

MINING TOWNS OF NORTH HOLD CHARM OF ROMANCE

Time Credited with Taming Timmins. This Town Also Described as a "Dude" but also as a model Modern Community

"Glamor marked their building, memory holds them dear, though rough and unadorned, the spirit of freedom lived in the early communities of the North Land, and lives to-day!" Such is the introductory heading on a very interesting article in the special industrial issue of The Northern Miner. The article deals with the romance of the mining towns of the North, and some extracts from the article will be of interest to readers of The Advance. Accordingly here are a few paragraphs from the article in The Northern Miner—

"A sight for the gods was the early boom mining camp. Mining men of Ontario's North have seen many such. They have watched the egg, the chrysalis and the final stage of evolution, and none of them were beautiful.

"The rough log shacks, pole-roofed and tarpapered, of the discovery days; the hastily erected, scattered agglomeration of lumber-built structures in the second stage; the final or semi-final collection of roughly-aligned streets of stores, restaurants, banks and public buildings, dominated by shaft houses and mine structures.

"Such were the camps of Cobalt, Elk Lake, Timmins, South Porcupine, Kirkland Lake and Rouyn in the days of their youth. And the roughest of these was Cobalt. Where the other town-sites had some pretension to a reasonably level terrain, Cobalt stood a jumbled mass of hills and rocks, heavily forested with pine, spruce and birch. A succession of mental pictures shows the fast-growing town stacked up on the steep shores of Long Lake, with a tiny railway station clinging precariously on the grade on the western shore. Conlagas ridge, accentuated by the forest growth, loomed starkly behind. Shacks of log and lumber began a straggling procession from the "Square" along old Lang Street, and eventually started south, over a creek which ran down Silver Street into the lake. Swamp Street was born.

"The second stage began when the town was incorporated. Streets were laid out and filled in, the trees and stumps disappeared, waterworks followed the disastrous fever epidemic, and the ordinary facilities for a community of 5,000 people made their appearance. The waterworks installation was an extremely difficult undertaking. No-where was it possible to use ordinary trenching methods to lay the pipes. It was a mining proposition. The contractor went bankrupt."

Further reference is made by the article to Cobalt, described as "Homely Cobalt." Then is reference to the ups-and-downs of "unconquerable Elk Lake." The article continues—

"The Porcupine rush, with Kelso for a take-off, displayed primitive conditions unsurpassed in the North. It was mainly a winter affair, with long team trails, half-way houses, freighting trains and sleep camps. At one end there was the confusion of unloading, at the other the difficulties of housing a horde of gold-seeking world rambblers. South Porcupine, Golden City and the environs were the first scenes of hectic life. All the Cobalt features developed, without the palliative of a railway or a Haileybury. The tide of fortune swayed this way and that. The Golden Cities disappeared and South Porcupine emerged as the permanent town, with one mine as its life blood.

"Timmins emerged more slowly, and all but died in a disastrous fire. The mines would not be denied. The railway followed the tote team and modern construction, after four years of pioneer life, began. Timmins, with its extraordinary mineral wealth, was, after its first difficult years, earmarked for the new type of mining camp. Legislation permitted the diversion of a substantial percentage of the earned wealth to the municipal coffers. Civic structures, schools, roads and sidewalks appeared in rapid succession. Business housed itself substantially, the citizenry took pride in its dwellings. The town stands today as a model modern community."

Reference is made to "Perky Kirkland," Swastika, Sudbury (never properly a mining town, says the article), Creighton, and also to "Rouyn the youth." Moreover, there is a word for the Pas, Manitoba, and for some other camps, the article concluding as follows:

"Individual properties, east and west, have importance, but not the stature of mining towns. All of them have something in common. Communities, as a rule isolated from civilization, they develop character and attract, to hold, a type of men and women to whom the frontier is home, and to whom the effete in life is the eccentric.

"Mining towns are homely. Mining towns are rough. They nurture their own and their own love them. Not like the town laborer do mining town dwellers become dull, nor like the grower of things narrow-minded. There is the nomad life. A tent, a shack, a house or a residence, they have known them all. They can contact without uncouthness with the city, and they have the fibre to return to their wilderness of rock and tree without repining. There is a true frontier breed."

St. Thomas Times-Journal—The ultimate in house-hold efficiency will be reached when it is possible to cook breakfast with a cigarette lighter.

BELT LINE IDEA FOR NORTH MORE THAN TEN YEARS OLD

Idea Ten Years Ago Centred Round Plan of a Railway to Connect Timmins and Sudbury. Extensions of the Plan Suggested.

