



Inspector Fred Johnson shows gold-bearing ore in a café, thus disrupting the place's business. Nothing in Kirkland Lake is as important as gold



Henry Kelly, shown with wife, fought in Europe with the Canadian army; is now working as a miner for the Sylvanite Co.

# THE GOLDEN MILE

BY BERTRAM B. FOWLER

The gold fever has peopled Canada's north country with new millionaires, stock-brokers and highly improbable characters. Everybody is a gambler, and today's dishwasher may well be tomorrow's tycoon



Roza Brown models her precious sealskin with ribbon saying "Hello, H. R. H. Duke of Kent." U. S. flag is to honor the late Harry Oakes

THERE may be a richer mile somewhere in the world. But the betting is a hundred to one that there isn't a street anywhere with more bumptious optimism than the main street of Kirkland Lake, Ontario, which is known as "The Golden Mile." It really is a golden mile; a mile long, a mile deep and a mile wide of rich gold-bearing ore.

Walking along it is a sort of Alice-in-Wonderland experience. As you pass the modern Park Lane Hotel, the stock exchanges, bustling banks, smart shops and movie theaters, the rumble of ore carriers and mine machinery accompanies you. For practically in the back yard of each building are the mine shafts of such rich mines as Amalgamated Kirkland, Tegren, Macassa, Tech-Hughes, the now fabulous Lake Shore, Wright-Hargreaves, Sylvanite, Toburn and Bidgood.

Sometimes you can duck between buildings into a mine property and watch a pair of men pouring molten gold into bricks. The golden stream flowing from these crucibles is the reason, reward and hope of this town.

Recently an old prospector came into a main-street restaurant at lunchtime with samples of ore from his claim in the newest adjacent strike. Promptly the waitress moved over to his table. The chef came in from the kitchen, followed by his assistants down to the lowliest dishwasher. The cashier left her wicket. In no time, half the patrons were crowded around him. The business of feeding ceased and did not resume until the old prospector left. As soon as the noon rush was over, the restaurant staff, from the dishwasher to the proprietor, headed for one of the two stock exchanges.

Which accounts for the fact that these stock exchanges are big enough for a city the size of Cleveland. The population of the town—as this is being written—is only a little over twenty thousand; it is booming, and everyone from the dogcatcher to the bank managers plays the all-important game of gambling on gold stocks.

These stock exchanges are the Kirkland Lake branches of two reputable Toronto houses. They are important branches. They are equipped with catwalks for a crew of girls who move back and forth chalking up the quotations as they come in on the ticker. At the back of the room the manager and a couple of assistants handle batteries of telephones, with all the frenzy of a Wall Street broker, on a three-million-share day.

Here the people gamble, not on the prom-

ise of some gaudy prospectus, but on the knowledge of the men who are diamond drilling and sinking shafts. They are gambling on the fact that threads of gold lace the whole of this north country, and the men on whom they place their bets have as good a chance as anyone of hitting one of those threads and expanding it into another golden mile.

The gyps and the shysters, the fly-by-night promoters and stock swindlers flock around the town, too. For where there is the fever of a gold rush, the unwary investor can be sold on fake Golcondas. Gold mines can be advertised as "Only three miles from Kirkland Lake," and still be worthless. For while the sound, substantial core of the mining business is represented by towns like Kirkland Lake, claims even a mile from a genuine gold seam may be staked out on barren granite.

Along the streets of Kirkland Lake move the men who have become legendary figures in their own time by running pennies into million-dollar fortunes. And ghosts walk, too, the ghosts of Harry Oakes and the Tough boys, of Wright and Hargreaves. Some of them are still living—but they're living elsewhere.

The late Harry Oakes somehow typifies Kirkland Lake. He arrived in near-by Swastika in 1912 with, figuratively, the seat out of his pants and the toes out of his shoes. Behind him lay years of prospecting in the United States, the Yukon, Mexico and New Zealand. He had searched for gold practically all of his life, and always it had eluded him.

A few miles from Swastika a gold strike had been made a year before by W. H. Wright—ex-butcher of England, ex-soldier and sometimes cook—and his brother-in-law, Ed Hargreaves. The site was where the town of Kirkland Lake now stands.

At Swastika, Oakes met the Tough boys, four farmers who had been hired to cut a road from Swastika to Larder Lake. The five of them set up a partnership. That winter Oakes found some promising claims staked by a man named Burrows. The five-year limit was due to expire at midnight on January 27th, and the first arrival might then restake the unworked claims.

