

THE CIRCLE DISTRICT

The Circle District was visited by the writer from September 3 to 9, 1938, for the purpose of obtaining data on mining and prospecting. A tabulation of present activities is appended and the individual operations have been covered by means of the Placer Mining Forms, which have been forwarded to the Territorial Department of Mines at Juneau.

This report is intended to cover only present mining and prospecting activities, and some of the factors influencing prospecting and gold production in the district.

The increased mining activity is shown by the 1938 production, which is estimated to be at least \$1,500,000. Accurate figures are not available, as the district was visited before mining had ceased for the season. It is believed that the 1938 production is above that of 1937, and is a record for the district.

The ⁵⁰⁻⁷⁴ Three dredges, on Mammoth, Coal and Woodchopper Creeks, accounted for \$750,000, or about half of the total production. Deadwood, Mastodon, Eagle and Independent Creeks produced an estimated \$415,000, and most of the remainder is divided between Butte, Porcupine, Harrison, Portage and Ketchum Creeks. The production on Mastodon Creek should decline in a year or two, and the known reserves on Deadwood Creek will last an estimated 4-5 years. The Harrison Creek production should increase when the dragline operation of Johnston and Blondo is on a full production basis. The F. E. Co. drilling on lower Harrison Creek may develop a large deposit, but no production can be expected from this for several years, at least. The ⁵⁰⁻⁶⁵ Portage ^{50-10 50-48} Creek ground should produce more, but it has been said that the dragline outfit there is in financial difficulties, due partly to numerous break-downs which cut down production and increased expenses.

As Circle is an old camp, the present mining is confined largely to low grade ground. The increased production, following a period of gradually declining activity,

is due to several obvious factors, namely, cheaper transportation afforded by the Fairbanks-Circle highway and numerous branch roads, cheaper mining through the use of diesel driven pumps, bulldozers and draglines, and the increased price of gold. While inadequate data is at hand, it is believed that the production of this district is approaching a maximum, and that it will remain fairly constant for a number of years, assuming no great change in the price of gold and in economic conditions.

Increased use of machinery, and new deposits brought into production, such as possibly on lower Harrison Creek, will tend to increase production, but this will be largely offset by other mining ground being worked out. It should be mentioned that repairs and machine parts are now available more cheaply and promptly through a service shop established last summer at Circle Springs by Carrington and Jones. The prospecting in the upper Birch Creek watershed may increase production, but not for several years. Finally, the production from strictly hydraulic plants, which was less than usual in 1938, will be greater during years of normal or above normal precipitation.

The Circle District, although it is, and will continue to be an important mining district, is not considered by the writer to be among the better districts for placer prospecting by newcomers. Practically all of the ground which has shown prospects is held, and competition for ground is rather keen. A newcomer must either take a lay, or wildcat on the outskirts of the more likely areas. There has been little lode prospecting, in spite of favorable indications. The writer found well mineralized float on Deadwood Creek, and there appears to be a large mineralized zone on the divide at the head of Mastodon Creek. Little systematic lode prospecting is expected while the placer mining and prospecting are booming.

The precipitation and water supply in most of this district are less than in the Fairbanks District. This may be due to the topography. The Eagle Creek area on the SW side of Eagle summit usually has more rainfall than the area on the NE side.

The water supply during the 1938 season was smaller than usual. The snow fall was below normal and there was very little rain during the summer. (Fairbanks, Hot Springs, Ruby and the lower Yukon had a dry early season, but ample rainfall during August and September.)

Transportation and Communication

The Circle District is reached from Fairbanks over a well-graded road which is open for auto travel from about the end of May to the end of October. The portion of the road over Eagle Summit, about 8 miles SW of Miller House, is the last to open in the spring and the first to close in the fall. The district is better supplied with roads than any district in the interior, except Fairbanks. Adequate roads lead to nearly all of the mines. There is an abundance of gravel in old tailing piles in most parts of the district.

The road to upper Harrison Creek could be extended three miles at relatively low expense to the Johnston and Blondo operation. Little grading would be needed and gravel is available from tailings along most of the route. The road to lower Harrison Creek, via Portage Creek, should be improved. There may be a future need for a road to the Birch Creek area south of Miller House. This area can be reached by several routes. In selecting a route for a road, consideration should be given to the mineralization of the intervening country, and not entirely to the cost of roads over the competing routes.

The only landing field in the district is that near Circle Springs. Because of the good roads, there is no present need for additional landing fields.

Telephone service is available to most of the mines in the district.

H.R. Joesting
Assoc. Min. Engineer.