

The Springer Creek District.

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THE Springer Creek District in West Kootenay concerning which so much has been heard during the last few months, and of which we are likely to hear a great deal more in the near future, comprises a tract of country at the foot of Slocan Lake the exact limits of which have never been accurately defined, but for purposes of description it may conveniently be considered to be bounded on the north by the watershed or divide which separates Ten Mile from Springer Creek, on the south by the main waters of Lemon Creek, on the west by portions of Slocan River and Lake, and on the east by the watershed separating it from the Ainsworth district; so that it covers a roughly estimated area of about 150 square miles, having a length from east to west of some 15 miles and a breadth from north to south of 10 miles.

The history of Springer Creek is, practically speaking, its history of the last year, as until quite recently but little legitimate prospecting was attempted.

The first evidence we have of its being seriously regarded as a mineralized region was in June, 1893, when amongst others William Springer, whose name the principal creek now bears, went prospecting in the neighborhood for placer deposits, and coming across a promising quartz ledge, staked a claim which he called the Dayton, the creek adjoining, which is tributary to Springer being now known as Dayton Creek. The claim is thus described in the *Nelson Tribune* of Feb. 10th, 1894: "It carries dry ore and is located in the granite belt, three miles east of and near the foot of Slocan Lake, 20 miles from New Denver. The vein is 2½ feet wide, carrying 10 inches of pay ore, averaging 215 ounces silver and \$21 gold per ton. The highest assay was 920 ounces silver and \$40 gold. Mr. Springer has sold the claim to Mr. Hanover the Salt Lake smelter man."

Nothing definite however, appears to have been done, and the fortunes of the few prospectors who found their way into Springer Creek were unrecorded until the fall of ninety-four when the now famous Arlington claim was staked by C. E. Fielding and R. Cooper. The appearance of this at first indicated nothing very startling, but when in April of last year the present magnificent showing was disclosed as the result of two assessments, a tremendous excitement was caused at once, and prospectors from all parts flocked in.

During the summer and fall nearly 300 claims were staked in that district alone, and the receipts at the recording office here in New Denver were unprecedented.

Prospecting continued and reports of marvellous finds kept coming in until the snow literally drove the prospectors from the hills. These reports were backed up in many instances by substantial assays, but as is only to be expected from the lateness of the season at which most of them were discovered, few assessments have yet been done, and it remains to be seen whether the ledges are permanent; but it must be confessed that all of those on which any development has been attempted, have more than upheld the most sanguine opinions which were formed of them, and the Springer Creek District seems destined at no distant date to supply that very necessary article to the efficient and economic working of home smelters, a profitable dry ore.

As soon as ever the weather will permit numbers of prospectors will be in evidence to do the assessment

work on claims which they staked last fall, and I have not the slightest doubt from what I have already seen, that many splendid propositions will be brought to light.

The formation of the country is generally conceded to be granite and it was largely on this account that the district was for so long disregarded, as it appears that many of the old prospectors had imaginary reasons for supposing it to be unproductive. A similar prejudice appears to exist regarding some of the mountains on the western shore of the lake and as the reasons in either case were not very obvious, it may be that the one will prove as great a fallacy as the other; there certainly appears to be no reason why there should not be many good ledges on that side of the lake yet awaiting discovery. However, regarding the actual formation of Springer Creek, I don't think it is to be disposed of quite so easily as many people imagine. So far no reliable geological explorations have been attempted, or at least if it has the results have not been made public and no printed map whatever of the district exists, so that it is impossible to speak authoritatively respecting the nature or extent of the various formations. There are many reasons however for believing that the geology of that section is considerably more complicated than is generally supposed.

True granite undoubtedly exists there in large quantities, but dykes of porphyry, serpentine and other eruptive rocks, cut the formation in many places; limestone, slates and schists are also found in the immediate vicinity and it would be presumptuous for me to attempt a more detailed description without first making a thorough and comprehensive examination.

Another feature of the country which is difficult of explanation with the limited information at my disposal, is the exact character and mode of formation of the veins. They vary in width from a few inches to several feet and dip at all angles, some appearing almost horizontal, others again being nearly vertical. Speaking generally, the true fissures trend east and west, while the smaller ledges or stringers point north-east and south-west or direct north and south. The district is usually regarded as forming part of a large dry ore belt, but recent discoveries tend to show that it contains paying wet ore propositions as well.

The most noticeable mineral is of course argentite or sulphide of silver. This contains when pure 87.1 per cent. of silver and is present in varying quantities in nearly all the veins. It is probably the most commonly occurring ore of silver and is found in large quantities in all the great silver-producing countries of the world, the United States, Mexico, Germany, Chili, Peru, etc., but it does not appear to exist in paying quantities in Canada outside of this district, except in one or two isolated cases. The ores all carry more or less gold in conjunction with the silver and not infrequently you may find visible evidence of both native gold and silver in the same specimen, which I believe is somewhat of an anomaly and would serve to indicate the extreme richness of the ore.

Contrary to general belief the dry ore region, so far as has been observed, is not separated with any degree of distinctness from the galena producing portions of the district, and it is no uncommon thing to find ledges carrying both wet and dry ores. To illustrate this we will instance the case of the Arlington. This claim, as before mentioned, was discovered by C. E. Fielding and R. Cooper. It is situated some seven miles up Springer Creek and the present showing, which is disclosed on the side of a small creek bank, is probably the best in the district. It presents to view about seven feet of enormously rich ore which, however, is somewhat peculiar of arrangement. The larger part of the vein consists of a