm, with everything about him handy and comfortable, with more outbuildings than are shown in the picture, and he is arranging to build a frame house and a 100-foot barn, with concrete basement. School, church and market are convenient, as he is only four miles from New Liskeard, where he can buy all he needs or sell all his produce. He also has rural mail delivery and telephone, and will soon have Hydro-electric. In five years' time he will have as fine a farm, as well-appointed buildings and as complete a property as many farms in older Ontario can produce in fifty years.

Strike for New Ontario, where you have good land, good water, good neighbors, close to markets and railways, and are within twenty-four hours' ride of century-old civilization.

THE GREAT CLAY BELT

About twenty miles west of the Porcupine Camp, and beyond the mighty Mattagami River, there lies a very beautiful lake called by the Indians Kamiskotia. It is dotted with pretty, well-wooded islands. Its waters are clear as crystal. Its shores often high, but always wooded to the water's edge.

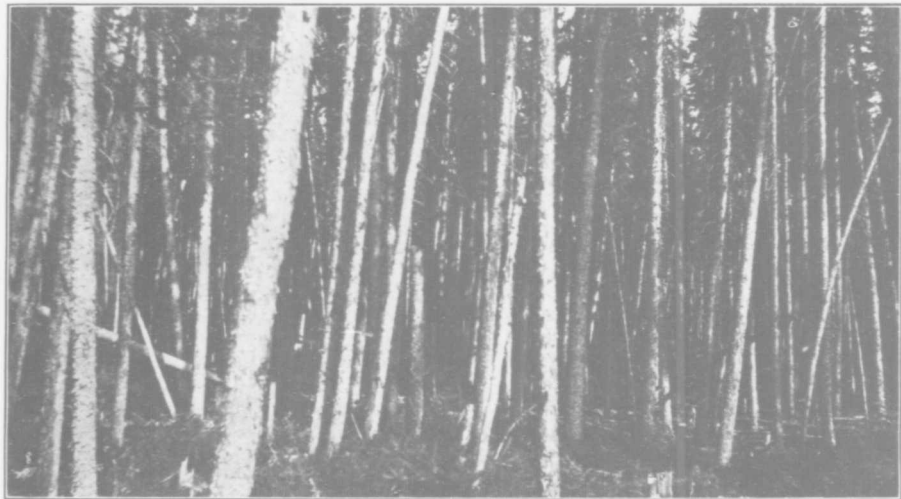
The country to the westward of this lake is very rough and hilly, one elevation rising to the height of about five hundred feet.

Some years ago I had the good fortune to stand on the top of this hill, on a very clear day, and as my eye took in the vast expanse of country to the northward and eastward I had for the first time some conception of the vast area of virgin land known as "The Great Clay Belt."

I could mark the valley of the Mattagami River for many miles. Its varied shades of green showed the mingling of spruce and balsam with poplar and birch. The depth of the valley did not seem to be great. Far away to the eastward I could see a sheet of silver. This was Nighthawk Lake, and beyond it again, on the eastern horizon appeared several hills which I took to be the hills in the south of Currie Township, some forty miles distant. The country between consisted of a great rolling plain, completely covered with forest. There was the even, dark green of the spruce lands; the lighter green of the ridges where poplar and white birch predominate, and the mixed green of the banks of the stream. Northerly and northeasterly, as far as the eye could reach, there lay before me a gently rolling plain, but with some large areas apparently perfectly level, like the prairies of the West. The similarity of these two countries was perfectly apparent. Both, I believe, were at one time the bed of a mighty inland sea. The soils are in many cases very much alike, but the forest growth of the Clay Belt and its thick covering of moss gives to much of the country a swampy appearance. But it is not really swamp, as an examination shows. It consists of a few inches of moss, then a considerable depth of muck or mould, which is really decayed vegetation, then an underlying alluvial clay, which extends to a great depth, and which constitutes splendid agricultural soil.

Interspersed with this level wet plain are low, wide ridges of drier land on which the decayed vegetation is not so deep, and in some cases has a mixture of fine sand, constituting a sandy loam.

There are other areas known as muskegs, which in some places are of considerable extent. These muskegs are very sparsely timbered, and are very wet. Under a deep and loose moss, in



Pulpwood—Small bent tree at extreme right is 4 inches in diameter.

which one sinks to the knees, there is a black muck. In a true muskeg this muck is from five to twenty feet in depth, and full of water. It is generally supposed that a muskeg at one time was a shallow lake which has gradually become filled with decayed vegetation. If drained this muck soon dries, and is capable of producing most wonderful crops.

Compared with the prairies of the West, it seems to me that the Clay Belt has many advantages. It has in all parts an abundance of good water. Fuel is plentiful. All that a settler has to do is to cut it in the process of clearing his land. The tamarac is all dead and dry. It makes excellent fuel. Shelter is another consideration. The fierce winds and blizzards of the prairies are unknown here. It has every advantage in marketing its produce. It has great mining camps in the vicinity. Large pulp and paper mills are locating in different parts, and the important towns of the country, as well as the seaboard, are close at hand. It has some of the best water powers in the whole Dominion, and its almost inexhaustible supplies of pulpwood and cooperage stock, spool wood and good lumber warrants the establishment of many mills and factories which, besides employing much labor, will create a valuable home market for the produce of the soil.

