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## Canada's Northland.

BY MR. R. E. YOUNG, D.L.S., OTTAWA.

AT an evening meeting of the Canadian Club, Mr. R. E. Young, D.L.S., superintendent of railway lands in the Department of the Interior, at Ottawa, delivered an interesting and instructive address on "Canada's Northlands." Mr. Young said, in part:—

*Mr. President and members of the Canadian Club of Toronto,*—Let me first thank you for the honor you have done me in inviting me to address you to-night. I am going to endeavor to speak to you for a little while on the resources and possibilities of that portion of Canada lying north of a line drawn from Prince Albert to Edmonton, and I am going to commence by telling you a short story. On one occasion there came to the City of Rossland, B.C., a man prominent in the political life of Canada. He addressed the electors explaining the finances of the country, the revenue, the exports and the annual trade. The audience was composed of miners, and towards the end of the address one of their number got up and, looking the speaker in the eye, demanded, "I know, but what is there in it for us?" That is a question some may feel like asking me to-night, and I think its answer will appear as we go on.

The red color on the larger map exhibited represents the surveyed lands. The settlement of the North-west is confined to the territory denoted by that color. The darker red color around Winnipeg shows the surveyed land and explorations of 1873, about four and a half million acres, according to the Departmental map of that date. The subject of my remarks is the stretch of country north of the colored portion. The other map is the homestead map, the green representing the Canadian Northern and the red the C.P.R., while the dotted lines are the G.T.P. and the lines of the Hill system.

It is my purpose to take a few minutes to talk about that portion of the country. The first reason is because the rapid growth of it shows us that the country lying contiguous to the north must soon be opened up. Second, there is the approaching exhaustion of the fertile belt. The magnet that draws settlement is the free homestead policy, and it is necessary to show that we have still large areas available to the settler. The third is a personal reason. I am a Westerner. I lived

there for twenty years, through the dark years, and in view of the satisfactory progress, in addressing an Ontario audience I cannot fail to exult in what is going on. There may be difficulty in explaining the progress if I use wearisome figures, but, if there is any doubter at any point, let him speak up, for I have documentary evidence for every statement I make, right here on this table.

The railway situation is first worthy of notice. On July 1, last there were 6,422 miles in the Province. On July 1, next, there will be 8,000 miles. When I landed in Manitoba by St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba, in 1880, there was a railway laid 50 or 60 miles from Emerson to St. Boniface and you went to Winnipeg on a ferry. On January 1st, there were 1,000,000 people in the three Provinces, according to the census, while Canada's total population on the same date was 6,800,000, so that the three Provinces, not including British Columbia, comprise one-seventh of the total population of the present time.

Now, let us compare the wheat area diagram with the area alienated diagram. There are 120,000,000 acres of land in the colored square, of which 86,000,000 are areated. The margin is all we have left unless we have a good deal of land to the north. This square represents 5,000,000 acres of land and upon it 100,000,000 bushels of wheat were obtained in 1906.

Supposing I take 86,000,000 acres of alienated land and cut it down by one-quarter. In the time of people living 1,300,000,000 bushels of wheat have been produced in the surveyed land of the northwest. The land is good land. It is land selected by homesteaders and railways in satisfaction of their land subsidies. If 5,000,000 acres gave 100,000,000 bushels of wheat in 1906, thirteen times that area, on a conservative estimate, will give 1,300,000,000 bushels. Turn that wheat into dollars; consider the meaning of the figures in dollars. If there is any over estimate in wheat (and I do not think there is) other grains and cattle production will more than make it up. I don't own any land in Saskatchewan and the North-west. The salary and the work done by the civil servants don't admit of it. But I have had opportunity to personally obtain reliable figures from Saskatoon. I learned from these that 375 acres of wheat realized a net profit of \$14.33 per acre. And that means that a man gets that much net to put into the bank.

