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Fine Address Over Radio on Ontario's Mineral Industry

Professor of Geology in the University of Western Ontario Tells Radio Fans About Mining in This Province from its Struggling Days to the Present.

Recently radio listeners in had the privilege of hearing a most interesting and informative address on the expansion of Ontario's mineral industry. The address brought out some very interesting and little considered facts. For instance, emphasis was given to the fact that mining is now Ontario's second most important industry. The address was given by J. R. Russell, Professor of Geology at the University of Western Ontario, and was delivered over Radio Station CJGC, London, Ontario. The address in part was as follows:—

"Ladies and gentlemen of the radio audience, and young men, and young men especially to you belongs the greater heritage in the mineral wealth of Ontario, and to you should my words be the more significant. The older members of the passing generation were born under evil stars. In their days, it was believed, somewhat generally, that Ontario had no mineral treasures to speak of; at least what mineral she had was so overshadowed by the agricultural possibilities and by the lumbering resources, that in comparison, the minerals were of little account in the wealth of the province as a whole. Even the geologists at the end of the last century, were about as skeptical as the banking fraternity.

"The change from this mental attitude, has come about so quickly that it has caused amazement and apprehension, and it has found us inadequately prepared to take full advantage of the industry for the benefit of the Province. Neither in the high schools, nor in the universities has there been given adequate instruction to prepare us to grapple with the problems of mine exploitation and development. We have been at the mercy of the wild-catter and the dishonest promoter.

"For some time now, the Minister of Mines for Ontario, the Hon. Chas. McCrea, has been calling attention to the fact that our mining industry has advanced to second place among the industries of the province. Such a statement 25 years ago would have been received with incredulity, or if made as a prophecy, would have been ridiculed. Up to the present the mineral production of the province has amounted to one billion, four hundred million dollars. Last year's production was 90 million dollars, of which gold accounted for 34 millions.

"As a contributor to national wealth, the cumulative nature of the metals makes this annual production when compared with that of agriculture, all the more significant. The gold mines this year will still be serving the needs of the human race hundreds of years hence, while the wheat, the hogs, and the tobacco forming the agricultural production will have ceased in a year or so. The wheat will have been eaten, the hogs slaughtered and the tobacco turned into blue smoke. So when the cumulative character of the metals is also taken into consideration, mining is making a greater contribution to the nation's wealth than appears from mere 'Annual production returns.'

"The slow development of the mining industries in Ontario, as compared with the other industries, is due to a number of causes. The early settlements followed the waterways and the Great Lakes. It so happens that along the waterways and along the Great Lakes, the rocks are barren of mineral. Lake Superior is the one exception. Here on a small islet, not larger than a city lot, outcropped a silver vein, the production of which made a real sensation, and while it has since been eclipsed by quite a number of the silver veins at Cobalt, it was the first real eye-opener and mouth-shutter, and an index of what may be expected when the great interior of the Canadian Shield shall be opened up with roads and railways. Save for a narrow belt from Georgian Bay towards Ottawa, the rocks directly north of the settlements in older Ontario, are granitic, and therefore unfavourable for the finding of the common metals. Even in the belt of the metamorphosed Grenville sediments, no whirlwind mines have been developed yet, and a suspicion lurked in many minds that the granite rocks extended indefinitely northwards. This suspicion was not dispelled by the earlier geological explorations.

"A still greater handicap to the prospecting of the Hinterland was brought about when the Government of Ontario decided to set apart the northern part of the province as a lumber reserve to be harvested for the benefit of the Provincial Treasury. This may have been a wise move as regards to the lumbering industry and the provincial finances, but it also prevented the mining industry from becoming established as soon as it otherwise would have been. It is not surprising then that the more notable mineral finds have resulted from railway construction. The great expansion of mineral production dates from

the building of the C.P.R. Since 1890, incredible though it may seem, this expansion has been nearly a thousand fold. While building the C.P.R. north of Georgian Bay, a cliff green with copper carbonate was disclosed. This was taken up as a copper mine, and Copper Cliff and Sudbury assumed positions of importance on the map.

