

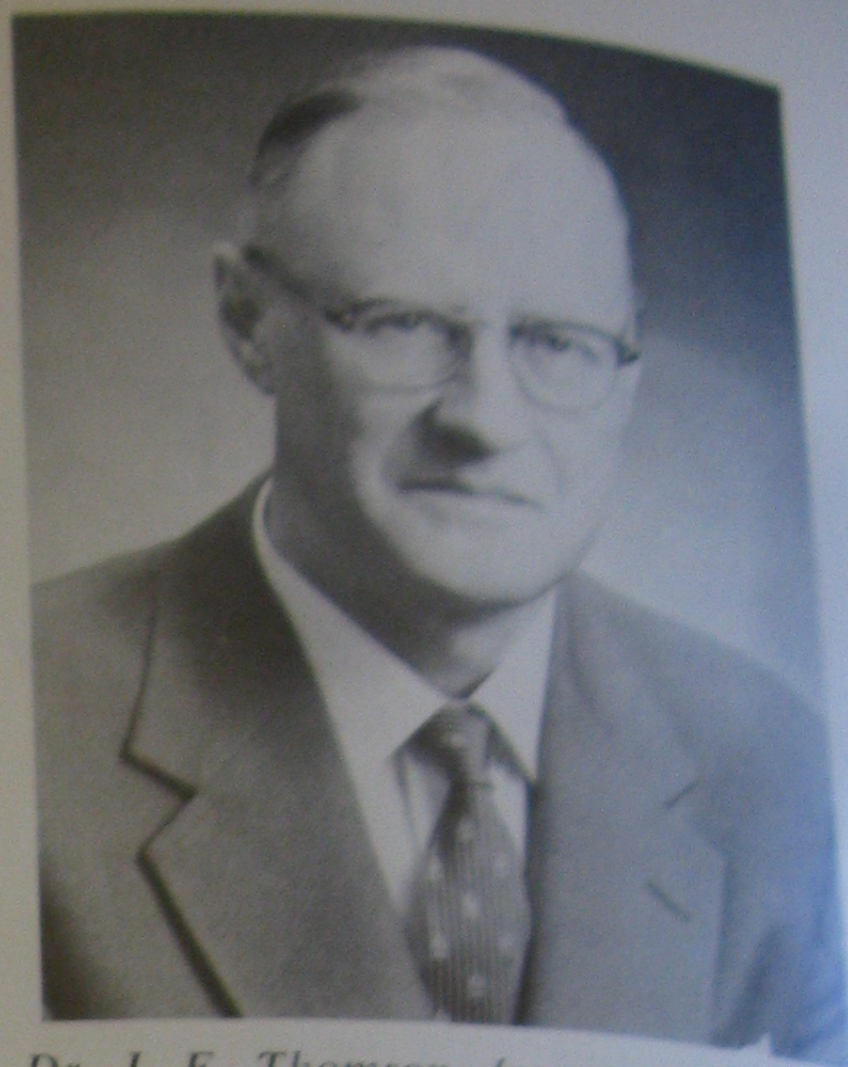
the current, and all that day they stopped paddling only to pull the canoe by hand through strong rapids. As the sun began to sink below the tree-tops they came upon the camp of a well-known prospector, "Little Jack" Miller and his partner who were at work on behalf of McIntyre Porcupine Mines. Miller was keenly interested in the Indian's story of Manitouwadge and arranged a meeting with the geologist on his return to the C.P.R.

Next morning they started out again and reached the mouth of Nama Creek. A short distance beyond they turned eastward toward the abode of the Great Spirit.

The going became rougher and it gradually became clear to Thomson that the canoe route into Mani-

touwadge was as new to his guide as it was to him — that on previous trips Fisher had always travelled cross-country in the winter.

However, on the fourth day of arduous canoeing and portaging through country that was alive with game, particularly moose, the geologist and his guide arrived at Manitouwadge Lake. Fisher was able to provide the Indian names for most of the lakes in the area but when they came to one east of Lake Manitouwadge which he could not name, Thomson forthwith immortalized the guide by christening it Moses Lake. When his map was subsequently examined by The Canadian Board on Geographic Names some changes were required



Dr. J. E. Thomson, former Director of the Ontario Department of Mines, geological branch, whose report was largely responsible for the discovery of Manitouwadge.

because of name duplication. So Moses Lake was officially shortened to Mose Lake and it still appears as such on maps.