The first thing to which I want to direct your opinion in connection with the north country is the erroneous impression about latitude governing climate. This impression is absurdly untrue, and we have suffered for it. The country north of the surveyed area is wooded country. Look at Fort Good Hope

on the Mackenzie River, 40 miles outside the Arctic circle. Here they grow potatoes, cabbages, lettuce and onions—as fine a brand as we grow in Ontario. And that is 1,200 miles further north than Winnipeg. Growth, however, is there very rapid. Bishop Clut, of the Schultz committee, wrote in 1888: “Towards the 7th or 8th of June vegetation commences and in five or six days the leaves of the trees had reached their natural size.”

These red spots are points where there is successful wheat growth. You are an audience of business men. I have down here on my notes, “Mail home the wheat points.” Remember that these points were selected for the fur trade and not for grain growing, and the inhabitants are flesh eaters and give no encouragement to the growing of wheat. This is a sample of the wheat grown at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River.

(The speaker here exhibited samples, passing them around among the members.)

Dr. Saunders, an authority, says we are warranted in describing it as good wheat. And conditions will improve, first, because, as Professor Macoun puts it, when grain ripens in the country and is again sown there, it will take on the conditions of its environment and mature earlier, and early frosts, like those attributed to Manitoba, will have no effect, as the crop will mature before they come. I may remark here that the wheat in the North-west ripens earlier now than it did twenty years ago, and many people believe that it is the climate that has changed, whereas it is only the wheat that has adapted itself to its environment.

Other reasons why conditions have improved are the investigations held, the experimental farm to obtain earlier variety, and the sharpening of the soil by cultivation.

And there are other sources of wealth in this country. There are minerals, petroleum, tar, gum, bitumen or crude petroleum and natural gas. Bishop Clut in 1888, reported that near Fort Smith there is a salt mine which is probably the most beautiful and the most abundant in the universe. There is there a veritable mountain of salt. By digging a little in the earth from six inches to a foot, rock salt can be found there. There are Indian stories of gold and copper discoveries, and coal, iron, gypsum and sulphur are found in good quantities. From Cumberland to northeastward there are the Keewatin and Huronian rocks. On them there has been practically no prospecting, but the same rocks are rich in minerals elsewhere. Mr. J. B. Tyrell says that north of Lake Athabaska there are rocks which certainly contain iron and some gold and silver.

This district is a very likely looking mineral country. Between Dubaunt and Baker Lakes there are promising Huronian schists, precisely similar to silver, copper and gold bearing rocks on the north shore of Lake Superior.

There is a wealth of timber throughout this country, building timber, and pulp wood and material for railway ties. It has, moreover, several splendid water powers.

Its fish are unsurpassed. In every lake, river and stream, white fish, lake trout and jackfish are found in the clear waters. Sturgeon are in many of the rivers and salmon in rivers running into Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean. Inconnu are found in Mackenzie River and the great Slave Lake. There are over 60,000 square miles of water west of Nelson River, nearly equal to the combined areas of Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie.

The vast system of natural waterways extends considerably over 2,000 miles. There are 1,300 miles on the Mackenzie and Slave below Fort Smith; 320 miles on the Peace below the Chutes to Smith's Landing on the Slave; 550 miles on the Peace above the Chutes, and 200 miles on the Athabasca, from Fort Murray to Lake Athabasca.

There is therefore much advisability of acquiring further knowledge of this great country. We know what exploration by the Ontario Government has accomplished in Northern Ontario, the discovery of 16,000,000 acres of clay belt, the building of the T. & N. O. railway and the discovery of Cobalt. Is the story of the natural wealth of New Ontario yet fully told? Eight or nine years ago many said that country was no good for anything.

Now let us refer to the northern map again. Three great railway systems are ready to occupy the country. What is there in it for us? What is the meaning of the opening up of this great and productive country to the business interests of Canada and Toronto? What is the meaning of all this to members of your clubs and all patriotic Canadians?

When we think on these things, on the magnificent domain we have, on the wealth and variety of its resources, is it any wonder that thinking men in Canada are apprehensive as to whether the Canadian people are proving themselves worthy to carry out to fruition the destiny God Almighty has placed in our hands.

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