

Great Mineral Wealth in the Area Along Hudson Bay Shore

Transportation Will Open Up District of Wonderful Potential Wealth. Suggests Report of Representative of Department of the Interior, Ottawa, After Visit Last Summer.

People in Cochrane and others interested particularly in the extension of the T. & N. O. north have been enthusiastic regarding the mineral wealth in the James Bay and Hudson Bay areas. Some others have been inclined to discount the claims made, but a report made by L. T. Burwash, M.E., F.R.G.S., for the Department of the Interior at Ottawa seems to fully support the most enthusiastic claims made for the territory along the James and Hudson Bays.

Mr. Burwash made a trip to the far north last summer, his chief purpose being to report on the living conditions of the Eskimos, and to see as to the desirability and practicability of introducing domestic reindeer in the north as an assistance to bettering the conditions of the Eskimos. His instructions also included investigation of mineral deposits and of bird life in the north.

The outbound trip by Mr. Burwash was made by way of the Canadian National and the T. & N. O. to Island

Falls, 43 miles northerly from Cochrane; thence 30 miles along the uncompleted grade of the T. & N. O. and seven miles by portage road to the foot of the canyon on the Abitibi river. Leaving Abitibi canyon by canoe on July 12th, the party arrived at Moose Factory on July 14th. A synopsis of the report says that from the canyon there was smooth water to Otter rapids, then a two mile portage. Sexton rapids was run, but a short portage was made at Coral rapids. No portage was made below Coral rapids. The Blacksmith and several other rapids beyond were run. Mr. Burwash estimates the possibilities of Otter rapids at 100,000 horse-power. At Blacksmith rapids several outcroppings of coal was seen. It was expected that the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario track would have reached the foot of Coral rapids last fall.

In regard to navigation on the Abitibi the report says:—"In its present condition it will never be used as a

waterway for the transport of freight, as it includes many rapids and is at points hardly deep enough to carry a lightly loaded canoe."

For the return trip Moose Factory was left on September 19. The route taken was up the Moose and Mattagami rivers to Smoky falls. The Mattagami is the middle fork of the Moose. The Missinabi is the west fork and was the old canoe route from Michipicoten on Lake Superior to James Bay. From Moose to Smoky Falls took four days of strenuous upstream work with canoes; distance about 110 miles. The report says: "While there are no portages on the Mattagami below Smoky falls, in low water the river is shallow and swift and is no improvement on the Abitibi as a freight route."

Other matters were noted by the report. A twenty million dollar power development is being installed at Smoky falls to serve a pulp mill at Kapuskasing 52 miles south on the C.N.R. A private railway connects Smoky falls with the National at Kapuskasing. There is a portage of eight miles from the river below the falls to the end of steel.

Operations were in progress on a china clay deposit at the lower end of Smoky falls portage. On the way up the river from Moose, calcite and coal deposits were noted. Some claims had been staked and there had been prospecting to a limited extent.

The exploration included visits to Rupert House, Charlton island, South Twin island, Port Herroldier, Fort

George at the mouth of Big river, Paul bay and Cape Jones harbour, all on the east shore of James bay, and Huskie harbour, Long Island sound, Otsko Harbour, Great Whale river, Little Whale river and Richmond gulf on the east shore of Hudson bay. All the main land points mentioned are in the province of Quebec. The island points are in the Northwest Territories.

Richmond gulf was the most northerly point reached by the expedition. The Belcher islands were visited from Great Whale river on the return trip; then Long Island sound, Huskie harbour, Fort George and Charlton island. Moose was reached on September 17.

From Moose to Rupert along the south shore of James bay the outbound trip was made by canoe. The direct distance is about 100 miles but to follow the coast line lengthens the trip considerably. Moose was left on the 18th, and Rupert was reached on the 21st. There was considerable delay from weather conditions. Rupert was left at 11 a.m. on the 23rd, and Charlton island was reached at 8 p.m. of the same day.

After detailing the trip made on the Hudson bay schooner Maude to Charlton island, Richmond gulf, etc., the report proceeds to say that the small Hudson bay schooner Fort George manned by Eskimos took Mr. Burwash from Great Whale river to Belcher islands. The Fort George had been built at Moose. The voyage began on September 1. In eight hours' sailing a small sheltering is-

land twelve miles east of the main group was reached.

Reference is made in the report to agriculture in the far north, especially at Rupert House. The report indicates that Rupert House is the most important Hudson bay post on the Quebec side of the bay. It is at the mouth of Rupert river, which flows out of Lake Mistannini, two hundred miles to the eastward. It was first established in 1668 by the forerunners of the Hudson bay company. Revisions also have a post there. At one time a farm was operated by the Hudson bay company. Potatoes are now grown successfully and the farm may be re-established. The officer in charge has established a canoe factory. Canoes 16 to 20 feet in length are built of cedar and covered with canvas. The inland winter transport operated from Rupert uses two tractors, the freight being hauled on heavy flat sleighs. The report contains a photograph of a tractor driven by a gasoline engine and rolling on three steel gasoline barrels, the construction of Mr. Watts, the Hudson bay officer in charge. This homemade machine precedes the tractors.

Fort Charlton on Charlton island has the most southerly harbor in James bay. It is large enough to accommodate ocean-going vessels. It is a distributing post for the Hudson bay company, but the post is closed in winter.

