

Ingall, E. D.



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SILVER MINING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BY E. D. INGALL, M. E.,

Chief of Mining Division, Geological Survey of Canada.

Until a comparatively recent period the mineral production of the Province of British Columbia was almost entirely confined to coal and gold the latter chiefly obtained by washing the shallow auriferous gravels distributed widely throughout the province.

The discovery and working of veins yielding silver ores was all, with the exception of a few scattering discoveries, subsequent to 1880.

It is not the intention, in this paper, to go into any details as to the history of the silver mines of the province which are so admirably dealt with in the report of Dr. G. M. Dawson on the Mineral Wealth of British Columbia, issued with the Annual Report of the Geological Survey for 1887.

A few items may, however, not be amiss as prefacing the more immediate subject of this paper viz. the more newly discovered silver veins of the West Kootenay District.

According to Dr. Dawson the large deposit of galena now known as the Blue Bell Mine and situated on the east shore of Kootenay Lake was discovered as early as 1825 by the botanist Douglas and amongst the earlier discoveries of this class of ores is that in the Coast Range of Mountains at Hope on the Fraser River in 1871. The ore discovered there was described as "argentiferous grey copper" containing lead, copper, antimony and iron.

In 1882 a number of claims were located on discoveries at Stump Lake in Yale District, of veins, carrying ores rich in gold and silver and from that date to 1889 various camps came into greater or less prominence in that district and in those of East and West Kootenay which together constitute the S. E. corner of the Province.

At the time of the writing of Dr. Dawson's report in 1888, argentiferous ores had been reported also from various points in the Northern districts; in Cariboo, Omenica, Cassiar and further north in the Yukon country but none of these have come into any prominence so far, doubtless on account of the numerous drawbacks due to lack of good communications with the outer world.

Before passing then to the subject proper of this paper, it may be well to point out on the map here (referring to maps shewn), the various other districts in the province where veins carrying argentiferous ores have been found and more or less worked.

It is noticeable that at most of these points the ores are mixed carrying much copper sulphurets and are often antimonial and arsenical, differing in this respect from the prevalent ore of the Ainsworth, Hendryx, Slocan and Illecillewaet districts where argentiferous galenas and the products of their decomposition take precedence over all others.

The points to which it is desired to draw special attention in this paper, are the results of studies made by the writer in 1892 when in British Columbia for the Geological Survey.

The time at disposal allowed only of the study of the Illecillewaet, Ainsworth and Slocan, sub-districts of West Kootenay where, however, a large number of claims were visited and examined with a view to getting the general features of the veins.

Illecillewaet.—Beginning then with the district tributary to Illecillewaet on the Canadian Pacific Railway we have within a radius of from 5 to 10 miles, a number of claims upon which more or less work has been done, among which are the Lanark and Maple Leaf, with the Isabella, the Jumbo, the Sanquahar, the Cariboo and others all lying north of the C. P. Railway station and all within five miles of it.

* Paper read before the General Mining Association of Quebec, July 10th, 1894.