The thermometer hung at fifty below zero that night. But the partnership was, after all the Tough-Oakes, and the name was significant. The weather forced Oakes to wear five pairs of trousers but he made the claim,





A view of Kirkland Lake's busy stock exchange gives you an idea of the color of the town. There's probably not a Homburg hat in the place

This is The Golden Mile. The picture shows the many mine heads, but you can't really get the flavor of the place unless you walk along the street, have lunch in a restaurant and talk to its citizens



These two gold bricks, here watched over by Sylvanite Mill Superintendent C. L. Williams, are not phonies. They are worth about \$87,472

and an hour after midnight the five toasted—in hot tea—the Tough-Oakes Mine.

Out of the combination of strikes made by Wright and Hargreaves, Oakes and the Tough boys, grew the saga of The Golden Mile. They were absolutely confident that the gold was there. Nearly everybody in the camp believed it. But outside capital had to be convinced. And it took considerable convincing.

So for years Kirkland Lake was a brawling, hectic camp which lived on its expectations. Oakes and men like him existed on the ten-cent gold stocks which bulged their pockets. The shares fed and housed them and got their laundry washed.

One time, for example, Harry Oakes headed for Buffalo with his load of ten-cent shares. From his hotel he went out daily, tramping from office to office, peddling his stock.

When he was ready to return, Harry handed the hotel clerk a batch of his shares in payment of his bill. The clerk demurred. But Oakes had not turned himself into a stock salesman for nothing. When he walked out, the clerk was holding a part ownership in The Golden Mile.

The clerk, however, was not so smooth a salesman as Oakes. The hotel manager would have no part of the gold stocks. So the hotel clerk had to pay Oakes' hotel bill out of his salary, while he held on to the stocks as a sort of doleful reminder to trust no more fast-talking mine promoters.

Oakes eventually raised the capital needed and the shafts went down to the gold-bearing ore. In a New Jersey smelter, ore from the Tough-Oakes Mine assayed seven hundred dollars a ton in gold. Stocks shot upward and the shares that paid Harry Oakes' hotel bill made the clerk one of the richest men in Buffalo.

But even more fabulous are the stories of the characters who still walk the streets of Kirkland Lake.

Back in those pioneer days Charlie Chow ran a little Chinese restaurant. For chow mein and egg fooyoung to line the innards of Oakes and the rest of the boys, Charlie took ten-cent mining stocks.

The great Lake Shore Mine came into being and the golden flood started. The ten-cent stocks mounted in value. Melons were cut as dividends on stock hit about four dollars for the year. Today no one in Kirkland Lake would dare hazard a guess as to Charlie's wealth. And Charlie isn't talking.

He has the perfect defense against inter-

viewers. He chants inconsequentialities in a musical-comedy singsong that is as phony as a three-dollar bill. His moonface shines in guileless geniality as he trots around his hotel, located on The Golden Mile. But people do know that he is still a big stockholder in Lake Shore Mine, and for years he has donated thousands to China Relief.

They also know that he is the despair of Lake Shore officials. Charlie has a nice big safe. As soon as he receives an envelope with a dividend check, he tosses it—unopened—into a stack of other unopened envelopes also containing dividend checks. About once a week a harassed member of the Lake Shore accounting department calls on Charlie to plead with him. Won't he please, please open those envelopes, cash the checks and allow Lake Shore to bring some semblance of order into its books?

Behind his bar, serving ten-cent beer, Charlie beams blandly and chants in his vaudeville accent, "Allee ttime velly much too blizy." He mops the bar with a rag, serves another beer and goes into a singsong of banalities until the Lake Shore man goes despondently back to his books.

The characters come and go for the most part. Only a few remember the diligent Danish laborer who arrived in Kirkland Lake with a vocabulary of a few dozen English words. A couple of years later he returned to Denmark without ever having expanded his knowledge of English. But he carried \$250,000 away in his overalls.

#### Meet the Mysterious Countess

The most fabulous of all resident characters is Roza Brown. Nobody knows where Roza came from or what her real name is. Roza Brown was the handle she chose when she landed in the northern wilderness to cook and do laundry for the old-timers. It is said that she is Hungarian. Her English has an execrable accent that could be anything. Since she speaks seven or eight European languages fluently, and with an aristocratic accent, no one can pin down her point of origin.

Roza strutting along The Golden Mile is a sight. In her ears are the now-famous genuine pearl earrings she had when she arrived. They supported the rumor that in her own country she was a countess. Above the pearl earrings is perched a battered old felt hat that originally was built for some departed miner. Her tattered old coat sweater is fas-

tened at the front with a horse-blanket safety pin. She wears a ragged pair of men's trousers tucked into rubber boots.

More often than not she is on her way to Swastika, where she banks, to deposit some fat dividend checks. She is going to walk the seven miles because the bus company—along with most of the institutions that surround her—is in Roza's black book and won't get any of her nickels. She banks in Swastika, because she wants no Kirkland Lake banker to know the state of her finances.

