

MINING.

GREGORY, MONTANA, April, 1886.

To the Editor of the Critic:—

Sir,—During the past winter I have been much interested, both as a miner and as a Nova Scotian, in the encouraging reports of the Nova Scotian Gold Mines, given from time to time in the columns of THE CRITIC.

The test shaft seems to be taking a good deal of the public attention at present, so that a few words on that subject may not be amiss. I have every confidence in the belief that gold in paying quantities will be found by deep sinking on the gold lodes in Nova Scotia, but I must confess I am afraid of this test shaft. A good many seem to be of the opinion that gold will be struck very much in the same manner that water is—after reaching a certain depth.

Now a person with any experience in mining knows, that a shaft, as a rule, is a very poor test of a quartz lode, as the shaft may be in barren quartz for hundreds of feet, and at the same time, mineral in paying quantities be within a short distance. Reference has been made to the Idaho Mine, of Grass Valley, Cal., and to the Ontario Mine of Utah.

One would suppose from the letters in THE CRITIC and Halifax Herald that what is at present making the Idaho Mine famous was discovered by a test shaft. In a manner it was—but I am afraid that had it been Nova Scotia capitalists who were operating the Idaho Mine, the test shaft in that case would have been a failure. The fact that large quantities of gold had been taken from the mine adjoining gave the owners encouragement to thoroughly prospect, and the present rich bodies of mineral were discovered by a drift 2000 feet from the bottom of the main shaft, which is 1000 feet in depth, so that the ore is hoisted by means of compressed air through an incline shaft to the tenth level and from there taken to the main shaft and hoisted to the surface.

The Ontario Mine has been referred to. In this mine they have had mineral in paying quantities from the grass-roots, but in the extension, the Standard Oil Company, the richest company in America, have expended thousands upon thousands of dollars, in an unsuccessful effort to find mineral in paying quantities.

Here in one case the test shaft is a success, the other has resulted in a failure, and in my opinion the same result will be found in the mines of Nova Scotia. What may be a success on one lode will be a failure on another. And for the Government to sink or assist in sinking a deep shaft as a test, seems to me to be putting our all on one throw of the dice, because should this test shaft prove a failure, the gold mines of Nova Scotia will receive the worst set back they have ever had.

I think there are various ways by which the Government can encourage mining in a far better manner than by sinking a test shaft.

It is a well-known fact that there is scarcely a dump of tailings from any stamp mill in Nova Scotia but what will show a large percentage of gold. Now would it not be better for the Government to use some of their surplus money in trying to get some more improved method for saving the gold that is already in sight.

Could the low grade quartz be worked to a greater advantage than at present, I have little doubt but that the owners will do their own deep sinking.

Another thing would greatly assist the mines of Nova Scotia and that is to improve the roads leading to the mines. I have been in a good many mining camps in the Rocky Mountains, but in no place have I seen worse roads than I have seen near some of the mines of Nova Scotia.

Let a railroad be subsidized that will go through a mineral portion of Nova Scotia, say Eastern Halifax taking a portion of Guysborough and Pictou Counties and on to Cape Breton, then there will be ten times more life thrown into the mines than this test shaft will ever produce. Wishing prosperity to the mines of Nova Scotia and to THE CRITIC.

I am yours, &c.,

MINER.

A new metallic element has been discovered by Clemens Winkler, a German chemist. It occurs in Argyrodite, a silver ore from the Himmelsturm mine, near Freyburg. It is called Germanium, symbol Ge, and has a great resemblance to antimony, is gray, volatile at a full red heat, though as readily than antimony. The vapor deposits small crystals resembling those of iodine, which do not melt. Herr Winkler is determining its atomic weight, with a view to determine its place in the periodic arrangement.

A new gold field has been discovered in Patagonia, S. A. It is known to extend for 40 miles along the coast. A number of Chilians are already working and are reported as netting from \$200 to \$1000 per month.

NOVA SCOTIA'S MINING EXHIBIT.—The Government of Nova Scotia by special arrangement with Sir Charles Tupper, have secured the privilege of exhibiting a collection of the minerals of this Province *en bloc*. This will show the mineral wealth of Nova Scotia in a much more satisfactory manner than the more scientific but less practical arrangement adopted by Dr. Hayden for the general exhibit of the Geological Survey. The exhibit of the Provincial Government will be strong in coal and iron, and some fine mineral samples will be shown, but as the work of collecting was not begun till the last of December, it is far short of a complete representation. There will be over one hundred exhibits, all of which have been shipped. The annual report of the inspector of mines will contain a short account of the minerals of Nova Scotia, in addition to the annual summary of mining progress, and an extra edition will be sent to London for distribution at the exhibition.

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CHARLES J. MACDONALD,
Post Office Inspector.

Post Office Inspector's Office,
Halifax, 2nd April, 1886



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