"The early attempts at smelting the Copper Cliff ores were puzzling. There was something in the ores that was playing up the old Nick with the slags: In Sweden, in a more superstitious age, similar troubles in the furnace were attributed to evil spirits, to the old Nick. The real cause, however, of the furnace trouble was a metal, which has received the significant name "Nickel." This nickel content of the Sudbury ores has proven of more value than the copper. The establishing of the nickel-mining and smelting on a large and profitable basis, was slow, due partly to the apathy of the people in Ontario, and not until large capital was obtained from New York and from England did the nickel industry become firmly established. Since beginning operations, 20,000,000 tons of ore have been smelted and reserves created sufficient to last another 150 years at present rate of production, according to estimates of reliable Sudbury engineers.

"The building of the T. & N. O. Railway made another mining sensation, this time almost a scandal, for when veins of plate silver and slabs of leaf silver, too large for one man to lift, are mined almost from the grass roots, it seems a scandal that Ontario should ever have been neglected and maligned as a mining province. Such has been the richness of the Cobalt silver deposits that in less than 25 years, over 350 million ounces of silver have been produced, and a record made for high dividends compared with operating costs. The end of Cobalt is not yet reached; able engineers well acquainted with the camp expect further valuable veins to be found.

"The Cobalt camp and the extension of the T. & N. O. to Cochrane are responsible for the gold discoveries in the Temiskaming. The Porcupine gold camp may rightly be considered a child of Cobalt. In this case the child is a very husky youngster, and still growing vigorously. There is also a younger brother, which may prove to be a prodigy, for the ores at Kirkland Lake exceed those at Porcupine in their richness. At both camps it seems pretty well established that the gold will extend to full mining depths. A depth of 4,000 feet at the McIntyre has been reached; at Kirkland Lake Gold almost 3,000 feet.

"The marked increase in the richness of the veins of the Kirkland camp, together with increased tonnage from the Teek-Hughes mine, will make the production from the younger brother more nearly a rival to that of the older. Besides these two established sons of the old Cobalt camp, there are quite a bevy of little boys—Boston Creek, Painkiller Lake, Woman Lake, and Red Lake. These are all alive but of uncertain dispositions.

"The most outstanding new quest of the past two or three years, is the search for the base metals. Prosperity to the Province as a whole will respond to successful mining of these, more than of the precious metals, because of the greater number of employees required and the greater amount of supplies needed. Also the base metal mines have usually a longer life. The Rio Tinto Copper Mines of Spain have been working intermittently for over 2,000 years, and the Michigan Copper Mines began in 1846 and are still going strong. The steady production of the Kingdom Lead Mines at Galetta shows that Ontario will not prove the exception. The lack of smelting facilities in the North has kept prospecting for the base metals inactive. Promising veins of copper, zinc and lead have been known in a way for years, but no serious attempts to open them up was

made till copper finds in Quebec made the Noranda smelter a fact. It was Quebec then that set Ontario agog, and now that the Minister of Mines is promising a Custom Smelter for the Sudbury section, the search for copper and zinc is on.

"A wave of enthusiasm has struck the prospector, and a flock of Mining Companies are scrambling for likely location in the Sudbury-Soo area. That part of Ontario, where the Huronian formation has been cut by intrusives of Keweenaw age, has been regarded by geologists as the most likely ground for copper. The work of the past two years, however, has shown that the Sudbury-Soo region has no exclusive mortgage on copper and the other base metals. There are good prospects for copper both east and west of Porcupine and as far south as the Little Clay Belt. There are many geologists, notwithstanding, who persist in the belief that the Huronian Rocks will prove the more valuable for copper at least, and many watchful eyes will be turned to the Huronian basins north of Lake Huron. In any case the march of progress and the expansion of the mineral industry shall continue, and in the prosperity of Northern Ontario will Older Ontario and all the cities thereof share."

