

Ice Discovery In Hot Valley Recalled By Mine Promoter

By GERRY McNEIL
MONTREAL (CP) — R. F. Mills, promoter of a good many memorable mining enterprises recalls that the Mexican ice mine was quite a find in the hot Rio Grande Valley.

Fruit and vegetable growers abounded in the valley but ice was as scarce as orange groves in Alaska.

The Mexican Penueco Oil Company wasn't looking for ice when it sank its first well in the oil-rich Tampico field in 1922.

Therefore, its roughnecks were taken aback—some ran—when snow and ice suddenly sprayed from the well into the 100-degree air.

"Caramba! Had the gringo engineers drilled through to Sierrita?"

"They'd actually drilled into a pocket of carbon dioxide," explained Mr. Mills, who was there. "It turned to ice when it hit the air. There was a mountain of dry ice in no time."

SAID ICE

The developers coolly assessed the worth of their product to Rio Grande growers, found a way to remove the gas odor, and soon were selling ice from the world's first commercial field.

Randy Mills's Canadian experiences have been less unusual but more thrilling since he came here in 1934.

He and Addison McKay, colorful mining figure who died in 1949, were attracted from New York by the promising wilds of northern Quebec and Labrador.

They were among the first to promote and develop the rich Chibougamau copper and Ungava iron ore finds.

The Newfoundland government granted them the first Labrador mining concession in 1935. Newfoundland, then a British colony, had to get the king's signature on it.

"It was probably one of the few documents Edward VIII signed," notes Mr. Mills. The king later abdicated after a short reign.

STUCK PIN IN MAP

Mr. Mills tried to get the British government to develop the concession in 1939. It would have cost \$60,000,000 then to build a railway and shipping facilities, he said.

Britain didn't invest though and the Labrador concession was later sold. Iron Ore Company of Canada Limited has since spent \$250,000,000 to develop it.

Mr. Mills and Mr. McKay stumbled on to Chibougamau in 1932. Looking for fresh fields to conquer, they stuck a pin in a map of northern Quebec and sent an engineer there to do some prospecting.

"Every week he'd send back to find him in a Val d'Or bar, a bag of rocks and a request for more money," says Mr. Mills. "Finally, McKay went up New York."

The engineer was fired but the venture wasn't a total loss. A local prospector, N. O. Carpenter, told Mr. McKay about promising finds near Amos, 320 miles northwest of Montreal.

300 CLAIMS

He was hired and soon staked 300 claims in remote but copper-rich country. A railway was built there in 1956 and several companies now are mining cop-

per, gold and silver in the Chibougamau field.

The Virginia-born Mills, a youthful 62, is a director of 19 companies and president of 14. They keep him dabbling in everything from gold to natural gas, from Cape Breton to the Arctic.

He is president of Baker Talc Limited, which sells soapstone from its Highwater, Que., mine

their popular primitive carvings. Arctic soapstone has too many impurities.

The same mine produces talc that is being refined to the point of invisibility.

CAN'T SEE IT

"The fineness is measured in microns," explains Mr. Mills. "One micron equals the wave length of light. When you get beyond that, you can't see it. It

lined ours to five microns."

Mr. Mills is also a director of Laduboro Oil Limited, currently developing a promising gas field in the St. Lawrence River Valley 80 miles northeast of Montreal, and an executive of several companies exploring a copper find deep in Quebec's north.

"This stuff is sticking right out of the ground," the promoter said, holding a rich-looking sample. "The boys don't

The Northwest Territories and northern Quebec are about the only places left where you can do that.

"And it's 95 miles north of the railway at Schefferville, not as inaccessible as Chibougamau was 30 years ago . . ."

FAMOUS PEAK

Mont Blanc on the French-Italian border, reaching 15,771 feet, is Europe's tallest mountain west of the Caucasus.

WOODSTOCK

Mr. J. George MacKay, liberal candidate, was a recent visitor to the district.

Maurice Arseneault is a patient in the Western Hospital in Alberton.

Mr. Gilbert Gaudet was a business visitor to Charlottetown recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gallan were recent visitors to the community.



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