If she takes a fancy to you she may invite you around to the hovel where she lives. When she opens the door everything but bats pours out. Cats in broods come out with a pack of mongrels, all bitches. Chickens perch on the few pieces of furniture. The place hasn't seen a broom in probably twenty years. But in the closet at the back hang about fifty thousand dollars worth of Roza's fur coats.

Her story parallels Charlie's. She baked pies and cakes and collected ten-cent gold shares. She scrubbed shirts and collected more shares. When the shares skyrocketed they made Roza a millionaire. But they never altered her mode of living, except for brief though frequent sallies into prominence.

Her poverty-stricken appearance and dilapidated domicile might lead one to believe that Roza is a miser. But there are too many prospectors who will tell you of grubstakes from Roza when they were down and out and no one else would give them a decent "Good day." It seems that anyone who has been given up by everyone else has one friend he can turn to—Roza.

But to everyone from the bank managers to Ann Shipley, the lady reeve—mayor, to you—Roza is the town's prize headache. She appears at every taxpayers' meeting, tailed by five or six of her mongrels, and takes a prominent place on the platform. There she makes comments on every motion and heckles everyone who rises to make a motion or speech. Most of the heckling remarks are frankly libelous—if anyone there could understand the brand of English she uses so volubly.

When Roza has an argument with anyone she prefers it to be in public. If carried out in private Roza would have no audience, and Roza could not expand without an audience. Therefore, if she wishes to comment on the character, background, habits and moral status of a woman whom she dislikes, she waits until she meets her on the main street

at the busiest hour. Then her words bloom violently. Usually, the result is a suit for defamation of character.

The rumor that Roza has an aristocratic background may have some foundation in fact. There is no doubt of her complete devotion to royalty. When King George and Queen Elizabeth visited Canada, Roza cleaned herself up and donned a sealskin robe which she reserves strictly for royalty. The town laughed when she boarded the train for Montreal. But Roza made the grade and had herself personally presented to the royal couple.

Now when she has a gripe, she goes right to the top. She writes a letter to the King. In her hovel is a fat sheaf of correspondence from the secretaries to the King and Queen.

#### A Devoted Adherent of Royalty

When the Duke of Connaught and the Princess Alice arrived in Canada, Roza was in the front rank of the assemblage. Wearing another fur robe, she carried a flag in each hand. On her front was hung a picture of the King and Queen. Across her chest she wore a broad purple band on which was emblazoned, "God bless His Highness, the Duke of Connaught."

The Duke looked at her in amazement and forthwith had her presented. What her conversation covered, the townspeople never have learned. For Roza and the Duke conversed in fluent French.

For lesser events, such as visiting nobility or when anyone of prominence dies, Roza turns up in another fur robe reserved for such occasions. Across her chest, the purple band reads, "God rest his (or her) soul."

Such is Kirkland Lake, symbol of the gold fever that is sweeping the whole of northern Ontario and Quebec as new strikes become daily occurrences; as prospectors swarm the bush, and the mine shafts begin to dot what just a few years ago was almost impenetrable wilderness.

In fact, The Golden Mile is symbolical of the whole of the Canadian north country. Its gold rush may soon put Canada into the lead of the gold producers of the world. For here has been recreated the modern, but unchanged, spirit of the forty-niners, and the Yukon. But today airplanes, cat trains and bulldozers have replaced the privations and misery of the old gold camps with smart hotels, caviar and lobster.

THE END



# PAN-AMERICAN HOSPITALITY

BY WILFRED WEISS



Mary Frances Devine, one of International House's bilingual stenographers, takes Ascario Garcia, a Colombia industrialist, on a shopping tour. This is just one way International House makes business painless for our good neighbors

## Mississippi Valley businessmen have devised a unique way of muting the loud clang of Yankee cash registers for the ears of South Americans

**A**BOUT four months ago a firm in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, wrote to International House, New Orleans, with a note of desperation, asking if there was any place in the United States where they could buy 20,000 barrels, made of wood similar to Brazilian pine, which would hold liquid and would cost about five dollars.

The letter was passed from J. Stanton Robbins, then managing director of International House to Colonel Albert L. Loustalot, service director, who shot out queries to all the barrel manufacturers in the Mississippi Valley. Ten negative replies indicated why the Brazilians had been having difficulty. The eleventh, however, from the Southport Corporation, offered to do the job in red oak, at \$5.50 a barrel, if the Brazilians wanted to purchase them at that price.

The Brazilians cabled back: "Ship as many as possible as soon as possible, C.O.D." That is one of the early, and now typical, examples of the work of International House. Its friends claim that IH is the only organization of its kind in the world and its unavowed aim is to soften the clanging sound of cash registers, which has always made our southern neighbors suspicious of "Yanqui" good-neighbor gestures. The softening is done with a subtly comfortable, clubby atmosphere, an attitude of "Let's have a drink

and be friends—we'll talk business some other time."

