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The Trail Creek District, B.C.

From our Rossland Correspondent.

In the year 1894 the value of the total output of the mines of the Trail Creek camp amounted to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. This figure was increased to one million and a quarter last year. Such a wonderful increase in so short a time, and at a time too when the lack of anything like adequate transportation facilities for the shipment of ore, speaks more eloquently than words of the wonderful richness of the mines.

Six miles north-west of the confluence of the Pend d'Oreille and Columbia rivers, an average-sized mountain stream called "Trail" Creek, (from which the district takes its name) flows into the latter waterway. This creek was well known to placer miners in the late sixties, as the celebrated Dewdney Trail, which was built to connect Hope, on the Pacific coast, with the then fabulously rich placer diggings on the Wild Horse creek in East Kootenay. This trail follows the course of the creek from its mouth to its source—about ten miles. However, it is not definitely known whether these early pioneers ever found evidences of the vastness and richness of the present Trail Creek camp or not, the first authentic account of the value of the ore being the discoveries made by Ben Thrasher and a party of prospectors in the summer of 1887. The following summer but one, a French Canadian by the name of Bordeau made the first discovery and located a claim called the Lily May, of which more will be said anon, as the claim is now under bond for \$25,000. Bordeau worked the claim during that winter, and found much to encourage him. In July, 1890, Joseph Moris and Joseph Bourgeois, two men who had been in Bordeau's employ during the previous winter, started on a prospecting trip in the direction of Red Mountain, and there located the Le Roi, Centre Star, War Eagle, Iron Mask and Virginia claims, staking in one day a group of five claims that to-day could not be bought for ten millions of dollars.

At that time, Nelson, situated on the outlet of Kootenay Lake, and distant some sixty miles, was the only recording office in the district. While there having their claims recorded, and the ore assayed, they met E. S. Topping, and, under the law, being unable to hold two claims on the same lead, and as the LeRoi, Centre Star, and Idaho appeared to be located on the same ledge, they gave Topping his choice of the three in consideration of paying the recording fees on the group. Topping chose the LeRoi, as the ore from this claim showed on assay a slightly better gold value than any of the others.

Topping returned, carefully sampled the vein, and, armed with splendid samples of ore and assay certificates, he then went to Spokane, and succeeded in inducing some western mining-men, with Mr. Oliver Durant, a mining-man of many years practical experience, to take hold. A bond of \$16,000 was taken on sixteen-thirtieths of the mine. Subsequently, Mr. Durant sold his interest in the Le Roi, and bonded the Centre Star. For five years Mr. Durant has continued to put his money

in the camp, and up to date has not received a cent in return, though the day is not far distant when the Centre Star will re-imburse him for all his labor. Mr. Durant is certainly the pioneer and father of the camp. In the winter of 1890-91, the LeRoi Company had a carload of ore packed on mules' back to the Columbia river, and from thence shipped to the smelter at Butte, Montana. This ore averaged \$86.40 in gold and copper to the ton. However, regular shipments did not commence until three years later, as the cost of packing and transportation was very excessive. In the interim a great deal of desultory development work was being done on the Le Roi, War Eagle, Centre Star and Josie claims.

Though the camp is comparatively new, and has only been known to the outside world for the past year, it is easily accessible from the main lines of any of the great trans-continental railway systems which girt the continent. Leaving the C. P. R. at Revelstoke, a pleasant trip down the Columbia river on one of the splendid steamers of the Columbia and Kootenay Navigation Co. lands one at Trail. On this trip the grandest and most rugged mountain scenery in America can be most comfortably enjoyed, and the meanderings and sinuosities of the great Columbia, the commercial artery of the West Kootenay district, among the snow-clad mountains, are a sight never to be forgotten. Trail on the Columbia, by the road of the Columbia river and Western Railway, is ten miles from Rossland, which is virtually situated at the "dumps" of the mines. A five hours' journey from Spokane, in the State of Washington, which is on the main line of the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific and Great Northern systems, lands the passenger at Northport. At Northport streamers meet all trains for Trail.

ROSSLAND.

Rossland is to the Trail Creek mines what Johannesburg is to the Rand, and an idea may be gathered of its importance from the fact that in less than a year it grew from a straggling hamlet of some dozen log-cabins to a prosperous town of nearly 4,000 inhabitants. The town proper is situated on a succession of "benches" at the base of Red Mountain. Rossland is a substantial and prosperous place. It has an incandescent electric light plant, a first-class waterworks system, while its stores and buildings are second to none in Southern Kootenay. Though the town has sprung up in a night, as it were, Rossland is no "mush-room" town, redolent of and reeking with all the vices and moral pitfalls familiar to and typical of (according to Bret Harte) the latest mining camp in the wild and woolly west. Quite the contrary, Rossland is noted for its quietness and respect for the laws. John Kirkup, recorder, has been the constable, recorder, gaoler, and, in fact, a veritable Poo-Bah. He is respected far and near, and exercises a wonderful influence over the motley crowd, who necessarily make up the population of the new mining camp. In Rossland there is no legalized gambling, no "gun plays," no variety theatres, and the usual complement of dance-halls find no place here. Drinking there is, of course, but little compared with that usually going on in a new town, where the excitement of making money generally keeps the human pulse at fever heat. All lines