

# Surluga Road

-by D. Pugh

The year is 1936. Wawa, a tiny isolated settlement is joined to Sault Ste. Marie by The Algoma Central Rail - way. Some forty-five motor cars travel the short road between the Mission, Wawa, and the Helen Mine. The old trails to Grasset & Missinabie on the Canadian Pacific Railway are overgrown, and are replaced by a well gravelled highway on which the mail arrives regularly.

The old trail that ran from Wawa to the Grace Mine & connected up with Jimmie Dycie's farm and Joe Ball's hospitable house at Norwalk is no longer used. This trail had always been adventuresome, involving a fourteen mile hike down to the Mission. Now the old trail began at Wawa after one had crossed the two logs that spanned Wawa Creek, replacing the old bridge that had collapsed from disuse. One struggled through a dense growth of alders that had overgrown the roadbed after the mines had closed following the crash of the gold boom that had first brought the Michipicoten area into prominence.

Over alder swamps one struggled, and watched for traces of the ancient corduroy roads the oldtimers had used to pull their machinery in to their prospects.

The ruins of the Horneblende Mining camp was first to be encountered on the ancient road. It is incredible the operators of the Horneblende managed to get their mill installed, the first Nissen stamps ever put into operation on the little rocky ledge near the crest of the cliff face which constituted the site of the mine shaft. Today, the camp is gone, as is most of the mill building and its contents.

The next mine encountered is the Minto, one of Algoma's premier bullion producer. In place of the swamp, today is a fairly well drained area, on which is built the mills and other mine buildings together with the sleep camps and houses of the miners.

At the mouth of the old shaft, in the bygone days, there still could be seen the ancient steam hoist and boilers of the first mining plant installed at the Minto. Under Bob Patterson's direction the mine had been pumped out to permit sampling. Bob, who had combed the whole Michipicoten area for pumps, had more pumps for the Minto, per square mile, than any other mine.

Beyond the old Minto swamp the going got harder. Park's Lake was negotiated on a couple of logs strung end to end, and originally installed by the old Algoma Power Company for the convenience of linemen inspecting the power lines running over to the Helen Mine, then in operation. Beyond Park's Lake one crossed the Longbottle vein, later to be opened at the Parkhill Mine but then only a six foot width of quartz that most people stepped over casually, little thinking that they were stepping over a fortune in gold. Today, that vein is the most talked about gold producer in Ontario.

Further on, more swamps are encountered in order to reach the old Maripona and the Grace Mines. This area only thirteen years ago was deserted, nothing but bush trail, abandoned mine workings, the haunt of vanished hopes and dreams of old time prospectors. How little did they realize the area would be reconstructed as a paying proposition.

Next is James Dycie's farm, a straggling clearing hacked from the bush and the only farm in the whole area. - (Continued bottom of first column-front page)

a cup of  
Mine where  
his walk  
the great

.M. Arnott)

## THE SURLUGA ROAD STORY

*(Story begins top of page-2nd. col)*

Here, the weary traveller could always obtain a cup of tea and rest before pushing on to the Norwalk Mine where Joe Ball's hospitality prepared the hiker for his walk back to Wawa. How the region has changed from the great old days of Algoma's Gold Camp Trails.

*(With apologies to the late W.M. Arnott)*

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Next is James Dycie's farm, a strip hacked from the bush and the only farm area. - (Continued bottom of first column)