

prise of the editor of a weekly paper, is due a large share of the credit in carrying the movement to a successful issue.

ON SAMPLING

It is an axiomatic truth that not one man in one hundred is capable of sampling an ore-body or stock-pile fairly and without prejudice. Although this truth is recognized, it is not acted upon in very many cases. A feeble assent will be accorded it, but sampling is even now largely left to inexperienced youths. When sampling is done as a step in the mining or metallurgical processes of an operating company, there may be and there often is, gross laxness. When that company is selling a product of mine or smelter, another element is imported into the sampling. It is easily recognized then that loss may follow hard upon the heels of carelessness or ignorance, and errors are guarded against with elaborate pains.

To the lay mind, sampling signifies little beyond securing a "chunk" of ore, or other material, and having it analyzed. But we have seen men of light and learning in technical matters gravely submit a sample, a hand-picked specimen. As, almost invariably, higher results are obtained from the "specimen" than from the legitimate sample, it is obviously a hard task to combat this particular perversion. Even the painstaking labor of an experienced sampler is sometimes vitiated by his personal predilections or prejudices. Suppose that he is sampling a stock-pile, over which there has been a dispute, and that he is one of the disputants, it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for that man to dispossess his mind of all preconceptions. Not a few devices, some of them ingenious and some merely silly, have been suggested with the object of eliminating the personal equation. One expedient, the offspring of a vagarious brain, consists in tearing up a sheet of paper in small pieces and throwing a handful of these pieces with the wind at intervals over the ground to be sampled. A piece of ore is then taken wherever paper has fallen. One trial of this method is sufficient.

But we wander from our overdue moral. The point which emerges from all this is to this effect, that to fairly qualify as an ore sampler a man must be honest first of all; and that, further, he must be intelligent and observant. Even then he may fail lamentably.

CONCERNING OTTAWA

It is announced from Ottawa that a Deputy Minister is to be appointed to assist the Hon. Mr. Templeman in administering his Department. The office is being created, and its creation will entail a sub-division of responsibility. The Deputy will have control of the Mines Section. The present Department of Mines, and a portion of the Geological Survey, will come under his jurisdiction. The need of such an office is not apparent. But, granting that there be such a need, the selection of a suitable Deputy should be a matter of most careful consideration. Never before has so much depended upon the proper and responsible exploration of our country. Interest in mining and in metallurgical process is at its flood. With the encouragement and with the intelligent assistance from an organized corps of Government geologists, and other specialists, we shall go on from strength to strength. Much, very much,

depends upon that help. The efficiency of that help may be destroyed by hasty or ill-considered action on the part of the Government. To state the matter plainly, we strongly urge that, since such a position is to be created, the incumbent be a man, not only of recognized administrative ability, but also of attainment and eminence in the very work which he is to supervise. This is essential. The intrusion of politics in such an appointment as this—a contingency which we hope is indeed remote—would be a lasting blot on the Department's fair name, and a sure precursor of bickerings, strife and incompetency.

LARDER LAKE

At date of writing, more than 3,000 claims have been registered around and about Larder Lake. Company after company is being floated with capitalizations which make one dizzy.

At risk of falling into that obnoxious category of human beings designated "knockers," we wish to express our views. Pick up a prospectus of a Larder Lake company. Read it with care. In almost every case you will see the claim made that fabulously rich assay values have been found close to the property being exploited. In some rare cases these values, it is stated, have actually been found upon the areas of the company whose prospectus you are reading. But it is very generally true that the majority of Larder Lake properties are valued on an entirely assumptive basis. The district is hardly yet in the initial stage of development. Not until late in April can systematic prospecting be undertaken. And yet thousands of dollars are being invested in possibilities! Improbabilities even are being capitalized at astounding figures!

We have not a word to say against Larder Lake as a legitimate and likely field for prospecting. Of its geological probabilities and limitations we are not now competent to speak. But no camp can survive the reckless and insanely unbusiness-like "boom" to which this place is now being subjected.

We wish to add one word in closing, and it is this. When statements of assay values are quoted in any prospectus, it is safer and saner to ignore them altogether unless signed affidavits describing the exact places, conditions and method of sampling, the name of the sampler, the name of the assayer, the size of sample and the circumstances under which it was shipped can be obtained. This is one very necessary and very much neglected preliminary step. You have, at this point, sufficient information to justify you in making further inquiry. Your next step is to engage a competent consulting mining engineer to go over the property in question and report upon the feasibility of beginning mining operations. In brief, there is no reason under the sun why mining should not be approached in the same business-like attitude which is characteristic of the successful merchant.

THE PROSPECTOR AGAIN

Again we sing the Prospector. We, who of late bepraised and applauded him, do now desire to dilate upon his sinister aspects. A knock resounds upon our editorial door. A lean and cheerful individual enters. From his person emanates the fragrance of black rum and of the narcotic plug. From his pocket leaps the specimen, a lump of quartz besprent with gold—gold