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REPORT ON
MT. CAMERON WATER-RACE AREA, NEAR GLADSTONE

Introduction

When representations were made to the Government to have the north race closed and a southern one constructed the larger deposits on the north side could not be operated at a profit owing to the low market rate for tin. Now, consequent upon the rise in price there appears to be a consensus of opinion in favour of a return to the north side; but, as the change over would involve an expenditure of £3,000 the miners do not desire this at present. They request an expenditure of £1,000 to extend the south race 4½ miles to Native Lass Plain. The extension of the race to that point would provide for the opening of known areas capable of supporting the miners for two years. It is likely, that as a result, of development performed in the operation of sluicing other profitable deposits will be revealed, and thereby add to the utility of the race.

THE DEPOSITS

Alluvial Deposits Containing Tin, Ore, Monazite & Gold

The working of the shallow beds now served by the race will be completed within eight months. Then, if provision is not made for operation on the gravels further on, the field will be abandoned. Some of the known deposits on Native Lass Plain and on the Southern bank of the Ringarooma River are extensively deep and of fair value. This area as a whole, however, has not been tested. Doubtless the provision of a water supply will prove an incentive to further prospecting. None of the known deposits can, under existing conditions, be attacked. The removal of the alluvial material will reveal the lodes from which the tin ore has been derived.

Monazite

The race at present in use will serve to conduct water to deposits of Monazite which in some places is associated with tin ore. These deposits are of great extent and at present, market rates are of considerable value. Samples indicate a thoria content of 6 to 8 per cent. In the treatment of the Monazite sands the tin ore lost in sluicing will be recovered. Therefore Monazite has not been a marketable product and this valuable mineral has been discarded. Owing to its high specific gravity its separation from tin ore by sluicing has proved a difficult operation. Now it is proposed to produce a cassiterite-monazite concentrate and to sell the mixed ores in overseas markets.

Gold

A little alluvial gold shed from narrow veins in the sedimentary rocks is associated with alluvial tin ore and Monazite. Some of the veins may be worthy of more attention.

Tin-Ore (Cassiterite) Lodes

The fundamental rocks (sandstone, slates and intrusive granites) are veined with lodes of tin ore and

gold. Some of the tin-ore veins are narrow (12 to 18 inches wide) and erratic. Others, however, of the true greisen type developed near the sedimentary contact are very wide and extensive. It is from these lodes that all the alluvial material found here has been shed, and it is to these that the miner will turn when the more easily workable alluvial beds have been deprived of their valuable minerals. The most important of the known bodies is that worked by the Fly-by-Night Syndicate some years ago. This ore-body is a greisen in which the felspar component of the original granite has been replaced by or transformed into lithia mica, topaz, quartz, cassiterite, and other minerals. In places the tin ore component is very rich. The average value, however, has not been determined. This body, it is considered by local residents, is identical with that opened by the Cybele Company, four miles to the north-eastward. It is worthy of very special attention.

The Proposed Extension Of The Water-Race.

The country to be traversed is gently undulating, and almost clear of trees and scrub, and the ground is soft and capable of carrying water without serious leakage. The cost of construction should not exceed 40/- per chain if the work be performed under the contract system. It is recommended that the water be conducted to Native Lass Dam, whence it can be reticulated to all quarters and to another reservoir on the Home Rule Area. Native Lass dam could be repaired at a cost of £200 or less. On the north side there are many reservoirs; on the south side, the two mentioned only, can be used to advantage. At present, water flowing during the night and Sunday is lost. If dams are used this water can be conserved.

The argument employed in the application for the extension of the race is not based on fact but on probabilities. The prospects appear favourable. The work if undertaken, should be commenced as soon as possible.

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