

Including the Big Ben and Comstock Areas

INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared after an examination of the Aid to Mining and prospecting work being carried out by the Department with a view to determining the general prospects of the deposits being developed. In connection with the Big Ben and Comstock areas this report is supplementary to that prepared by F. Blake, Acting Government Geologist, in June last as only work completed since then was examined in detail.

J. J. Hill - Vicinity of Old Swansea Mine:

A small shaft has been sunk 40 feet on a lode formation of an average width of eight inches (8") where drives north-west and south-east have been opened out. To the north-west of the shaft the level has been driven north 30° west a distance of 30 feet. From here a crosscut was driven north 16° east a distance of 13 feet without success. The drive was continued a further 17 feet on a bearing of north 22° west and the lode showed considerable reduction in width as driving proceeded; it apparently pinching out on a head underlaying flatly to the east. South east from the shaft the level has been driven 16 feet and a little stoping has been done near the shaft.

The chances of this prospect developing into a mine cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy owing to insufficient development.

J. McDermott - Spray Mine - Government Tribute A135

McDermott is engaged in driving, single handed, an adit which has been driven 260 feet and is still in melaphyre. At 180 feet from the approach, a formation one foot wide was cut but carried no silver lead ore of value. It is anticipated that the objective - the northern continuation of a lode worked in the Spray Mine - will be intersected at 320 feet.

Mrs. E. M. Griffiths - South Comet Mine - South Dundas

This party has confined its operations to stoping above the old No. 3 or low level adit about 400 feet from the portal. No facilities are available at the mine for milling. The ore is knapped by hand then put through a primary crusher - a Braun sample crusher - finally through a jig. A totally inadequate water supply and a most inefficient water wheel render it impossible to operate these two units at the one time. Prohibitive transport charges further add to the disabilities under which the operators are endeavouring to work their mine.

E. Griffiths stated that although the parcel of ore of about 12 tons was broken in about three shifts, two months elapsed before the ore reached Zeehan. In taking the ore from the mine to Maestri's Siding on the Dundas-Zeehan line, it was necessary to pack and sledge alternately some three or four times.

With assistance granted under the Aid to Mining Act, a cross-cut was driven in an easterly direction through the footwall a distance of thirty feet without exposing any parallel lode which I understand was the objective, although another five and a half feet still

remains to be driven. No evidence could be observed to suggest the possible existence of a parallel lode.

A grab sample taken from the face and back of the stope, over a stoping width of six feet, indicates the value of the ore:-

Lead 47.4 %
Silver 37.7 oz. per ton

There is good ore showing in the floor of the adit and there is every indication that the shoot of ore being stoped will extend downwards. It can be most readily tested by sinking a winze from the west cross cut as there appears to be a slight underlay to the west.

As no actual developmental work has been done, the ore reserves of the mine cannot be estimated and until sufficient reserves are proved, the heavy expenditure necessary for providing the essential transport and milling facilities could not be justified.

W. F. Thomas - Argent Flat

The workings consist of an adit driven in a northerly direction approximately 60 feet. A small vein carrying galena was cut about 50 feet from the portal and a shaft 50 feet deep was sunk to test it at depth. It was anticipated that a few feet of driving south would cut the lode at the bottom, but as the underlay was much flatter than expected over 40 feet was driven before the lode was met. It has been driven on a distance of six to eight feet in taking out a parcel of half a ton of ore. The average width of the vein would be three inches.

A grab sample from the lode indicates its relative value:-

Lead 75.7 %
Silver 76.2 oz. per ton.

As nine or ten inches of water still remained in the level the vein could not be inspected underfoot.

The prospect is kept unwatered by means of a pump driven by a 14 foot water wheel. A deep tail race has been cut for a distance of 35 feet in connection with the wheel. Other surface work includes a single hutch jig, ore shed etc.

Although a fair prospect is exposed in the level face, Thomas is not doing any work to develop it and is devoting his energies to sinking a prospect shaft, of main shaft proportions, on the flat south of the creek, about two chains south west from the ore shed. There is no apparent justification for his action and the development of the existing prospect is the obvious course to be adopted.

R. E. Davie - North Dundas

This man was granted £60 on 13th July 1936 to drive a tunnel on his prospecting claim at North Dundas but he did not go on with the work as he had accepted a wages job with Russell, a timber merchant of Zeehan. It is anticipated that he would be working at least until Christmas.

J. Wallace

Seven pounds (£7) was granted to this man for some trenching on his claim at the Five Mile, but ill-health has prevented him undertaking active prospecting.

J. Dunkley - Comstock - 9892/M

I examined this mine in company with H.A. Vaudeau, Inspector of Mines, on October 1st last, and could not see any prospects that would be likely to enable the mine to return to the productive stage. As it is over four years since a parcel of ore was produced and prospecting has been carried on almost continuously since then, little hope can be held regarding the future of the mine.

R. M. Clarke - Great Western

In connection with Clarke's application for assistance I inspected the area in the vicinity of the Great Western where he was applying for a Government Tribute in lieu of one applied for at the Despatch Mine. The adit for which Clarke desired financial assistance for the purpose of re-opening and equipping with blower etc. could not be inspected owing to bad air. It is situated 150 feet north west of the south-east angle of McDermott's old 10 acres Section No. 10645/M and is reported to be driven 400 feet in a northerly direction. Without an inspection no recommendation could be made. Clarke has since abandoned this application for attribute area and has renewed the application for an area at the Despatch.