Fort George, 180 miles north from Rupert, is at the mouth of Big river a stream larger and longer than Ru-

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port river. Port Herroldier is a small harbor in a group of islands seven miles off, where vessels can lie safely while awaiting the tide to taken them over the bar at the mouth of Big river to Fort George. At low water the depth on the bar is only six feet. The Hudson bay and Revillions both have trading posts and there are Anglican and Roman Catholic missions. The population is chiefly Indian, but Eskimos who live in the vicinity of Cape Jones, the point which marks the entrance from James bay into Hudson bay, come to Fort George to trade. This post is well within the timber zone and vegetable gardens appear to produce a fair return. Much of the land close to the settlement is covered by heavy spruce timber and would require draining before a success could be made of gardening.

The party stopped at Huskie harbour, north of Cape Jones, fresh fish the report saying, always being available there.

As the Churchill, the boat on which the party travelled in this part of the journey, was about to leave Richmond gulf, a prospecting party comprising Capt. Lucy, Mr. Brookbank, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Rubie, visited the schooner. They had spent the summer prospecting between Richmond gulf and Little Whale river. They had met with much encouragement and had located a block of claims. Mr. Brookbank had spent the previous summer on the same ground. He had located claims which he had turned over to the Consolidated Smelters, which had sent in a party in 1927 to make an examination of the area.

This prospecting party reported that that district had great possibilities. In this respect, Mr. Burwash in his report says:—"That large deposits of galena exist in this area has been known for many years. Years ago galena was quarried and used as ballast for the Hudson bay company's ships, but at the then price of lead, it had very little value." The area shows "two varieties of galena one a dull black galena with lead values only, the other a bright metallic galena, which has in addition to lead values shown as high as \$35 in gold and 150 oz. of silver. These deposits lie close to the coast. It appears to be certain that the galena in this area will run approximately 54 per cent. lead, to which must be added silver and gold values which on the surface appear to vary considerably. Taking the lead content only, the galenas are to-day worth approximately \$65 per ton, which is, when the location is considered, enough to justify a considerable expenditure on general reconnaissance and development work."

Mr. Burwash spent several days at the mouth of Great Whale river, where there is an important Hudson bay post, which has an outpost on the Belcher islands. In the adjacent country the hills are low with many wide plateaus of glacial clays. The timber is scattered. Grass and reindeer moss cover about twenty per cent. of the total area. The small streams are stocked with brook trout and a similar fish weighing as much as three pounds is caught in the salt water along the coast. Great Whale river itself was at one time considered good fishing ground. It has fallen off badly for summer fishing but is reported to be still good in spring and fall. White whales are still numerous near the mouth of Great Whale river. Fifty years ago the Hudson bay company's post was conducted solely as a whaling station.

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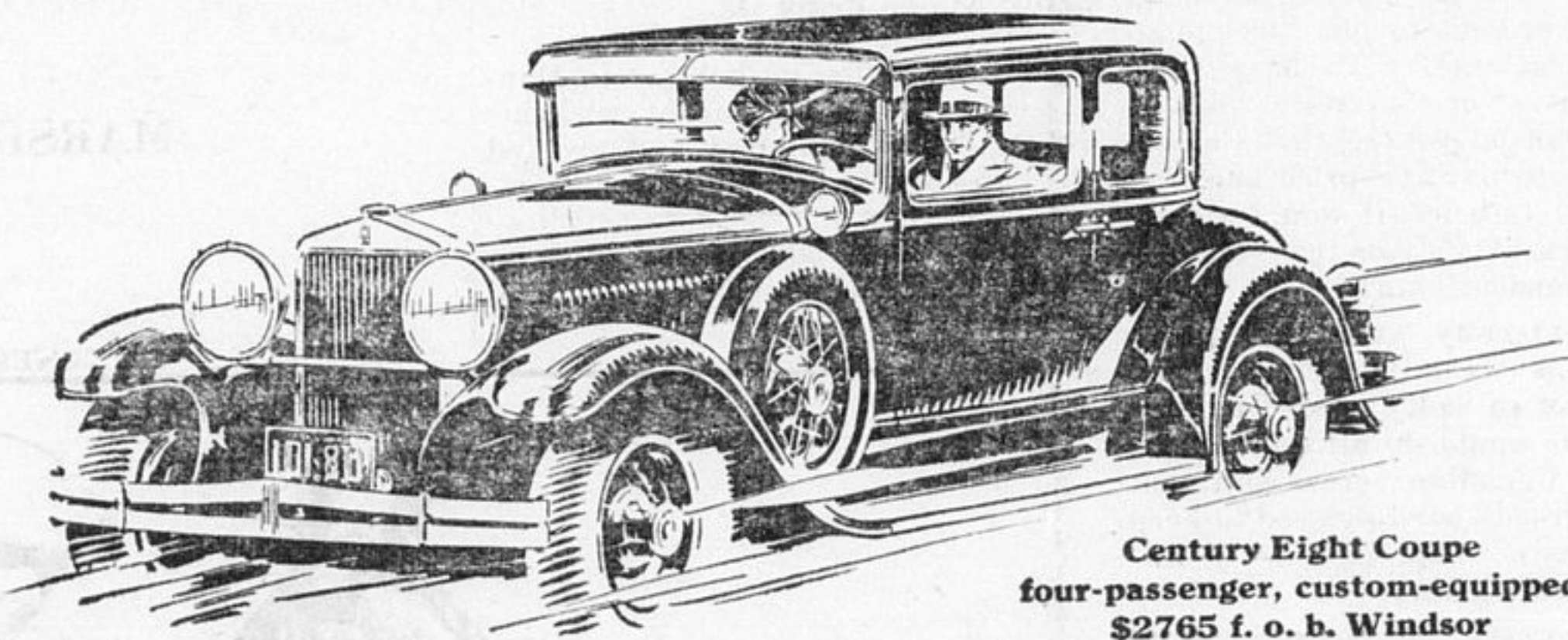
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