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LECTURE:

BY J. TRAVIS.

Delivered at St. John and (by request) subsequently delivered at Campbellton and Dalhousie, Restigouche. Published in compliance with the Resolution of the Campbellton meeting. Subject.

Restigouche and its Vicinity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Mineral resources of Restigouche are not yet fully developed; certainly, lime and marl are to be found, of a very superior description in many different localities; the marl perhaps not to be surpassed in any other part of the world. The second prize at the Paris Exhibition was awarded to marl from a section of the Bay Chaleur.

Much has been said of the Coal fields of Restigouche. My impression is that they are like those of the Pabos Coy, altogether imaginary. That very remarkable geologist Dr. Gesner (who elsewhere, mistook the bones of a whale found on the sea beach for the fossil remains of a mammoth of the pre-adamite period) insisted upon their being coal fields in Restigouche in all directions. The Dr has evidently been led astray by those slight indications of coal that have also led many of the respectable residents of Restigouche into error. At Point le Nim there is, as described by Dr Robb, a black coaly rock, which, according to that really able and eminent geologist, Sir Wm. Logan, of Canada, is made up of coal and carboniferous shale, in all about three inches thick, and he emphatically adds, that "though seven thousand feet of vertical thickness, have been carefully examined, nothing like a working seam, nor anything but this one like a regular seam, or like a seam at all has been met with."

Geology, as a science, is beginning to be so well understood, that there appears to be no difficulty in settling the whole question. Coal is found in that strata known as the Carboniferous area or coal measures. Now it is a well known fact that the soil of Restigouche rests not on the Carboniferous rocks, but upon, and formed from, those vastly superior for agricultural purposes, the Upper Silurian, and it is owing to this geological fact, that the upland of the Restigouche, for agricultural purposes, is not surpassed by any other upland soil in America. Why, the fact so evident in England that in those parts of Durham and Northumberland, where coal is found in abundance, the soil is found to be sterile and unproductive, should teach those who have the welfare of agriculture in Restigouche at heart, that it is a thing greatly to be rejoiced in, that coal fields are there, as they really are, a matter of geologic impossibility. Nay, further, no sane man who has ever read a correct geological description of the soils formed from the carboniferous rocks or coal measures, in which they are put down as "hungry, greedy of manure, liable to be burnt up in drouthy summers; often stony and defying the labor of man to put them into condition for the plough; or, as they not unfrequently are, little more than bogs, swamps, and barrens," will give the parties who have tried to make out that Restigouche is little more than a coal field, credit for being (as they would wish to be thought) either very wise or very complimentary. It is astonishing to me how much of a visionary nature there has been about several of those persons who have written well-paid-for reports in the Province of New Brunswick. All that I believe to be known with any degree of certainty about the mineralogical, or geological resources of Restigouche, is, that building stone and flags of different and valuable descriptions, together with mica and the limestone and marl before spoken of, are found there in many localities in great abundance, and will, doubtless, in the future, add to the value of the productions of the County, when once they shall have been introduced into the uses to which they are adapted. It may be surmised that in the future minerals on the Upper Restigouche will be found similar to those which are to be found near the contiguous Tobique river, but sufficient examination has not yet been made to enable one to arrive at a correct decision on that point.

From Mineralogy the diversion is very easy to Meteorology. And here at once one or two important facts present themselves. Restigouche and the Bay Chaleur are almost, indeed you might say totally, clear offogs. Such a thing as a foggy day is rarely, if ever, known.

