1926/157-159

PRELIMINARY REPORT

ON

BLYTH'S FREEHOLD GOLD PROSPECT AT

BEACONSFIELD

Introduction

The following brief report is the result of a very short visit of inspection. It is, therefore, incomplete and inconclusive. However, sufficient information was obtained to form a general impression of the value of the deposit and the prospects of its improvement along the strike and dip.

The earliest exploratory work on this property was performed prior to its acquisition by Blyth's Freehold Gold Mining Company in 1880. At that time the Tasmania Gold Mine had become well developed and large profits were being made from the operations of the Company. Attention was directed also to neighbouring properties, one of the most favoured being Blyth's Freehold.

Developments

The Directors of Blyth's Freehold Gold Mining Company reported at their June meeting 1881 that operations has been confined to the prospecting shaft. Using their words "at 100 feet depth a trial crushing of stone from a well-formed leader yielded gold in the proportion of 2 dwt. per ton only. It was then decided to explore the country by driving north and south from the shaft. In the northern drive at 20 feet from the shaft a gold-bearing leader was intersected and at 40 feet a reef 2 feet 6 inches wide was exposed. Seven tons of stone from the leader yielded 3 ounces 17 dwts. of gold or in the proportion of 1 ounce 11 dwts. per ton. At that time the main shaft was 190 feet in depth and it was expected that the lode would be cut at 60 feet from the shaft".

From the Mine Manager's progress reports issued at intervals between 4th December, 1880 and 4th October, 1882 it was gathered that development work was continued without interruption. The reports, however are difficult to follow. It appears that the north drive which is on the course of a shear lode was driven over 100 feet and that a number of east bearing lodes were intersected. The report of the Manager on the 2nd April, 1881 states that a reef 2 feet wide containing gold was cut and that a start had been made to drive east and west along its course. Later reports are confusing as no information is given as to the particular part of the mine referred to and the remarks are indefinite and non-committal. In effect, the reports do not convey a clear idea of the nature, extent or the value of the several leaders and reefs that were discovered in these workings.

As the north and south drives from the 100 foot level of the prospecting shaft have been filled with mullock it was not possible to decipher the confusing information or confirm the veracity of the statements appearing in the reports.

The following is an account of the results of observation made during the recent visit:-

Prospecting Shaft (6 feet by 3 feet)

The levels at 45 feet and 80 feet from surface were not examined. At 100 foot level the south drive is closed: the north drive (N, 10E is open to 12 feet whence a stope of the rise of a shear lode has been carried up 20 feet in a direction N 63 W. This shear lode is very thin (2 to 6 inches) and completely intersects the strata (sandstones and slates) which course N 53 W. The quartz of this lode contains a fair proportion of gold in places and rests in a sharply defined footwall of which the angle of dip is about 20 degrees. Samples of the material (quartzite and silicified sandstone) contained traces only of gold. This shear lode is cut in a winze sunk from the end of a drive bearing S 53 degrees E from the shaft and 45 feet distant. There the shear vein is very thin and rests on quartzite. The winze was continued to a depth of 47 feet on veinlets of quartz containing a little gold. Many of the so-called leaders bearing N. 53°W are very irregular splitting and coalescing in conformity with the bedding of the strata. It is evident from the early reports that the so-called reefs are bodies parallel to these and that they are not continuous long distances. In places the black and grey slate beds are compressed into sharp folds and puckered. Along these beds the veins and veinlets of gold-bearing cellular quartz are most prominent. (It appears that the important easterly trending veins were disappointing otherwise the north drive would not have been filled with mullock. This material should be removed to allow of examination). The bedded veins exposed to view now, dip in a north eastern direction at angles 60 to 70 degrees, yet the veins cut further northward (according to the Mine reports) dip south.

No opinion can be expressed until the northern veins have been unearthed and examined.

Main Shaft lies 120 feet from the prospecting shaft on a bearing S 63°E. It is 190 feet deep and is now inaccessible owing to the collapse of the timbers in the upper part. The shear lode should have been cut at 170 feet or thereabouts. As no mention of its intersection appears in any of the old reports it is evident that the vein is very narrow there. An examination of the materials on the dump reveals slates and sandstones and hard black quartzite and conglomerate (cabbage tree stone) flecked with pyrite. The black stain is due largely to the oxidation of pyrite and in small part to manganese oxide. At 190 feet, water-level was reached, the increase at that depth being of marked prominence.

The direction of the drive from the 190 feet level (not mentioned in the reports of the Manager) is presumably westward. From the shaft it was expected to cut the most important vein at 60 feet, but the records do not contain further reference to this work.

Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing brief account it is deduced that the results of the work were generally unsatisfactory. If it were not so, the Company would have reconstructed, when the funds were approaching exhaustion with the object of continuing development. As matters stand here are partly developed veins in a heavily mineralised belt lying nearly parallel to that of the Tasmania series, the extent

of which has not been proved. It is probable that the shear lode is in reality a cross course and that the more important eastward trending veins lie to the south of the shaft.

It is recommended that the north drive be cleared of mullock in order to permit an examination of the veins in that direction. If the prospects are not attractive there then the south cross-cut should be cleared and extended along the course of the shear lode or cross-course.

The results of the investigation show that operations from main shaft at this stage of development would be hazardous and costly. Moreover, nothing is to be gained by sinking the winze. It is probable that the shear lode or cross-course has faulted all the east trending veins, in which event exploration southward is worthy of consideration. Any other work is unwarranted.

A. McIntosh Reid,
DIRECTOR OF MINES.

Hobart,
19th May, 1926.