G.T. Bell & Pilkington - Government Tribute 136 on Old Crown Mine - Zeehan

The above have relinquished this tribute in favour of John Charles and James Bell.

A sinuous adit has been driven a considerable distance and a block of ore stoped. It was then decided to sink on this shoot of metal and a winze was put down 70 feet and a level opened out north west for 23 feet and south east for 30 feet. From the south east end a cross cut was driven 43 feet north - east to make a connection with some of the old Crown workings as an air way. This crosscut had also been extended 21 feet in a south westerly direction from the drive without intersecting the lode worked above. At the northern end of the drive the lode channel had been intersected but was rather poor where cut.

Assistance was recommended to enable this party to drive on the lode channel preparatory to stoping.

W. G. Bell - Oonah Mine

Bell made application for a Government Tribute on part of the old Oonah Mine Section and also financial assistance of £30 at the rate of 10/- per foot to enable him to drive an adit to test a small lode at shallow depth. The lode strikes north east and where exposed is six inches wide. It consists of quartz, zinc blende and galena in a black pug. An average sample of the lode material gave the following assay:

Lead	18.7 %
Silver	29.0 oz. per ton.

and a sample of clean galena gave:

Lead	64.2 %
Silver	82.6 oz. per ton

Approximately 56 feet of driving on a bearing of 334° will be necessary to intersect the lode and this will give 32-35 feet of backs.

W. G. Bell has since accepted employment with the Government prospecting party at the Big Ben and I am unaware of the present position at this prospect as the assistance required was recommended.

W. and C. S. Cook and A. Kemp - North Heemskirk

Mr. S. J. Statton reported that these men had not been out to their claim for some time and that without considerable time and trouble the workings could not be unwatered to enable an inspection and in view of the fact that A. Kemp who had been certified as medically unfit for working in water, had transferred his interests to the Cook Bros, therefore, as little could be gained by making a visit to the areas I did not make the proposed examination.

R. J. Clarke - Queen Hill

I examined the prospecting carried out by Clarke on the northern slopes of Queen Hill. A line of shallow trenches has been put down apparently without regard to the fundamentals of prospecting, there being no indication of mineralisation. Further, more the line is normal to the general strike of lodes in this area.

R. J. Clarke wishes to drive a tunnel to intersect the lode ahead of where Nicholls and party stoped to the surface at the north eastern end of Queen Hill. I tried to get into the workings from the bottom adit but a fall has completely blocked it, about 30 to 40 feet in. The proposed starting point was behind Flaherty's house but as no details are available regarding the old workings or the ore channel the expense of driving at least one hundred feet to a problematical lode cannot be justified. I would suggest, however, that if further attention is to be given to this area, that it be confined to a shallow adit to the north east of the caved stopes.

Comstock Area

In company with Mr. H. A. Vaudeau, Inspector of Mines, I inspected the Government prospecting operations in this area.

The main drive has been continued a further 100 feet since the Acting Government Geologist, F. Blake, surveyed the workings in June last, without revealing any prospects which offer sufficient inducement for further exploitation. In view of the poor results obtained after 15 months of continuous prospecting and the long distance required to drive to achieve one objective, the draining of the Sylvester Workings over 5000 feet, ten years work at the present rate, further prospecting is not justified.

May Queen Area

Since Mr. Blake reported on this area prospecting operations have been confined to an area north of the Zeehan-Corinna road about eighteen chains north from the May Queen shaft.

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Silver	82.6 oz. per ton

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An adit has been driven 44 feet on a bearing of 330° from Syd's Cut three quarters of a chain north of the 20 foot shaft and at the time of my inspection had not reached its objective - an oxidised formation exposed in a trench to the west.

Approximately three chains north north west from Syd's Cut an adit known as No. 1 Edwards has been driven 62.5 feet on a bearing of 68° to test at depth a siliceous outcrop with a north-south strike.

For the first part the adit is in glacial tillite and at forty feet the unconformable contact between slates and tillite is met. At 56 feet the lode channel was intersected but carried only traces of galena.

A little over two chains south south west of No. 1, No. 2 Edwards adit has been driven 60 feet in tillite with the object of testing the siliceous outcrop at about 30 feet lower than No. 1 but had not reached its objective at the time of my examination.

The only additional work in the vicinity of the underlay shaft is the three trenches which have been cut on a formation about 70 feet west of the shaft, revealing two to three inches of clean galena.

The veins range from small crush zones in which fragments of slates are completely surrounded by white vitreous quartz with seams of galena and splashes of pyrite and ones in which the interstitial material is almost wholly sulphidic, a little quartz being present in part only. The sulphides are galena, sphalerite, chalcopyrite and pyrite with the first two predominating, to clean galena up to 10 to 12 inches wide.

From this brief examination it is obvious that too much time has been wasted in attempting to prove the lines of lode over great lengths and that in future attention should be confined to developing the lode exposed in the immediate vicinity of the shaft. Further, as the amount of backs available is small, little advantage is gained by driving more adits, therefore, any scheme of development must include sinking.

The general outlook of the prospects examined is very depressing and few can be regarded as having even a remote chance of developing into mines. Those which appeal most are the May Queen area and the South Comet, although much remains to be done before these will be productive mines.

ACTING FIELD GEOLOGIST

Mines Department,
HOBART

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