What is the cause? In the Bay of Fundy and in the vicinity of St. John, often for weeks together, they know scarcely anything else. Is it because we are farther north? Chambers says that northern latitudes have a predisposition to fogs; and then, there is the St. Lawrence, still farther north, where, for days in succession, I have seen it so foggy that it was impossible to see across the river. The cause probably is that those noble Alpine heights, which line the Restigouche and Bay, influence the currents of air, and tend to dissipate the fog in its incipient state; but whether this be the cause or not, this fact is apparent, that the difficulty labored under, as I have shown, both north and south of Restigouche, has not there to be contended against, and a most valuable and important fact it is. Another peculiarity under this head, noticeable at Restigouche, is, that owing to the existence of its mountain ranges, the wind acts upon the river pretty much as though it passed through a tunnel, blowing either fair up or down nearly all the time. The advantage of this, in a commercial point of view, is sufficiently obvious; vessels being certain of having a fair wind both up and down, within a very short period; as, of course, the wind veering but very little, will produce the same effect as though it were blowing from the opposite quarter from that which it had been blowing previously. Another beneficial effect resulting from this peculiarity in the wind, is, to keep in constant shelter the coves along the river, thus enabling a large amount of property to be kept afloat without its being exposed to the same risk as it would be in St. John and other quarters. Another peculiar feature observable in Restigouche, is, that owing to the extreme height of the land, and the extraordinary clearness of the atmosphere, space, if not altogether annihilated, is greatly reduced in its apparent extent. Thus, for instance, a stranger in passing upwards from Dalhousie, observes a peculiarly-appearing, conical-shaped mountain, (known as the "Sugar-loaf") and which, when he first views it, he would conceive to be but three or four miles distant from him, when actually it will not be less than three or four times that distance; it being situated a short distance above Campbellton. The Sugar-loaf mountain stands at an altitude of nearly 900 feet, and affords an uninterrupted view of some forty miles in extent, displaying scenery as varied and beautiful as is to be found (with but few exceptions) in any part of the globe. A view to be had, however, from a place situated some seven or eight miles above Campbellton is still finer, and I greatly doubt if either Switzerland or Scotland, with all its boasted magnificence of scenery, can afford a view to compare with that extensive, varied, beautiful, and romantic scene, observable from the Restigouche "Prospect-Hill." To a lover of nature the scenery of Restigouche will alone repay him for a trip to that quarter; for, as far as this Province is concerned, it stands alone in its grand and unequalled beauty. Yet, beauty of scenery is but one feature out of the many that my subject opens forth, to interest the visitor to the Northern County of this Province. If he be a sportsman, in addition to the varieties of fish I have mentioned, he will not lack for other description of game to excite his interest or to test his skill. Restigouche far surpasses any other place I have ever been in for the quantity of its wild fowl. Ducks, Geese, and Brant, come into the Restigouche in Spring and Fall in countless myriads. The Geese generally arrive first. They make their appearance in March or April, when the Indians shoot them in great numbers. One of the plans resorted to by the Indians to effect this object, is the following:—They build houses of ice, on the ice in the middle of the river, in which, after setting out their decoys, which are blocks of wood made in shape and colour somewhat to resemble geese, they wait until a flock makes its appearance, which, tired of its long migratory flight, comes in sight of the decoys, and imagining all to be right, descends near the concealed "Muctum," when it meets with a reception from him a slight degree warmer than it had bargained for. From that time out the poor geese (and after them the ducks and brant, for they soon make their appearance) have but little rest, as their inveterate foe, the Indian, is ever on their trail.

* A sketch of a small portion of this magnificent scene has appeared in a late number of the "Illustrated London News."

Another plan the Indians adopt is this:—After the ice has left, and the fowls have become familiar with the hillocks of grass that grow about the flats, the Indian gets into his canoe, and having covered it with a species of wild grass called saline, thus conceals himself, and gently paddles on until he gets near enough to his game, when he blazes away, and meets with more or less success with his feathered victims. For winter shooting, the hardy hunter will find in Restigouche, Moose and Cariboo in considerable abundance, to test the merits of his rifle, and to try his skill in the chase. This description of noble game is occasionally killed by the lumbermen on the upper Restigouche, but more frequently becomes the more legitimate prey of the Indian hunter—one old Indian in particular, known by the euphonious name of "Mettallak," being pre-eminently successful. These Indians, to whom I have in this sketch once or twice incidentally referred, belong to the Micmac tribe, and have their residence at Mission Point, nearly opposite Campbellton, where there is the largest and best Indian settlement I have ever met with. The Indians there are of a much better description than are usual in this Province. Not at all such a set of creatures as are those stragglers that we occasionally fall in with about the streets of St. John. They occupy a tract of land of considerable extent, and of the very finest description about Restigouche. They have at the Mission a large and well-furnished Chapel, and a resident Priest, as well as a School-house and School-master. The Priest and School-master are both in the receipt of Salaries from the Canadian Government. The Indians are generally very attentive to their religious services, and the School is attended by the children with great interest and regularity. The elements of an English education are imparted to them, and their aptitude for receiving instruction is represented as being astonishingly great. Their parents feel a great interest in their improvement, and appear to conduce to it by every means in their power.

I stated that they occupied a fine tract of land. It is particularly so for Agricultural purposes, yielding good crops with but a limited amount of labor. The Indians all avail themselves of this advantage, each one having in connection with his house (the aboriginal wigwam having almost disappeared) a tract of land for agricultural purposes, of greater or less extent, according to his ability or inclination to cultivate it. Several of them have very good farms, with stock, barns, implements, &c., and in some cases their farms are well-cultivated and highly productive. One of them, named Swasson, has, as one of the items of his crop, between three and four hundred bushels of oats. This being beside barley and other grain, potatoes, hay, &c. In addition to this description of labor, they also engage in the usual Indian employments of fishing and hunting, facts in reference to which I have furnished in their proper place. Some of them also engage in lumbering operations. I had myself a party of them in the woods one winter, and their operations resulted better than any of the other parties I had then employed. Some of the Indians are shrewd and intelligent, quite as much so, considering their comparative advantages, as any persons you will meet with. Indian antiquities, peculiarities, and traditions, might be enlarged upon to any extent, but time and the great variety of topics that pass under my review, prevent me from dwelling upon those subjects, as I must pass on to other matter, and draw my already lengthy remarks to a close.

