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THE LIMITS OF RAPID GEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE.

Speaking of a rapid geological reconnaissance of portions of the great basin in southern Nevada and eastern California, Mr. S. F. Emmons makes the following pertinent remarks which apply very generally. He says, "It must be borne in mind that the geologist cannot see any further into a rock than any other man. He can only draw inferences from what is exposed to view; the deeper the exposure, the greater its value for such inferences, since surface alteration of the rocks so obscure their true character as to render their determination very uncertain. As this surface alteration extends for a considerable depth below the actual surface, it is only when he can extend his studies to a depth beyond the reach of surface alteration that the geologist can determine the true character of the rocks, with a sufficient certainty, to render his inferences of permanent value."

GOVERNMENT COAL-TESTING PLANT AT DENVER.

The decision of the United States Geological Survey to establish a coal-testing plant at Denver was announced this week. The local Chamber of Commerce merits the hearty appreciation of the city of Denver, of the state of Colorado and of the entire west in having offered sufficient inducements to Dr. J. A. Holmes, the United States Geological Survey coal expert, whereby the selection of this city was made possible.

This plant will be the first to be erected on an operative scale by the government. It is to be modelled after the one erected and operated at the St. Louis exposition on designs and under the supervision of Dr. Holmes. A liberal appropriation by congress has made possible its equipment for the carrying on of extensive practical tests as to the utility of western coals. In addition to works for briquette and gas-producer tests, there will be provided a complete laboratory for the analyses of coals.

The determination of proper methods of the utilization as fuel of the vast quantities of inferior grades of western coals, will unquestionably give an impetus to the coal mining industry of the Rocky mountain region.

The works, which are to be in charge of Mr. A. W. Belden, are expected to be in readiness in about sixty days. Machinery from the dismantled St. Louis plant is now en route to Denver.

THE COLORADO STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

We note that one of our contemporaries, in recently commenting on the University bill creating a State Geological Survey of Colorado—the bill reported favorably on by the joint Senate and House mining committee—voices in no uncertain language its regret at the "truly pitiable outcome of the effort to establish a Geological Survey of Colorado." In a lengthy and well-written editorial, criticism is made of the proposed advisory board, particularly of the placing thereon of the presidents of the State University and the State Agricultural College; also, having the survey located at Boulder instead of Denver; of the naming as state geologist, the professor of geology of the State University, who may be a good teacher, but who, like the majority, may or may not be an effective executive; and lastly, of the paltry appropriation of \$5,000 annually for this important work in a state productive of \$50,000,000 and more yearly.

Exception is also taken to the naming of state institution teachers as assistants to the State Geologist, who ought to have the assistance of men less academic and having a knowledge of the exploitation of ore deposits and of the search for them.

This editorial expression, coming from a former Coloradoan, is worthy of consideration. It is in accord, in large part, with our own views, as our readers know. In addition to the criticisms made by our contemporary, we would like to emphasize another objectionable feature in this favorably reported bill, viz., the naming of any one as state geologist who is not to devote his entire time to the survey work.

PLATINUM IN NEVADA.

The existence of pay platinum minerals in the vicinity of Bunkerville, Lincoln County, Nevada, some thirty miles east of Moapa, is reported. With the report comes the additional information that one company, which has been quietly carrying on mine developments for several years, is now erecting a smelting plant along the Virgin river, six miles from its mines, for a matte reduction of the platinum-nickel-copper ores. The estimated value of the in-sight tonnage in this and two other properties adjoining is given as \$6,000,000. The average contents of the ore are given as 6% copper, 3% nickel, .52% platinum and 20% iron. The ore is said to make in fissure veins of abnormal width—as great as 200 feet in places.

All this we gather from a Salt Lake daily, which may usually be relied upon for the reliability of its mining news items. This interesting information was, according to an accredited interview, given out by parties largely interested in one of the companies operating in this field.

Such widespread search for platinum and its minerals has been made since a curtailment of the output from the Siberian Urals, from the placer areas of which comes the bulk of the world's supply, that particular importance attaches to this Nevada-occurrence. We can find no mention of these platinum-nickel-copper deposits in the publications of the United States Geological Survey, under whose direction exhaustive search for and investigations of platinum and its minerals have lately been carried on. In a recent article on the platinum-copper ores of the New Rambler mine in Wyoming, we made mention of the known occurrences in this country.

