

rock and that the ores carry considerable amounts of chloride of silver and other varieties of silver ores rarely met with elsewhere in this country it is to be remembered that the first three crown grants applying to metalliferous lodes in British Columbia were issued in favour of claims located on Silver Peak.

Interesting, too, on account that in connection with these claims the residents of the Coast towns took for a time a keen interest in lode mining as distinguished from placer mining—an interest of which they gave proof by investing in shares of the companies formed to develop the ledges.

The mountain is situated in township 4, range 26, west of the 6th meridian and is about seven miles south of the village of old Fort Hope, originally a Hudson's Bay post, once the gateway to the great interior regions of the Okanagan, the Kootenays and the Colville districts, the posts of which were supplied once a year by the brigades of the company over their own cart trail. During the gold excitement on the Fraser Hope was a busy camp with a large floating population. Of late years the village has been in a moribund condition. A little travel to the Similkameen country and the silver-lead camp of Summit City, 27 miles distant at the headwaters of the Tullameen, with some gold dredging in the neighbourhood have prevented total extinction. With the construction of the proposed coast railway to the interior the place will rapidly regain some of its old-time importance. It is charmingly situated on the bank of the river, but on the opposite side to the railway station, and is at one elbow of the great bend to the north which the Fraser here begins to make.

The mines of Silver Peak are reached by a pack trail built in the early days, which leaves the Hope-Chilliwack government road at the crossing of Silver Creek near its junction with the river. The trail is of a total length of about six miles of which the first two miles rising very gradually from the river elevation of 130 feet run along Silver Creek a boisterous torrent famed for its splendid fishing. The remaining four miles consist of steep zig-zags with the exception of a flat of several acres in extent across which the path runs before the ascent of what may be called the Peak proper begins.

From this point the mountain commences to divide into two stupendous pinnacles. This division, gradual at first, follows the track of a great snowslide down which chasm in summer a snow-fed cascade thunders. Higher up the peaks are connected by but a razor-backed ridge. Bearing to the left the trail circles and clings to the mountain wall and with abrupt turns gradually works its way upwards until at an elevation of 4,850 feet it emerges on a tiny flat on which one of the old bunk houses still stands.

The discovery of one of the ledges—the Eureka—was made by an Indian of the Emory Bar Reservation, George Wil-willuts, in 1870. While hunting goat he found on a rock slide numerous fragments of ore. Taking some of the float with him he hastened back to Hope and on having received a promise of sundry goods and valuables *inter alia* a gun which local tradition says he never received, he led some white men to his find.

Those early years of the seventies were the palmy days of silver—the price stood at double the present figure. All over the west men grew rich in a day or went broke in an hour and the fame of the Bonanza Kings and the Comstock, the Emma, the Silver Islet

on Thunder Bay and many other fortune making mines with its resultant speculative activity spread to every corner of the continent. The discovery of the Hope silver claims with their high grade assays led naturally enough to the conviction in Victoria and New Westminster that a repetition of the money-making times of Nevada and other mining regions might be expected nearer home. So it was not a difficult matter for the locators of the Eureka to enlist local support in the Eureka Silver Mining Company, which was organized under the Company Ordinance, 1862, in September, 1871, with a capital of \$150,000, divided into 3,000 shares of \$50.00, with Mr. George Deitz in charge of development. The shareholders included most of those who were prominent at the time in the Colony in official, professional and commercial circles.

These claims were taken up and crown-granted under "An Ordinance to facilitate the working of mineral lands," No. 123, 10th March, 1869, the preamble of which runs: "Whereas it is expedient to develop the resources of the Colony by affording facilities for the effectual working of silver, lead, iron, copper, coal, and other minerals, other than gold—be it enacted," etc., etc.

Under this Act certain fees were payable for the right to prospect within extended limits and after the licensees had completed their preliminary prospecting operations they were called upon to define within a restricted area the ground they desired to have surveyed and ultimately deeded to them. The section defining the area allowed runs: "shall for each individual applicant not exceed three chains long by two chains wide and for each association or company of ten persons thirty chains long by six chains wide." Under this Act the Victoria Silver Mining Company received on the 7th July, 1875, a crown grant for the Van Bremer ledge, being the first ever issued under the above ordinance. The second grant was issued to the Eureka and the third to a small claim afterwards incorporated with the Eureka Company.

During the years 1871-75 work was carried on to some extent on both the Eureka and Victoria claims. The trail was built, several cabins erected, as also a short rope tramway from the Eureka main tunnel to the dump. On the Victoria the main tunnel was about 80 feet in length and the Eureka some 220. Some surface mining was also done. The history of the companies was pretty much that of all the early lode mines in British Columbia. What with insufficient funds and shareholders with assessable shares and others with unassessable stock and a law-suit thrown in, it is not difficult for us to understand that the ultimate collapse of operations was only a matter of time. Misfortunes seemed to dog even some of the individual operators. One of the original locators was executed at Victoria for murder and another who was one of those most prominent in pushing matters lost his life in the wreck of the steamship "Pacific." It may also be pointed out what great difficulties the companies had to contend with, not only in the high price of labour, tools, explosives, provisions and local packing rates, but in the cost of the transportation of such mineral as they mined to the one or two smelters then in operation in the Western States, where the complex ores which these claims produced could be treated at the exorbitant charges then prevailing.

Perhaps the following extracts from various government reports will explain to some extent the