The Indian names of places in Restigouche, have been wisely retained, although sometimes I must say, they are most horribly murdered. The names given by the Indians are generally descriptive of some quality or peculiarity in connection with the places named, some of those names being remarkably sweet and euphonious. Upsalquitch (a river twenty miles above Campbellton) means literally "first blanket night," that is, the first night necessary to camp out in the ascent of the river. The pretty names "Mettapediac" and "Cascapediac," mean, the first from the peculiarity of its waters meeting with the Restigouche, and running side by side with it for some distance without losing their distinctive colour, "the meeting of the waters"; "Cascapediac" from its rapidity and broken surface, "the troubled waters." (I may mention that for this last river another interpretation is also given.) Accept-

ing these renderings of those names, how great a resemblance do they bear to two English words, possessing kindred meanings. Thus "pedia" in each case being waters, how similar is the Indian word "mella" to our word meeting, and "cascu" to our word Cascade. Those two pretty names are often murdered in the pronunciation, and called by the coarse and unmeaning names of Mattemejaw and Casepejaw.

I had intended making remarks in reference to various matters relating to Restigouche such as its existing and projected lines of roads, lumber, lumberers, and lumbering, on the Restigouche; with other kindred topics, but the extent to which I have already gone with the vast amount of matter that has presented itself to my consideration, utterly prevents me from carrying out this idea; yet, as there are one or two subjects of importance sufficient, I may hope, even now to command your attention, I will conclude this lengthy production, by referring to them and giving you my views in connection therewith.

One of these is the advantages of Restigouche as a shipping port in comparison with the other Northern ports of New Brunswick, and in comparison with the port of St. John.

In the consideration of this portion of our subject, the necessity of glancing for a little at the different harbours along the North shore of the Province, (that is, in popular idea, from Shediac to Restigouche,) is obvious, and in doing so, the result of such an observation will show most conclusively, the advantages Restigouche possesses over all the others.—First, is Shediac, which is a harbour with such limited depth of water, that vessels of any considerable size are unable to approach within several miles of the wharves from which they load; deals having to be carried off to them for the whole of that distance in either rafts or scows, and subject of course to the risk that thus necessarily arises. The disadvantage of such a position is easily seen. Cocaigne, Buctouche, Richibucto and Kouchibouguac, are all open to one and the same objection of being bar harbours; vessels having a draft of over 14 or 15 feet, being unable to load within either of those different harbours, but are compelled, in order to accomplish that result, to go out into the open roadstead, and of course, at times—with a bar upon which there is danger of being stranded in case of a storm occurring, being exposed to a large amount of risk. At the last mentioned harbour, I believe they scarcely attempt loading vessels of any considerable size, but are accustomed to raft their deals and thus send them to the neighboring port of Richibucto for shipment.

Miramichi, the next of the Northern ports, is a good and safe harbour for vessels of not too large a size, but ships that would be in proper quarters in Restigouche, would fare but indifferently at Miramichi. I recollect of having been at this latter place, some few years ago, when a large ship, with a valuable cargo of goods, anxiously looked for, was compelled to remain down at the entrance to Miramichi for several days, there not having been sufficient water to enable her to cross the "Horse-shoe bar"; a short distance from which place she lay at anchor.

I have previously given you a description of Bathurst harbour, showing you that that has similar difficulties connected with it as exist in connection with those other harbours; and now, on the other hand, look at Restigouche, how different and how much superior is the position she occupies!

Upon entering the Bay Chaleur, as fine a body of water presents itself to the eye as is to be found in the world. Neither studded with Islands, nor filled with dangerous ledges of rocks, bars, or shoals, the navigation for the largest vessel that flaunts her pennon to the breeze, in the grandest navy in the world, is open, clear, and unimpeded. No fogs to render doubtful the course to be pursued—no intricate channel to make necessary the practised skill of other than an ordinarily experienced pilot—no treacherous tides setting on to dangerous reefs, need there be apprehended; but, with a course almost as free and unobstructed as is the broad Atlantic itself, the monster ship may hold on her way in safety, until, in undoubted anchorage, she finds a magnificent haven in the safe and commodious harbour of Dalhousie. From this place to the traverse, a short distance above Oak Point, on the north or Canada side of Restigouche,