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THE RUBY DISTRICT

B. D. STEWART

Commissioner of Mines

The Ruby District was visited by the writer from September 26 to October 5, 1938, for the purpose of obtaining data on mining and prospecting. A tabulation of present activities is appended. 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.

Mining and Prospecting

It is felt that little general discussion of the mining operations in this district is necessary, as they have been visited by Irving Reed for the Territorial Department of Mines. The only large scale operation is that of the Long Creek Mining Co., about which some additional remarks will follow. At present there is no drift mining in the Long area. A few drift mines are still operating around Poorman, where most of the ground is too deep for small scale open cut mining. There is relatively little prospecting in the Ruby District. This is partly because the generally deeper ground makes prospecting more expensive and slower than in some of the other regions.

Gold production in the Ruby District will increase greatly when sufficient capital is brought in to rework some of the old drifted ground by more economical large scale methods. In the Poorman area, Poorman Creek and several of its tributaries, also Spruce and Tamarack Creeks, and in the Long area, Greenstone, Midnight and possibly Monument Creeks appear to be suitable for larger scale operations. The spotted nature of the ground may present prospecting difficulties, and the lack of creek grade and generally small irregular water supply will tend to handicap mining. However, Poorman Creek, if the water problem can be solved, probably could be developed into one of the larger placer operations of Alaska.

The data obtained on the Long Creek Mining Co. is incomplete. The shooting of several men on September 27 caused mining to be suspended for the season, and left the camp in an unsettled condition. Mr. A. A. McCandless, who owned the ground

worked by the company on Greenstone Creek, did the shooting following a decision of the company to turn back to him the options on the creek. Mr. McCandless killed himself a short time later. ^{to 27}

There is dissatisfaction among some of the owners from whom the Long Creek Mining Co. is leasing ground, concerning the manner in which the ground is being worked. They believe that the company intends to work only the richer ground, and neglect ground that is leaner but which can be profitably worked. Other owners have sided with the company so that a certain amount of dissension exists. From a brief inspection, made after the plant had been shut down, it appears that the ground is not being worked in the most systematic manner possible, but it is difficult to say whether this is intentional or otherwise. There was no preliminary prospecting, as it is contended that the gold, being coarse and occurring in spots, cannot be prospected for by drilling. However, as the ground is frozen for the most part, satisfactory prospecting can be done by close spacing of the drill holes.

Transportation and Communication

The Ruby District is served by Alaska Railroad river steamers, which land freight at Ruby from where it is transported by trucks to the mining camps. The distance by road from Ruby to Long is 29 miles and to Poorman is about 58 miles. South and southeast of Poorman, winter trails lead to several nearby drift mines. There also is a winter trail to Ophir via Placerville, and one to Cripple. The Ruby-Poorman road is suitable for autos in dry weather, and during part of the winter, but is impassable during prolonged rainy periods. The writer found it necessary to walk from Ruby to Long and Poorman and back to Long because of the bad weather.

The freight rates from Seattle to Ruby via Nenana are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 cents a pound for less than carload lots. From Ruby to Poorman the freight rates are 4 cents a pound in summer and 5 cents in winter. Weekly mail deliveries are made to Long and Poorman and to mines en route.

Road repair work, consisting largely of laying new corduroy, was done in this district last summer by a crew of 8 to 10 men. Most of the work was done between Long and Poorman. A new steel bridge has been built across the Sulatna River alongside of the old one, about 12 miles from Poorman. Work was being done on the approaches, and it should be ready for use this fall.

The country between Poorman and Cripple is not being prospected at present. It is difficult of access, and while mineralized to some extent, is said to be deep for the most part. Doubtless a road from Poorman to Cripple would stimulate prospecting. However, more should be determined about the mineralization and the possibility of the existence of placer deposits before such a road is built. It also seems to the writer that a road from Poorman to the Kuskokwim River via Cripple, Tolstoy and Flat would stimulate prospecting and gold production in a very large mineralized area.

The only usable landing field in the district is located near Ruby. One was built near Poorman, but it was used only a few times, and is now abandoned. Good landing fields at Long and Poorman are badly needed.

An old telephone line runs between Ruby, Long and Poorman. It is in a bad state of repair, but occasionally calls can be made between Ruby and Long. A short telephone line which works after a fashion runs between Ruby and the landing field. The only radio transmitter known to the writer is at Ruby.

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