

IRON ORE DEPOSITS OF VANCOUVER AND TEXADA ISLANDS, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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Introduction.

With the rapid development of the west, the proposal has frequently been made to establish an iron industry on the Pacific coast, instead of importing iron products from the east. An attempt to accomplish this was made in 1880, when a small blast furnace was erected at Irondale, in the state of Washington, for the manufacture of pig iron. "It had a daily capacity of ten tons, and was a hot-blast charcoal furnace. It was operated for six months, and then was replaced by a 50 ton furnace, which, a few months later, was reconstructed, and for years turned out a good grade of pig iron, until, in 1891, it was closed down. In 1901 Pennsylvania capital was interested in it. The Pacific Steel Company was organized to acquire and operate it. The plant was modernized, and about \$100,000 expended on it, and in December, 1901, the manufacture of pig iron was resumed. Ores from Texada island, and from Hamilton, Skagit county, Washington, were used, mixed in the proportion of 700 tons of Texada ore to 50 tons of Hamilton ore. The Texada ore was arranged in large heaps, and roasted to get rid of the sulphur, and also to render it porous, to facilitate reduction. The principal flux was limestone, and the chief fuel was charcoal, with a little coke from Cokedale, in Skagit county. Castings were made three time a day. The pig iron was sold to the various foundries around Puget sound, Oregon and British Columbia."¹

As the attempt did not meet with success, the plant was soon shut down. This fact has not had a deterring effect; on the contrary, new efforts have, during the past year, been made to re-open the works, and the possibility of this American iron industry resuming has stimulated prospecting for iron ore on the coast of British Columbia.

In the summer of 1907 the writer spent the field season in studying the reported iron ore deposits of Vancouver and Texada islands. It is the purpose of this report to give the result of that work, but, in doing so, the writer desires to state that, with very few exceptions, none of the iron ore locations have had any more development work done than was necessary to meet assessment requirements. A few strippings, or an open-cut, is often all that can be seen.

¹ See general review of mining in British Columbia, Bulletin 19; Victoria, B.C.