PROSPECTOR IN PATRICIA STRICKEN BY SNOW GLARE

Little appreciation of the hardships attendant upon exploration work and prospecting in the Northern fields can be experienced by those who have never tried it, and in the comfort of the city on spring days it is difficult to visualize the hardy mining men facing the glare of sun on snow and ice, says the Toronto Mail and Empire. A few days ago J. D. Williamson, who has been at work on his claims near the Coniagas property at East Clearwater, had to be picked up by a Patricia Airways plane and rushed to Sioux Lookout, the prospector having been rendered helpless by snow blindness. For a day or two the brilliant April sun on the white glare of ice and snow caused discomfort, but seemingly not more than usual. Then, suddenly, the blindness came on and the prospector was rendered practically helpless. To be blind in the still fastnesses of the north woods is an experience that few will want to undergo. Mr. Williamson has been taken to his home in Regina, and is reported as making a satisfactory recovery from his unfortunate mishap.

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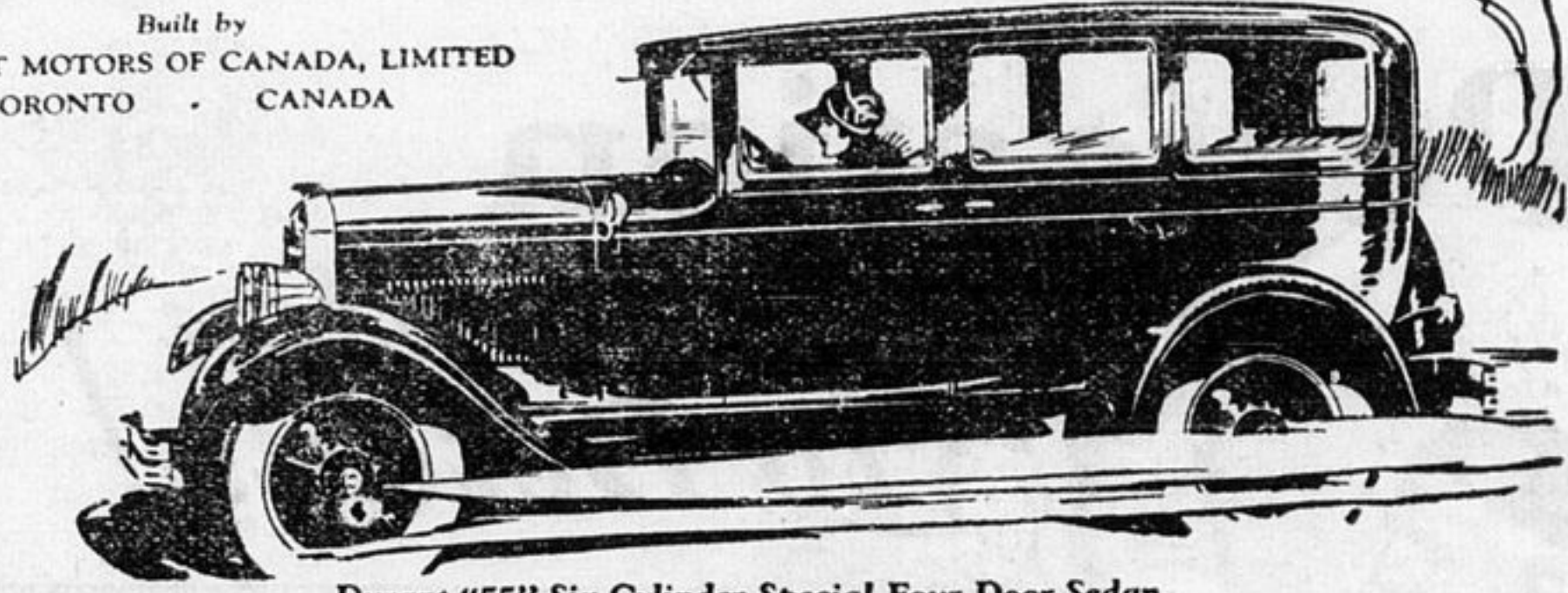
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