In recent years The Advance has been a persistent and insistent advocate of a belt line of roads for the North Land, believing that such a plan would be invaluable in opening up a vast new stretch of country, supplying transportation to many promising mining fields, helping solve the forest fire menace, and multiplying many times the attraction of the North to tourist trade. The Advance believes that the completing of this belt line of roads is second in importance only to the building of roads for settlers. Roads for settlers should be built and the belt line of roads should be completed. It is interesting to note that the belt line idea is more than ten years old. Looking through the files of The Advance last week for material for the column "Ten Years Ago in Timmins," a feature published each week in The Advance, there was an article advocating the belt line idea. Ten years ago, however, the belt line idea took the form of a request for a railroad. Had a railway been built then The Advance believes it would have proved a paying venture and that it would have opened up the country in effective way without undue cost. The country to-day would have been in better situation than it is. Had that railway been built ten years ago there would be no regrets to-day. In the intervening ten years, however, conditions have changed in some directions. The remarkable development of motor traffic has somewhat altered the situation. For the immediate present it would appear that a belt line of roads should be dealt with before a belt line of rails. At the same time there still seems to be value to the idea of a railroad belt line though new developments would suggest an extension of the plan proposed in 1920. Instead of simply a connecting railway from Sudbury to Timmins, the line should run also from Timmins through Kamiskotia and on to Kapuskasing. The Advance believes that the completion of the belt line of roads will develop the country to such an extent that the railway plans would appear both feasible and promising.

In the meantime it may be interesting to re-read the plans suggested ten years ago along the belt line chain of thought. The Advance of March 10th, 1920, carried a front page article reading in part as follows:—

"A Timmins citizen who is largely interested in lumbering and other industries in the North Land was in Sudbury on business last week and was impressed with the absurdity of present railway and other conditions so far as they touch the North Land. "There I was," he said this week, "just fifty miles from Timmins, yet I had to travel 300 miles on the railway to reach home. In this modern day when a man has to travel 300 miles to go fifty he certainly is "going some" and has a genuine grievance." Just before the war, it was understood that the C.N.R. intended to build a line from Timmins to connect with the C.N.R. at or near Sudbury. Surveys of the line were made and it was expected that work would be started in a comparatively short time. The C.N.R. looked upon the line as a good business proposition, and the people in general who were interested viewed it as of much advantage from a public viewpoint. Then the war came on and all plans were side-tracked. It was confidently believed, however, that after the war the C.N.R. would take up the question again simply as a business proposition. But in the meantime the C.N.R. became part of the Canadian National Railways, instead of being the Canadian Northern Railway. But what was good business for the C.N.R. of private capital is even better business for the C.N.R. of national government ownership. The line from Timmins to Sudbury will knock more than a hundred miles off the railway journey from the Porcupine—the greatest gold camp in Canada,—to Toronto and other southern points. It will bring north and south more closely together, and so be profitable economically, industrially and otherwise. It will open up a big stretch of promising country with unusual prospective riches of forest and mine. It will mean cheaper living, because of more economical transportation facilities; it will mean added convenience and advantage to north and south alike. The Canadian National Railways should take up the question as a matter of good business; otherwise the T. & N. O. should see that this line is built as soon as possible. If neither government will move in this necessary matter, then at least they should step back and leave the field clear for private capital and enterprise. The line should be built as a proposition for the development of the country and as a matter of good business. There would be traffic enough for such a road. Indeed, there is a reason for believing that the proposed line would develop a business of its own, much to the general advantage, practically without interference with the present railroad serving the North Land."

London Humorist—Eating jelly with a knitting needle was one of the competitions recently organized by a women's institute in the country and already we hear of several other sporting events that aspire to live up to the disheartened beginner's definition of golf as "getting a ball into a hole with instruments singularly ill-adapted for the purpose."

REMARKABLY FINE SPECIAL EDITION OF NORTHERN MINER

The annual special industrial edition of The Northern Miner has just been issued and it is a noteworthy effort. It composes a total of 88 pages, with much space being given to interesting and illuminating illustrations. The paper is well printed and full of articles of particular interest to all who pay any attention to mining or the North. Practically all mining camps of the

North are adequately dealt with and the issue is fairly encyclopedic in its information on mines, prospects and possibilities. The Northern Miner is to be congratulated not only on its enterprise in presenting such an issue but also on the talent and thoroughness that have carried the work through with such notable success.

Kitchener Record—About all some of us have saved for a rainy day is rheumatism.

TREE CONTAINED TWELVE LOGS, AND 2248 FT. LUMBER

The Pembroke Standard-Observer last week says:—"In the issue of Feb. 22 The Standard-Observer carried a story dealing with an exceptionally large hardwood log which had been brought to Alex Barr's carriage factory by Cecil Butler of Allumette Island. It has since been learned that the tree from which the log was made contained 12 logs, with a total length of

112 feet and produced 2,248 feet of lumber in log measure and approximately two cords of firewood. The facts and measurements are vouched for by Mr. Butler."

Edmonton Journal — A French woman, one hundred years old, has slept every night of the century in the same house. What makes her record remarkable is that her home is in St. Omer, which was consistently bombed and often shelled during the war.

Toronto Telegram— One or two more conferences and peace will have been spread over the world just about as often as Canada has been made a nation.

Pembroke Standard-Observer — Tell the next man there is a million stars to be seen with the naked eye, and he'll take your word for it without trying to count them. Show him a sign with "Wet Paint" and he'll insist on seeing whether it really is wet.



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