The town of Cochrane is on the same parallel of latitude as the south of Manitoba, and the only difference in climate is caused by the different surface conditions. The dense forests of the Clay Belt hold the frost longer in the spring, but when these are cleared the season will doubtless be earlier, and the summer frosts which are occasionally experienced will also disappear, as they did in the southern parts of Ontario.

And I might also mention in passing that game and fish are plentiful. Moose are found everywhere, and it is certainly a great help to the settler to be able to lay in a stock of meat in the autumn which will last him all winter. Pike, pickerel and whitefish are most abundant. Speckled trout are also found in some parts, notably in the Mattagami and its tributaries.

Now what is against all this? Why is it that every day a trainload of settlers is not speeding north to find homes in so favored a land? Why is it that the overflow of Great Britain, United States and Europe are not pouring northward in the fear that all good locations may now be taken? It is this, and this only—the fear of the forest. The dread of the great labor of carving out a home from wooded land, the felling of trees, the burning of brush, the grubbing of stumps, and the long wait for returns from their labor. In Canada and the United States they have the memory of the past. They know with what labor their ancestors hewed out homes from the virgin forest. They still see huge stumps which, after so many years, require great effort to remove. For this reason do the treeless prairies of the West appeal to the farmer and the farmer's son. There he puts in his plow and the next year he may reap his harvest.

But I want to tell the farmer, and the mechanic, and the laborer, and all who may have longings for the free, untrammelled and independent life of the new land, this forest is not like that which clothed southern Ontario and the United States. Here it consists of spruce up to twenty inches in diameter, but averaging less than eight, balsam up to sixteen inches but averaging six, poplar and balm of gilead up to two feet in diameter but averaging thirteen inches. Tamarac runs about ten inches on the average, and white birch about seven inches. Where there is a good growth of Jack pine the land is not suited to agriculture. So it can be readily seen that the tree growth is generally small. There are none of the huge white pine, maple, oak, elm, ash, beech and hemlock of the southern areas, which, while valuable as timber, gave the settler so much work to remove, and at a time, too, when the timber brought him little or nothing in return for his labor in marketing it.

The Government holds back from the settler the white pine, but it does not withhold the spruce, and to the settler it is a most valuable asset. The Abitibi Power and Paper Co. have established a large pulp and paper mill at Iroquois Falls on the Abitibi River, and they are buying from all the settlers in a wide area. They were paying the sum of three dollars per cord for spruce and balsam in sixteen foot lengths put into floatable streams draining into the Abitibi above their mill. Now how does this work out for the settler? His land carries from five to thirty cords of pulpwood per acre. Let us say ten cords. This gives him a return of thirty dollars per acre towards his clearing expenses. After his field has been burned and cleared up most of the stumps are easily removed. In a couple of years there are none which a team of horses would not easily pull out, as the roots do not extend to any depth. Then you have a good clear field—no stumps, no stones, and soil equal to any in the country.

What obtains in the country above described will soon apply to the Mattagami River valley as well, as a large pulp and paper company have secured a lease from the Government and expect to be in operation before long. These companies will not only buy wood from the settler, but be large employers of labor, creating good local markets for all farm produce.

These are the conditions which exist at the present time, but what will they be a few years hence? The demand for pulpwood must be greater. The pulpwood forests of the United States are dwindling rapidly, yet the consumption of wood continues to grow, and with no prospect of any satisfactory substitute. The price will naturally increase. Small saw mills and cooperage factories will dot the country. A good local market will exist, and under such ideal conditions will naturally be in a very prosperous condition.

I know of one area to which the first settler came less than two years ago. It is ten miles by road from the railway. To-day



School House, 10 miles west of Matheson. (See page 42.)

it has a population of about two hundred. It has a fine little school, and there are fifty-five children in the settlement. The people took out pulpwood and worked on the Government roads. They are all well-to-do and contented, they are very enthusiastic about the country, and though they complain bitterly about the lack of roads they are not wasting any time, but their clearings are growing rapidly. They all came in practically penniless, but many of them have comfortable houses, and all pay as they go. Can you show me anything in the West where a settlement of this size has done so well in the same length of time and with no capital? It would not be possible there, for the settler must get returns from the soil, and he must have something to live upon and a good start to make a success there.

I cannot understand the apathy which exists in the rest of Canada regarding this country. Of course little is known about it, but there seems to be no great desire to investigate, notwithstanding the fact that the settlement of this country would mean the linking up of the East with the West.

The day will assuredly come when settlers will rush into this country. Not only farmers, but mechanics, clerks and business men and the overflow of our cities will here find a home. During the last two years over half a million acres have been located for actual settlement purposes, and it is a safe prophecy that over one million acres will be located in the two years to come.