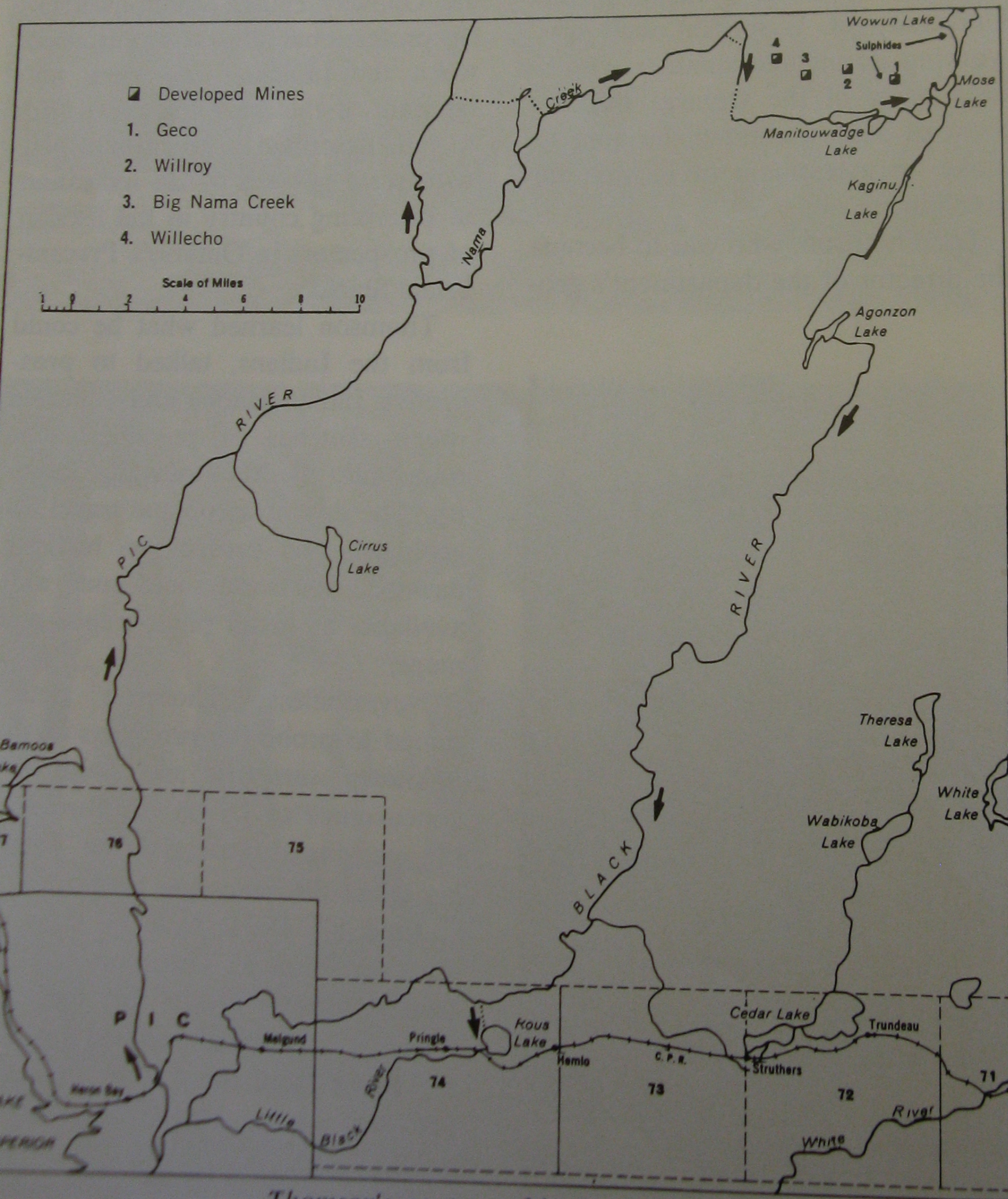
They spent only two days at Manitouwadge Lake, long enough for Thomson to make rough sketch maps of the topography and geology of the immediate area, and during those two days they had a tussle with a bear which the guide finally dispatched with his axe.

In the daily log of his exploration trip, Thomson made two important notes. The first: "Sulphides north of Manitouwadge Lake. Fifty chains north of the north bay on the west side of the creek there is a gossan eight feet wide in gneiss and pegmatite. The strike is N 80° E., dip vertical. Ore consists of pyrite and pyrrhotite with a little chalcopyrite in quartz and chlorite schist. Sample taken for assay".

He had sampled what was to become one day the main orebody of the Geco Mine.

The other note read:

"At 130 chains north of the lake there is widespread development of gossan and considerable magnetic disturbance. A sample of the rusty



Thomson's route to Manitouwadge.

material has been taken for assay."

Near this spot the Willroy mine is now producing steadily.

After this short stay at Manitowadge Thomson and his guide returned to the C.P.R. right-of-way by way of the Black River.

This so far has been an account of an exploration trip, almost routine in the history of the development of Canada's broad expanses of unknown country.

The results have been far from routine.

Thomson's chief in the Department of Mines arranged for an immediate aerial survey of the Manitowadge area to be made by one of the forestry planes that was currently engaged in a survey near the north shore of Lake Superior to establish the route of what has since become the Lake Superior section of the Trans-Canada Highway. The aerial base map was

ready early in August. Thomson and a field party returned to Lake Manitowadge by way of the Black River, travelling slowly as they surveyed the meandering course of the stream.

Two parties of prospectors, one led by "Little Jack" Miller and the other by William DeVilliers, went on ahead to Manitowadge armed with sketch maps supplied by Thomson. In those depression years mining in Ontario was almost synonymous with gold mining. Nothing else could attract any real interest and, when the gossans around Manitowadge Lake failed to reveal any interesting gold colours, these two prospectors called off the search.

The Department of Mines published Thomson's report and the accompanying geological map in the following year, 1932. In both the report and map the author-

geologist described in somewhat greater detail the mineral occurrences which he had mentioned in his field notes.

Several prospectors visited the Manitowadge area in the years following publication of the report but, because no gold was found, none reported any success. One of these men was Moses Fisher, Thomson's Ojibway guide who returned in 1943 to stake the sulphide showing which a few years later was to become the Geco mine. He was unable to stir up any interest in this holding, however, and after one year he allowed the claim to lapse.

It was not until May 1953 that two residents of Geraldton, members of the fraternity of weekend prospectors, studied the 21-year-old Thomson report and decided to see for themselves the possibilities it described.

*Shown in this aerial picture are the principal surface installations of Noranda's Geco Mine. The two headframes, both equipped with friction-drive hoists tower high over the other buildings and the surrounding bushland. George Hunter Photo.*

