

The Working of a Modern Mine

Written for The Western Home Monthly by James Harold Thompson.

The modern mine, as mines go in British Columbia, is an institution harboring within its borders men of all trades, and some representing professions. To those who are not conversant with the workings of a modern mine the pay roll would be of great interest. This monthly sheet gives one an idea of the actual expense for labor in operating a prosperous mining property. Those who draw salaries from the company are not all residents at the mine; and, under the heading of "non-

resident salaried employes" we include the doctor. He may reside at the mining camp, some distance from the mine. Also the attorney, whose practice keeps him in a distant city. The men who come under the head of "miners" are the nucleus around which forms a coterie of trades, equal in variety to those in a modern village. One is reminded of a quiet peaceful country town when, climbing up the mountain trail, you hear the clanging music of the anvil at the mine's blacksmith shop.

Up along a tortuous trail your panting horse carries you until far above you see, at what appears to be within a stone's throw of the apex mountain, the bunk-house. Perched above an overhanging precipice, it stands alone in its solitude, surrounded by a bleak and barren landscape, here and there the charred remains of a tree adding to the uninteresting aspect of the miner's home.

In this unpainted, barren-looking building, in company with the miners, live men representing a diversion of trades which have nothing to do with the handling of pick or drill. First in importance comes the cook, and his assistants—commonly known among the men as "funkies" or "slingers." The average salary of a mining cook is \$90

per month, while his helpers, who are practically apprentices, receive from \$50 to \$80. The mine employing seventy-five miners always has upon its pay roll at least twenty-five men of other callings. These non-miners employed by the company fill the positions of blacksmith, tool-sharpener, timbermen, timber-framers, carpenters, sawyers, teamsters, assayer, draughtsmen, engineer and bookkeeper. If any other artisan is required he is immediately imported—many times regardless of expense.

All materials used in and about the mine are of the best quality obtainable; and of articles in constant use, such as dynamite, dynamite caps, picks, drills, etc., a sufficient supply is always kept on hand. The manager of a mine

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