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CARLYLE'S REPORT ON SLOCAN AND NELSON DISTRICTS.

The report of W. A. Carlyle, provincial mineralogist, on the Slocan, Nelson and Ainsworth districts, is just to hand. It is most complete and comprehensive and will prove exceedingly useful. In his introduction Mr. Carlyle says:

"The fame of the large and unique gold-bearing deposits of Rossland has now spread far afield, with the result that during the past year the attention of mining men and capitalists from all parts of the world has been drawn to British Columbia, and many have been here and bought mining property, or will return next year to seek investment, for which this province without peradventure now offers most favorable and advantageous opportunities.

"The mining industry of British Columbia, it must be remembered, apart from the placer, gold and coal mining, is of very recent inception. Until eight or nine years ago the great extent of the mountainous country south of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the boundary line, was a wilderness known to few save the Indians and hunters, or the prospectors for gold diggins, but the finding of silver-copper ore on Toad mountain, and the beginning of work on the silver-lead ore deposits on the east of Kootenay lake, discovered many years ago by men in the Hudson Bay Company's employ, with the subsequent discovery among the mountains near by of other silver ledges, signalized the commencement of mining in Kootenay. But it was not until 1890-91 that these silver veins were beginning to attract mining men to this province from abroad, and active operations were getting well under way despite the difficulties and great cost of bringing in supplies or transporting ore to the smelters, when all progress was for a time stopped and hope crushed by the sudden collapse in silver values, occasioned by the closing of the Indian mints to the free coinage of this metal.

"Work, nevertheless, on some of the veins was persevered in, and in 1894 nearly \$650,000 worth of silver ore was sent out of Kootenay. Then better means of communication were provided, and in 1895 the production of the different kinds of silver ore increased to over \$1,000,000, which production has been doubled in 1896.

"Meanwhile, the gold-bearing pyrrhotite deposits on Trail Creek were being exploited under many vicissitudes, until the shipments of pay ore, in 1894, to the value of \$75,000, and of nearly ten times this amount in 1895 from the large ore bodies of the Le Roi and War Eagle, commanded widespread interest by reason of its being gold ore and very profitable, and in 1896 has been seen a great influx of capital's representatives and mining men, who are not only securing gold properties, but are investing in silver as well.

"The production of the Kootenay mines, when compared with that of many of the mining centres in other countries, will not appear so very large to a casual reader, but when all the conditions are understood, that an entirely new country of large territorial extent is being rapidly opened up under difficulties;

that the supply of needed capital, until recently, has been meagre, and that in reality not a single mine has had time to do sufficient development to put it on a really proper basis for extraction of ore and further exploratory work, this production will then be seen to indicate a most flourishing and hopeful condition of affairs.

"As to the future there is now no doubt but that the number of paying mines and the mine output will steadily increase in the districts to be described, but not with that extravagant rate of increase predicted by some - at least not until those conditions exist that will permit the extraction of a much greater tonnage of ore. Such conditions are being supplied, and judging from the shipments already made in the new year, which exceed those of any previous year for the corresponding time, the output from Kootenay for 1897 will show a very substantial increase.

"For some time back there has existed a strong antipathy to silver properties, and foreign investors especially have refused to entertain any proposition that was not on a gold basis, but now the fact is being realized that with silver even at its greatly reduced value, if there is a sufficient number of ounces of this white metal in the ore, a silver or silver-lead mine is quite as profitable and as desirable as a gold mine, and the handsome returns from the very high grade silver ores being mined in the districts to be described, are attracting increasing attention, as is testified by the numbers now seeking silver properties and the transactions recorded, as many mines or claims have been bought or bonded by English, American and Canadian investors during the past season, not only within these districts, but other parts of British Columbia.

"The outlook for the coming year is especially bright, as many properties are beginning the new year with ore in sight, new mines have been added to the list, very promising prospects are being opened up, and during 1897 nearly every claim from which ore has been shipped in the past, will be on the list of shippers. There promises to be a steady increase in the amount of the ore extracted and sold and in the amount of development done, but it is both unwise and hurtful to predict very large and sudden advances in the mineral output, as it must be remembered that a greatly increased output requires also a greatly increased amount of under-ground work, unless large bodies of very high grade ore are uncovered. Extravagant prophecies may travel far, and if the actual results do not approach the amount thus foretold, harm unjustly a mine or district in which the progress has been most favorable and satisfactory, quite equal to the expectations of those best qualified to know."

A feature of the report which will prove of interest is the statement of ore production and values from the producing mines of the Slocan and Ainsworth districts. The impression has prevailed that the ore of the Silver King mine was very rich, but this idea is dissipated by Mr. Carlyle's figures, which show that the returns from nearly 30,000 tons of Silver King ore were approximately 21 ounces of silver and 37-10 per cent. copper. The fact that such ore is successfully

treated and pays the cost of production and smelting is certainly most encouraging to those interested in the low-grade propositions of Kootenay.

The Slocan with an area 15 by 25 miles, Mr. Carlyle characterizes as the most productive mining district in the province. This winter nearly fifty properties are shipping high grade with very profitable results and a large number of other claims being opened up.

During 1896, 18,215 tons yielded 2,141,088 ounces of silver and 19,210,667 pounds of lead and an average of 117.4 ounces of silver per ton and 52.7 per cent lead giving a net profit of \$75 per ton. Many carloads of ore shipped yielded as high as 300 and 400 ounces of silver per ton. The Slocan Star which has the largest chute of high grade ore in the district received from the smelters, from 11,529 tons of ore and concentrates sold during the last three years, 912,000 ounces of silver and 13,482,090 pounds of lead.

In speaking of the Ainsworth district Mr. Carlyle says it is recovering rapidly from the set back following the decline of silver prices and nine mines shipped ore during 1896, averaging 30 or 40 ounces in silver.

The mines shipping ore during the last season were: Slocan, 42; Nelson, 4; Ainsworth, 9. The miners at work were: Slocan, 1000; Ainsworth, 200; Nelson, 350. The ore shipped was: Slocan, 2,316,561 ounces of silver, 17,778,384 pounds of lead, value \$2,085,445 against \$942,094 in 1895. Nelson, 586,143 ounces of silver and 2,010,294 pounds of lead, value \$493,225, against \$38,120 in 1895. Ainsworth, 203,897 ounces of silver, 2,476,972 pounds of lead, value \$210,918, against \$384,677 in 1895; the falling off in this district being due to the stoppage of work on the Blue Bird, where the ore had become rather low grade for present conditions.

TALKING ABOUT CONDITIONS.

The Ottawa correspondent of the World wires this paper as follows: "It is currently reported in political circles that negotiations are in progress between the government and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. It is said Mr. Blair realizes that a line through the Crow's Nest could not be built by the government as cheaply as by an independent corporation, but there stands in his way the feeling in Alberta, as well as in British Columbia, in favor of the construction and operation of the line under government auspices. Mr. Blair is anxious to placate the feeling in the Territories and British Columbia before committing the government to aid the Canadian Pacific in this matter. He wants a definite understanding in the matter of freight rates, not only over the proposed new line, but over all the lines of the company. The contention of the company in the past has been that its rates are not unreasonable, and while it is not stated precisely, what Mr. Blair's wishes are, on excellent authority it is learned that he will not consent to the acquisition of the charter for the Crow's line by the C. P. R., and government assistance towards its construction, until a definite arrangement regarding local and through rates, has been secured with the company."