

THE LABRADOR PENINSULA.

549. In the North-east Territory, or Labrador Peninsula, exploratory work of great interest has been done by Mr. A. P. Low, who in 1884 and 1885 surveyed lake Mistassini and the Rupert River to its mouth in James Bay. Mr. J. Richardson and Mr. McQuat had already, in 1870 and 1871, carried exploratory lines of geological examination as far as the great lake. The work thus done by Mr. Low opened the way for the exploration of the great interior region of the Labrador Peninsula, which, with an area of nearly 300,000 square miles, had remained almost unknown geographically and entirely so in regard to its geological structure. Mr. Low was consequently entrusted with the conduct of an expedition in 1893 of which the purpose was to traverse the region at least on some of the principal natural lines of communication which it had been ascertained existed through it; and as this object has just been successfully accomplished it may be interesting to refer to the expedition in somewhat greater detail than that accorded to earlier work of the same kind. After reaching Lake Mistassini, the route was followed by devious courses along tributaries of the Rupert and East Main Rivers to those of the Big River, which like them flows to Hudson Bay. The feeders of Big River were followed down to Nichicoon Lake, whence various waterways were employed to reach lake Caniapiscow, from which the Ungava River flows to the bay of the same name on Hudson Strait. This river is characterized by wild rapids and by several high falls, but the bay was eventually reached in safety.

550. It had been intended to pass the winter at Ungava Bay, but the state of starvation in which the Indians and Esquimaux were there found rendered this undesirable, and Mr. Low was so fortunate as to secure transport by a Hudson Bay Company's steamer to Hamilton Inlet on the east or Atlantic coast of Labrador. There new arrangements were made, and in October the process of forwarding provisions into the interior for the next season's work was begun. During the winter and spring the supplies were taken in to a point above the Grand Falls of the Hamilton River. At the point thus reached it was necessary to await the breaking up of the ice, and when this occurred the exploration was continued by water. The west or Ashuanipi branch of the river was first examined, with Birch Lake and Lakes Petitsikapow and Michikamow, the latter seventy miles long by as much as thirty miles wide. After returning to the point at which the main supply of provisions had been cached, the Attikonak branch of the Hamilton River was then followed in a general southerly direction, through several lakes, till the water-shed between the Hamilton River and Romaine River was reached. The latter flows into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but it is so extremely rapid and rough that it is not employed by the Indians as a route. Thus at about 100 miles from the coast it became necessary to cross to the St. John River, and this was followed down to the sea. Mingan was reached the day following, the party having travelled approximately 5,660 miles since leaving Lake St. John, in the previous summer.

551. Mr. Low reports that between the forks of the Ashuapmouchouan River and File-axe Lake the country is half burnt over and partly grown up with black spruce, banksian pine, aspen, poplar and white birch. In the