

lying to the south-east of James Bay with some imaginary rivers dotted upon it. Dr. Bell has proved that nearly the whole region is drained by one stream which discharges into Rupert Bay, where it is called the Noddawai River, but nothing was hitherto known of its course inland. Our first definite knowledge of its main branch was obtained by Dr. Bell in 1887 through one of his assistants, Mr. A. S. Cochrane, whom he sent from Grand Lake to explore its upper waters. The "height of land" was found to pass quite close to the northern extremity of this lake, or much further south than had been represented on the sketch-maps. The new river began on the north side of the water-shed in the geographical depression in which the long northern arm of Grand Lake lies. The "divide" here consists of a shallow deposit of sand which blocks up this ancient river-course and turns the waters of the Upper Ottawa westward down their present channel; but at a comparatively recent date, geologically, these waters appear to have flowed northward by the new river which Dr. Bell followed to James Bay. The drainage basin of the latter stream lies immediately north of the sources of the Ottawa and between Lake Mistassini on the east and Abitibi River on the west. The outline of the border of the basin has a rounded figure when mapped and it measures about 300 miles in diameter, but one of its branches makes a long curve from its source and it bends about in such a way as to give the river a detailed course of nearly 500 miles. This hydrographic basin, lying south-east of the head of James Bay, is the counterpart of the basin of Moose River, which lies to the south-west of it, and has almost the same area. The stream followed proved to be the central or trunk river of the system and many large branches fell into it from both sides, all the way to Mattagami Lake, at the head of the Noddawai River.

Although such a large stream, it has hitherto received no name, and the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, as well as the press both in Canada and the United States, have called it Bell River, after the person who first surveyed it and made it known to geography. It often happens that the Indians have no distinctive name for a leading topographical feature, as in this case. They have no idea of a permanent or general geography. Different names for the same places or the same lakes and rivers prevail at different times, as was noted by the earlier discoverers in Canada. In any generation each band or each isolated family will have its own set of names for its limited world. The largest river or lake of this region does not require in their view any special designation, but may be called "the lake" or "the big lake" or "river." James Bay is "the great salt lake"; Hannah Bay is "the bay," &c., but all the smaller features bear temporary names.

It may be asked how it happened that this important region was not sooner explored. There may be several reasons. One is the difficulties in the way of getting there, and another the fact that it produces nothing which would pay to exploit, without better means of communication. The main river has never been a travelled route even of the Hudson's Bay Company. There is a post of the company on the Waswanipi River, a large tributary from the east which falls into Mattigami Lake, already mentioned. The waters which unite in this lake discharge a very large stream 100 miles long and identical with what has been called the Noddawai at its mouth. In the lower half of this distance the country descends with a more per-