The avowed aim of this nonprofit, non-trading membership organization, which formally opened last June, is "to foster closer cultural and trade relations between the Mississippi Valley and the countries of the world."

According to Robbins (who has since been succeeded as director by Charles Nutter), it was founded by "men who believe that the true way to international good will is through expanded, amicable trade and travel, and who believe that no matter what Washington does, nothing can be accomplished unless private industry does something on its own." There is not much question that the idea is clicking with our neighbors down yonder. The local consuls of the South American republics are unanimously and exuberantly enthusiastic about it.

Service activities, directed by Colonel Loustalot, are a two-way tradeway: An American manufacturer wants Argentine chocolate in five- and ten-pound bars, a Brazilian wants to import American rayon and export Brazilian silk, a jobber in Venezuela wants to sell American Diesel engines, an American manufacturer wants South American hides, and through a two-way list ranging from paper clips to railroad engines, Colonel Loustalot gets them together.

International House's appeal to the foreign businessman is basic. When he hits New Orleans he can move into IH and conduct his business. He can have the use of a completely equipped private office, including a secretary who understands his language. In the rest of the building he has use of the impressively comfortable lounge, the private

conference rooms, the international library, the bar, and the dining room, said to offer a cuisine as fine as you'll find anywhere.

For all this the foreign businessman pays nothing but the bills he runs up in the dining room and bar. If he chooses to be a member, the cost is \$25.

The maintenance tab is paid by the domestic members, whose fees range from \$50 a year for out-of-New Orleans members up to \$250 for sustaining members.

All this good will for free arouses a suspicion in the breasts of our southern neighbors, who ask the Latin equivalent of "What's the pitch?" As far as anyone, including a couple of official delegates from Venezuela, has been able to discover, it's all on the level, a beautiful vision of good will. Of it, William Trauth, an executive of the Alcoa Steamship Lines, and a founder of IH, said, "Good business doesn't mean a dollar on the line every time. When we can lead foreign businessmen to think and talk about the pleasantness of doing business through our part of the country, we're doing ourselves a favor."

So far, American businessmen have subscribed to that thesis to the extent of about \$600,000—\$500,000 to purchase and convert three of the ten floors of an ex-bank building in the heart of the New Orleans business district, and the rest for the first year's budget, which includes the expense of a bilingual staff of twenty.

International House makes nonbusiness gestures too. One recent one followed a letter from a young Brazilian doctor who wanted to come to the States to study plastic surgery. International House arranged for him to study with Dr. Neal Owens, a leading plastic surgeon, at Ochsner Clinic, on a scholarship.

Their major plan along this line is an exchange of young businessmen, industrialists, and scientists between the United States and South American countries. If transportation facilities permit, they plan to inaugurate summer schools for South American students at Mississippi Valley colleges.

Though all IH work is unofficial, Mr. Zed

E. Brock, local representative of the State Department, who has his office in International House, expressed the department attitude, "We have no official connection. But without the State Department's recommendation, they couldn't have gotten the priorities to fix up this building."

The relation of the South American consuls is also unofficial, but as the Chilean consul's secretary offered, "If he is not here, he is at International House. All the time he likes to go there, to meet other consuls, to meet his friends. Look for him in the club-room or the bar. You will find him."

Recently a Colombian young woman walked in and asked for a room. Colonel Loustalot explained in Spanish that International House is not a hotel. "But," protested the young lady, "when I left, everybody told me not to worry that I am a stranger and cannot speak English. They told me, 'When you get to New Orleans, just tell the taxi driver International House, and everything will be all right.'"

## Good Will—Good Business

Gallic and gallant, Colonel Loustalot shrugged, explaining the functions of IH, and then arranged for her to get a hotel room and a reservation on the next morning's train to New England, where she would meet her sailor husband. "It will happen again," the colonel predicted fatalistically. "She insisted she will write home and tell them how nice we were."

Up to recently, International House concentrated on South America because of the war. But what they hope for is illustrated by a recent letter from a Dutch firm, roughly translated:

"The German culture left our Continental business scraped bare; the Japanese co-prosperity left our Java sources and customers prostrate. We want to buy anything America has for sale, and sell anything we have which America wants to buy."

A special letter to all members of International House will no doubt take care of the Dutch firm. ★★★



Hands across the border is the idea, but a vast understatement of the effusiveness of this airport greeting of Pierre Villere, left, trilingual publicity man for International House, and Ramon Garcia, newspaper publisher from Guatemala

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY ALLAN GOULD