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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

JUNEAU, ALASKA

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TIN DEPOSITS IN WESTERN SEWARD PENNINSULA, ALASKA

The discovery of two tin-bearing veins in the bedrock at Cape Mountain, in the western part of the Seward Peninsula, Alaska, has considerably enhanced the prospect for the finding of additional reserves of this important strategic mineral in the area, according to a report made today to Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes by Director William E. Wrather of the Geological Survey. This discovery occurred during the investigations made at Lost River and Cape Mountain in the field season of 1944 as a part of the Survey's long-range program for the investigations of the tin-bearing deposits in the Seward Peninsula area.

Careful examination during the field season of 1943 of the loose rock covering the hill slopes in the Cape Mountain area resulted in the selection, by geologist P. L. Killeen, of three sites for further exploration. Two of these were trenched by the Bureau of Mines during 1944 and exposed tin-bearing veins in the underlying bedrock. One vein, 140 feet in length and locally 14 inches wide, is of a type from which the large pieces of nearly solid tin ore found in adjacent stream gravels could have been derived. Additional sites of tin ore float were found in the 1944 season. Although the orebodies thus found are not impressive in size, the outlook for the discovery of other orebodies appears more favorable than it was thought to be in the past, it was announced.

Tin ore is found in the Lost River area in dikes, veins, and in mineralized zones cutting the limestone throughout the general vicinity of the dikes. The study of drill cores obtained by the Bureau of Mines at Lost River in 1943 shows that the dikes, which have been the site of nearly all earlier prospecting, carry little tin at depth. The cores show, however, a fair tin content in the veins and mineralized area, as well as in the upper portion of a granite mass that lies several hundred feet below the surface in an area south of the dikes at Lost River. Drilling by the Bureau of Mines during 1944 was oriented to determine the extent of this mineralized part of the granite. The Survey's work in this area during 1944 emphasized the tracing of areas of tin float on the hill slopes, and subsequent trenching by the Bureau of Mines of the favorable sites has exposed several small but rich veins of tin and tungsten ore. The distribution of such small veins may be the best guide to the finding of the most intensely mineralized portions of the underlying granite.

Reports incorporating all available data on these two areas are now in preparation and will be released as soon as completed.

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