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MINE MANAGEMENT.

The subject of mine management is one of the most important in connection with the mining industry. Time and again we have commented on this matter, but scarcely a day passes but that the expensive mistakes, which are constantly occurring through the incompetency of the management of properties, are forced upon our attention, so that we cannot resist the temptation to again refer to it. Take nine companies out of ten which are organized to operate mining properties by people unfamiliar with the industry, no matter whether they live in the East or in Colorado, the custom is to put one of their own number in as manager, no matter how little knowledge he may have of the subject. Once in a while the enterprise may have sufficient merit to more than counterbalance the effects of incompetent management, but it is safe to say that nine times out of ten a management of that kind will end disastrously.

We know of no business in the world which requires such eminent ability for success as the management of a large mining property. The essential requisites in a mine manager is first, his ability to operate the property, to know when the work is properly done, to plan out the workings so that they may be carried on in the most economical manner to obtain the best results, to know the character of machinery necessary to carry on the work, to know how to overcome difficulties in the way of caving ground or swelling ground, to be sufficient of a geologist to follow his vein through faults and other irregularities, to be sufficiently informed with regard to the development of his property to plan his workings ahead, to know absolutely what is going to be required in the way of machinery and to have it ready when emergencies arise.

How often one will find on a visit to a mine that they are straining their machinery trying to keep up with their work. The hoisting plant will be too light, or the boiler capacity will be too light and change after change is made in a hand to mouth manner. One time it is a little larger hoist, another time it is a little larger boiler, another time it is a little larger pump, but never all of them of sufficient capacity to carry on the work. At one time the shaft is stopped because they have not the capacity to keep it going and must depend on driving levels, at another time the slope is stopped when they need their money from the ores, because they have not enough hois-

ing power when the pumps are running; always something. One meets it every day and nine times out of ten the troubles are of a character which a competent manager would have prepared for on the start out. To be successful, in addition to his ability to manage a large number of men and his geological knowledge, a manager must also have an education in chemistry and metallurgy. He must know how to get the best results from the ores when they are mined.

This is a point which is nearly always overlooked. In almost every canon of our mountains one can find mills, or the remainder of mills, which have been built by incompetent management. They did not understand the character of mill necessary to handle the ores of their property and went at it by guess work. On some other property they had noticed a mill of a certain kind which seemed to be doing good work so far as they could see. The fact that the character of the ore was altogether different from theirs seemed to cut no figure with them. They must have the same kind of a mill, but when it was ready to run they found they could not save their values. They did not know why. They had the same kind of a mill some other man had, who did save the values. The fault must be in the mine or the mill man.

Still another item of loss comes from the fact that a number of mills are built before the mines are opened sufficiently to furnish them with ore to run on. Very often a mill is built where a mine has no value to start on and never would be able to furnish the mill with sufficient ore of a character which would pay.

Another serious item of loss we have found on our visits to the districts on the part of incompetent management, has been that they have run expensive tunnels to open up their mines without first following their ore bodies so as to get their trend and dip, and when the tunnel has reached the vein they have found it barren. Probably they have encountered a vein before they have reached their own, but which they thought was theirs, because of the fact that they had not followed their own down so as to get the dip or trend of it, and when they encountered this vein, which they took to be theirs, they have driven levels on it only to find it barren and they then abandoned the property and have probably got into debt. The parties furnishing the capital have become discouraged and refuse to furnish any more. Once in a while a mining enterprise of that kind falls into the hands of a competent mining man afterwards and

turns out to be a bonanza. The Delmar properties in Idaho are a striking illustration of this. Some eastern people had a lease and bond on that group of properties. Instead of following the ore body down by means of a shaft and finding out where it went, they drove a cross-cut tunnel some 800 feet in length and encountered a vein at a point where they thought they should have encountered the one above, which did contain high grade mineral. At the point they encountered it in the tunnel, it was comparatively barren. They did little prospective work and then abandoned the enterprise. Captain Delmar, having had considerable experience in mining, investigated the vein and found that it dipped to the west and that the tunnel must be driven some little distance further to encounter the vein, allowing for the dip. So the captain took hold of it and drove the tunnel further and opened up one of the bonanza mines of the world.

This illustrates the difference between the management of one experienced in the business, who uses judgment, and the management of one who is not experienced, although he may be a thoroughly reliable man in other respects.

There are hundreds of similar cases all through our mountain country. Hundreds of people in the east have bought stocks in companies which ended disastrously who thought they had been swindled out of their money. A little investigation might have shown them that the fault was in themselves. They elected the wrong man to manage their interests. In many cases when men have been placed in charge who had been proven to be absolute failures in every line of business they had ever undertaken. It seems to be taken for granted that a man who cannot run any other kind of a business is competent to run a mining property which in reality requires the combined ability of a banker, a business man, a geologist, a chemist and an excavator. The mine manager is a busy man, but he must find time to read if he wants to keep up with the procession, for unless he does so his world is limited to what is going on about him, and he must trust to his own knowledge and resources. To be successful he must also know what others in the same business are doing elsewhere. At no time in the history of the world has there been so much rapid advance in the recovery of the precious metals as during the past decade, and never before has there been so decided a tendency to break away from traditional methods and ideas, consequent-