

# The Land Called Bruce

(By George Morehead in the London Free Press)

When we travel north through the County of Huron, (we eventually reach the border line of the County of Bruce, which is a long-drawn out tract of land bearing some resemblance to a large animal with a huge body, a slender neck and a long head with a nose projecting out into the deep waters of Lake Huron. It was never intended to be a dry country, as there is water, water everywhere, in which vast stores of fish and health abound.

A considerable portion of Western Ontario was surveyed and formed into counties during the years that James Bruce, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, was governor-general of Canada; and his name was given to this new county in the year 1850, and also upon the towns of Port Elgin and Kincardine. The Government was then selling farm lands to actual settlers at a price of ten shillings an acre. As we proceed, we will find that the Scottish people were very generous in the gift of their favorite names to the new townships in the county of Bruce.

The Township of Amabel, in which the town of Wiarton is located, was surveyed during the time that Sir Edmund Head was governor-general of Canada, and as a compliment to him, this township was named after his wife, Lady Isabel. One of the earliest settlers was an Irishman named James Allen, who was the founder of the village of Allentord, in the southern part of the township.

There is another township, farther north, where the peninsula is, at one point, only five miles wide, which contains much rocky and waste land, but it is connected with the family of Sir Edmund Head, by reason of the fact that it was named Eastnor, after Viscount Eastnor, who was closely related to Sir Edmund's wife. The honors were thus distributed amongst the various relatives of the governor-general. Farther north, at extreme end of the peninsula, there are two townships in which rocks are plentiful and fertile soil is scarce. It is said that a close observer may discover a rattlesnake hiding amongst the rocks. These townships were formed in the year 1855, when Viscount Bury—of Bury St. Edmunds—came from England to act as superintendent of Indian affairs in Canada. He remained here several years and married a daughter of Sir Allan MacNab of Hamilton, Ont. The Township of St. Edmunds was so named after the town of Bury St. Edmunds in England from which the viscount derived his title. The adjoining

Township of Lindsay was so named by the viscount in honor of the Lindsay family, who were relatives of his mother.

We will start with the Township of Greenock, which was called after the town of Greenock, the seaport at the mouth of the River Clyde, where we used to embark when travelling from Glasgow to New York, as the steamer could navigate the Clyde only at high tide. Another township is called Elderslie, and was so named after Sir William Wallace, Knight of Elderslie, a Scottish hero of the 14th century who defeated the English army at the Battle of Stirling, but later he was defeated at Falkirk and captured near Glasgow by the English soldiers who carried him to London and beheaded him at Smithfield in the year 1305.

"Yet bleeding and bound, though  
the Wallace wight  
For his long-loved country die,  
The bugle ne'er sung to a braver knight  
Than William of Elderslie."

The Township of Arran was, of course, named after the Island of Arran, which rises 2,000 feet above the waters of the Firth of Clyde. But our new township is not wholly Scotch, since we find the principal village bears the famous Irish name of Tara. Thus we have good reason to fear that the music of the harp in the hall of this modern Tara may be supplanted by the skirling of the bagpipes.

Among the many titles bestowed upon our former governor-general, Lord Elgin, was that of Baron Bruce of Kinloss, and it would seem that the scarcity of good names forced the Government officials, who laid out new townships, to seize Lord Elgin's many titles and plant them in the unbroken forests of Western Ontario. And Culross is another spot in Scotland connected with the Earl of Elgin. It is described as "the ancient and decayed burgh of Culross" on the north shore of the Firth of Forth.

"They are a' Scotch thegither  
who dwell in Culross,  
And they often foregather with  
these of Kinloss."

We have not yet dealt with all the Scottish names, for the Township of Kincardine, as well as the town of that name, take their names from Kincardineshire, a county on the east coast of Scotland.

There are two townships which bear the names of Huron and of Bruce. We need not ask the origin of those names. But there is a township called Saugeen; also a river of the same name. It is said that the word "Saugeen" is a cor-

rupted form of an Indian word meaning the mouth of a river.

The county seat is the town of Walkerton, which was so called after an early settler named Joseph Walker, who took up land at that particular spot in the year 1850, built a dam across the Saugeen River, erected a saw-mill and, later, a grist-mill. In truth, he was the first citizen in point of time as well as in the activities of the new municipality. He was the first hotel-keeper, and also the first mayor of the town when it was incorporated in the year 1871. Although the county was settled principally by people from the Highlands of Scotland, we learn that Joseph Walker, the founder of the town, was a native of Tyrone, Ireland. We have reason to be proud of the citizens we have received from that same County of Tyrone.