

T D M BULLETIN

November - 1953

MINING ACTIVITIES

FIRST DIVISION

Exploratory drifting is being continued at the Funter Bay nickel-copper-cobalt property rather than diamond drilling as reported in the last Bulletin. A crew of four men is at work on two headings.

QMI has apparently decided to wait until spring before continuing with their exploratory work at the Klukwan iron deposit.

W. S. Pekovich and "Bobby" Coughlin are obtaining patents on a group of sixteen claims covering the Snettisham iron deposit. Patenting a large group of claims like this has become a rare occurrence in Alaska with the possible exception of one or two large placer operations.

George Roberts is continuing exploration at his antimony prospect on Camaano Point, Cleveland Peninsula. A seventy-foot shaft has been sunk, and he is now drifting. This is a DMEA project, and it will probably cease for the winter in mid-November.

SECOND DIVISION

The big event in the Nome District is the development of plans to open the Big Hurrah Mine. All agencies are reportedly cooperating. The Alaska Road Commission has rebuilt three miles of road and has promised to keep it open through the winter. The Territorial Department of Aviation will build an airfield. A post office will be established, and a thrice-weekly mail schedule will be flown by Alaska Airlines. Radio communications are being set up with the cooperation of ACS. School facilities are under consideration.

All tin operations are now shut down for the winter with the exception of the lode mine at Lost River. The Lost River Mine has a current payroll of approximately 100 men.

It has been reported that the Northern Commercial Company Caterpillar Department at Nome has received its largest order in many years for "cats" and "cat" parts for next year's placer operations in the Second Division.

THIRD DIVISION

A pyrite deposit in Prince William Sound was examined during the past season by the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company of New York. They are reported to be currently negotiating with the owners of the property.

The Kennicott subsidiary, Bear Creek Mining Company, which has had a party investigating the large low-grade Orange Hill deposit has not yet announced their

findings or future plans. The deposit contains copper, molybdenite, gold, and silver. It is located in the Nabesna area.

A field party representing a Canadian group has recently examined a sulphur deposit on Makushin Volcano, Unalaska Island. Two well-known American companies are also reported to be interested in Alaskan sulphur possibilities.

The Peninsula Exploration Company is still working on its copper showing near Old Harbor, Sitkalidak Island. The company is hoping to obtain financial assistance on the property in the form of a DMEA loan.

Some new work is being done in the chromite area near Seldovia. Bill Lyons and associates have some very promising showings there to which they have built a "cat" road, and they intend to open-cut them throughout the winter.

Clay deposits in the Palmer District are being investigated.

Work has ceased for the season at the Wren, Waskey, and Wolff cinnabar prospect at Aleknagik, just north of Dillingham.

FOURTH DIVISION

Howard Sparks is reported to be trenching with a bulldozer on the ridge between Happy and St. Patrick's Creeks, Ester Dome. He is prospecting for stibnite.

The holders of the MacLaren River copper show are still undecided about applying for financial help in exploring their property. Present plans include the driving of a 150-foot adit.

Work is progressing favorably at the Red Devil and DeCoursey cinnabar mines. About thirty men are employed there, and Paul Sorenson is managing the operation.

COAL MINE NEWS

SAFETY

Last July, a law was passed by Congress placing responsibility for coal mine safety inspection and enforcement with the Federal Bureau of Mines and taking away the States' rights in this matter until they present policing plans acceptable to the Bureau. Under this law, the Territory of Alaska and the States of Washington and Oregon are the only ones thus far to submit plans that qualify them to handle coal mine safety work. The Territorial Department of Mines' plan is one of co-operation with the Bureau.

MINERS' EXAMINATION

The Territorial Coal Miners Examining Board met at Anchorage for the first time on October 5 to 9 and gave examinations to 14 coal miners who wished to qualify for 1st or 2nd class "papers". A coal miner must possess these if he wishes to be a boss or foreman when the position is available. Nine of the miners passed the examination. The remainder were disappointed, but they may repeat the examination next year if they wish.

COAL MINE RESERVES

According to news reports, Mr. Charles W. Connor has reported that coal mine operators in Alaska will be able to supply all anticipated military and civilian requirements in the Territory for several years. He also has reportedly stated that the Haines-Fairbanks oil pipeline will not handle grades of oil that will compete with coal. Mr. Connor headed a group of Department of the Interior coal experts who surveyed the Alaskan coal situation last summer. A copy of his report has not been made available to the Department of Mines, but it reportedly recommends the immediate construction of a railroad spur to link the Usibelli and Cripple Creek operations with the Alaska Railroad main line.

Governor B. Frank Heintzleman is requesting the Department of the Interior to release the Esko coal reserve in the Metanuska field in order that it may be made available to private operators.

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

In the First Division, some dipneedle work was done at Funter Bay to determine if that means could be used to help delimit the high-grade Cu-Ni-Co ore body, which is quite magnetic. A safety examination was made of the various tunneling projects in the vicinity of Ketchikan.

In the Second Division, equipment and supplies are being moved into the new Territorial Department of Mines building at Nome.

In the Third Division, the Department of Mines has helped clay pit investigations, examined the copper property of Peninsula Exploration Company, and helped them with paper work necessary for a DMEA loan application, entered into a cooperative arrangement with the U.S.G.S. for handling the samples from the oil-well drilling at Eureka, examined new chromite showings near Seldovia, and has been checking mining records in the various recording precincts.