In the Bunkerville, Nevada, fields it would appear that the platinum occurs in veins and in association with nickel-copper ores—having some similarity, in this respect, to the platinum-bearing nickeliferous pyrrhotite, copper pyrites and other nickel-copper ore deposits of Sudbury, Ontario. The mineralized area wherein occur these deposits is said to be of considerable extent, but its development thus far appears to have been confined to platinum-bearing veins, although the existence of veins, chiefly valuable for their copper ores, has been proven in several places.

THE IDIOSYNCRASY OF CANADIAN LAWS.

There is so much to commend in Canadian laws and in the enforcement thereof, that we are loath to take exception to even one parliamentary or provincial enactment. And yet, we, as an exponent of the mineral and mining industry, cannot refrain from entering a more than mild protest against the promulgation of two recent government rulings affecting mining interests.

One of these, and one almost absurd to the average liberty-loving American, is the making so unseemingly effective of the Sunday observance act, on which we made editorial comment in a preceding issue.

"The act provides that it shall be unlawful on Sunday to engage in any public game or contest for gain, etc., or to be present at any performance or public meeting, elsewhere than in a church, at which a fee is charged, or to run, conduct, or convey any excursion on which passengers are conveyed for hire, or to advertise any performance, or to bring into Canada for sale or distribution or to sell or

distribute on 'the Lord's day' any foreign newspaper or publication classified as a newspaper. The act also provides that every corporation which directs, authorizes, or permits its employees to carry on any part of its business on that day shall be liable to a fine, but nothing shall prevent the operation on Sunday of a railway for passenger traffic when the company has been incorporated by legislative authority."

The clause "that every corporation which directs, authorizes or permits its employees to carry on any part of its business on that day shall be liable to a fine" is so inclusive and broad, that it is not easy to figure out how mining and metallurgical operations can be carried on on the Sabbath, unless the "liability to a fine" affords the loop-hole. Our experiences in several western and northern provinces (including Northwest and Yukon territories) impressed us, however, with the futility of evading any law passed by the Ottawa parliament.

With the vigorous protests that are coming from the mine operators of the province of British Columbia, in which the mining and allied industries are of paramount importance (statistics showing that this province's mineral products of 1906 had a value of \$26,350,000, a total greater than the combined value of the lumbering, agricultural and fishery products, and \$14,500,000 greater than the estimated worth of manufactured products), it is thought and hoped that an amelioration or modification of its effectiveness as regards mining and metallurgy may be shortly forthcoming.

This law, which became effective on March 1st, has thus far not interfered with the work at either the mines or reduction plants. Let us trust that it may not. The metallurgical branch of the industry is a peculiar one, and is attended with so great an expenditure of initiative and operative capital, that the curtailment of operations, for even one day in the week, would result in heavy money losses to, and perhaps in an early shut down of, reduction plants. In no other industry, as in smelting, are uninterrupted operations so essential to success.

The other measure, to which strenuous objection is being made in the Cobalt camp, is the one passed by the Ontario legislative body at the suggestion of the Minister of Mines. This provides for the levying of a tax of 3% upon mines, the net annual profit in the operation of which exceeds \$10,000. This tax is in addition to the collection of two cents per acre on all the land occupied by the mine or held by the company.

Both of these measures come as an unlooked for contrapolicy to that evidenced in a majority of the existent laws affecting the industry. We have taken occasion in a number of instances—once, in a recent issue, relative to the efficiency of the Canadian Geological Survey—to emphasize what Canada has done and is doing in fostering its mining industry.

Canada's laws, of a character beneficial to the prosperity and advancement of mining, have been much more far-sighted than those of this country; in this regard we need only cite first, the "government bounty on lead ores refined in Canada," established several years ago, the recent ruling fixing a "bounty on nickel-cobalt home-refined products," and the probability of the early "establishment of a Federal Mines Department, which shall be on an equality with the present Department of Agriculture and of Fisheries."

The Dominion government has, hitherto, shown so much encouragement to the mineral industry that we feel sure that any objectionable or detrimental measure, which may have been acted on hastily or unwisely, will be given deserved re-consideration resultant in either its annulment, revocation or modification.