Work in the Fourth Division has been confined the past month to preparation of maps and reports. Assaying and mineral identification services, of course, have been continued as usual in all Divisions.

U.S.G.S. ACTIVITIES

A Survey geologist and assistant made a brief reconnaissance at William Henry Bay in the First Division to investigate the oft-repeated story that platinum occurs there.

Another geologist made a trip on DMEA business in the course of which he investigated work done at the mercury prospect near Dillingham, and the Red Devil and DeCoursey cinnabar properties on the lower Kuskokwim.

BUREAU OF MINES

The Bureau of Mines has brought 150 tons of the alluvial material at the Klukwan iron deposit to its laboratory at Douglas for concentrating and metallurgical testing.

A crew of three men are making reconnaissance examinations in the vicinity of the Poorman iron deposit, Prince of Wales Island.

SCHOOL LAND GRAVEL CASE

Two of the three gravel concerns involved in the gravel-staking controversy at Anchorage have filed notice that they will appeal Judge Folta's decision that gravel is not a mineral and that proper discoveries were not made. The case will now be heard by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

ALASKA LANDS TO BE REEXAMINED

Secretary of the Interior McKay has approved a directive to expedite a review of all public lands now withdrawn or reserved for departmental activities in Alaska. Lands which are not further required or areas which are excessive in size will now be returned to open public land status. This action will make these lands available once more for sale, lease, or mineral locations.

NOTES FOR PROSPECTORS

The interest in iron deposits is still high. Representatives of steel companies will be in the Territory again next year looking for possibilities. Anyone knowing of reasonably accessible occurrences of iron would do well to investigate them to determine whether the tonnage is likely to be large. With the development of the new treatment methods for low-grade iron ores in the Mesabi Range, the possibilities of mining deposits like Klukwan and Snettisham in Alaska are increasing.

Large deposits of barite are in demand for use as drilling mud in the petroleum industry. For this use, the barite must be low in calcium and have a specific gravity higher than 4.2. As the price of barite is low, the deposit would have to be near water transportation.

Another industrial mineral which is in increasing demand is feldspar. In addition to the glass and ceramic industries which have long used feldspars, it is now reported that the steel industry is beginning to use feldspar as a flux in new smelting processes. Another new use is in cleansers. Like barite, feldspar is low priced, and deposits would have to be large and near water transportation to be of commercial interest.

Fluorite, or fluorspar, is yet another industrial mineral for which there is a growing demand. The price for it is presently quoted at from \$40 to \$60 per ton, depending on grade. It is used largely by the steel industry as a flux and also by the hydrofluoric acid industry. This latter industry is expanding rapidly because of the increasing use of derivatives by the petroleum industry in making insecticides and refrigerants. The most common occurrence of fluorite is in limestones as vein filling with quartz and calcite. An informative article on fluorite can be found on page 52 of the September, 1953, issue of the Western Miner.

The Territorial Department of Mines can furnish names and addresses of possible purchasers of these and other minerals to anyone wishing to contact them.

QUESTION

As stated in an earlier Bulletin, many of the copies of location certificates and assessment work affidavits that are coming into the Juneau office of the Territorial Department of Mines are improperly done, or show that improper work has been done on the claim. This, of course, places the claim holder's ground in jeopardy in case of a contest or in case the present noted trend in Washington continues toward stricter enforcement of mineral laws with regard to holding mining ground. It is the desire of the Department of Mines to inform claim holders on the various points of mining law as much as possible for their own protection. This was started in an earlier Bulletin with a brief dissertation on assessment work based on existing laws and court decisions, but as readers of Jessen's Weekly know, the Territorial Department of Mines was publicly criticized by at least one miner for making statements that differed with what he thought was legal assessment work. As a result of this rebuke, the Department of Mines has decided to move more cautiously in its education program and "put the question" to the mining public. Do you want the information or not?

The thought now is that we might write to individual claim holders whose records appear faulty and tell them confidentially what they are doing wrong. Before we start on a program of this type, we would like to know what Alaskan claim holders think of it. Therefore, we would appreciate hearing from anyone who has an opinion on the matter. Please address your letters to the Commissioner of Mines, Territorial Department of Mines, Box 1391, Juneau, Alaska.

It has been brought to our attention also that many persons who know we are receiving copies of their records are assuming that they must be correct if they hear nothing further on it. In other words, they are assuming that silent acceptance of their records amounts to an approval of them by the Territorial Department of Mines. It would appear, then, that if these claim holders lost claims later because of some error in their records, they would hold the Department of Mines responsible for not having informed them. We would like to make it clear to all concerned that the Territorial Department of Mines has no authority or jurisdiction over this phase of mining in Alaska, but feel that the Department should do everything possible to clarify and protect the miner's or prospector's interests in his claims.

B.L.M. MONEY

It has been reported that 25 states and Alaska will receive \$66,845,762.88 from the Bureau of Land Management as revenue from Federal lands under their jurisdiction. The principal source of this revenue was from mineral leases and permits, amounting to \$17,255,526.91. Alaska's share of these proceeds was not announced.

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