

Q501634

558001

BRIEF RESUME OF THE HISTORY OF THE
BIG BEN MINE
ZEEHAN
WEST COAST SILVER LEAD SYNDICATE

36-067

Zeehan, Tasmania
by
W.J. Turner
Dec 1936.

558

BRIEF RESUME OF THE HISTORY OF THE BIG BEN MINE, ZEEHAN, TASMANIA.

This mine was found by Messrs. Clark and Blacklow of Zeehan. Ore of high grade was uncovered at the base of a rocky escarpment and an underlie shaft was put down on the lode to a depth of 50 feet. Drives were put out north and south on the lode. The lode was of very little value south of the shaft. In the north drive a lense of high grade ore was opened up over a length of approximately 60 ft. This lense of ore was stoped out by Clark and Blacklow. The discoveries drove north on the lode until an east-west cross-course was met with, and at this point the values were lost. The West Coast Syndicate continued the north drive through the fault and found fair values on the north side of the cross-course. As the drive continued north, values became better, and a rather nice lense of ore about 2-3 feet wide and approximately 60 feet long was opened up. This lense of ore was going strong underfoot. Continuing north on the lode values became poorer and finally driving was discontinued when shale pitching at a steep angle to the north and with an east-west strike was encountered. This lense of ore was stoped out by the West Coast Syndicate, the maximum stoping width was 11 feet carrying good values. Two grades of ore were extracted by hand picking and jigging, the remainder was stacked as milling ore which would yield approximately 1 ton of concentrates for 7 tons of crudes.

After the No. 2 Lense of ore was stoped out by the West Coast Syndicate it was decided to sink a Main Shaft on the eastern side of the line of lode and some distance north of the underlie shaft put down by Clark and Blacklow. At 38 feet down the influx of water was too great to be handled and controlled by means of a windlass and buckets, and the shaft was discontinued, and shortly afterwards the option held by the West Coast Syndicate was surrendered.

The water seepage in the mine workings from the underlie shaft was controlled by a wind-mill class of pump, operated by a small oil engine. The pump had a 4" working barrel with 2" suction and delivery pipes, and worked on a 20" stroke. The water in the workings from the underlie shaft was very easily controlled. The pump would be stopped at 12 midnight and started at 7 o'clock each morning, and it was seldom that the workings would not be sufficiently drained for the men to go into the working faces at the beginning of the day shift. No work of any kind was done by the West Coast Syndicate below the level of the 50 ft. underlie shaft. The Big Ben Mine is well worth exploiting below the present workings. The shaft commenced by the West Coast Syndicate should be continued down to a depth of 100 feet below the surface. From this level a short cross-cut would intercept the downward continuation of the No. 2 Lense of ore, and if this opened up satisfactorily a southerly drive on the line of lode would intercept the No. 1 Lense of ore worked by Clark and Blacklow. The Big Ben Mine is about 3 miles north of Zeehan and is situate within the mineralized belt of country that traverses the Zeehan Silver-Lead Field. Mr. Fred Tricks of Melbourne was the Legal Manager and Mr. A. D. Sligo was the Local Director and Tasmanian Agent for the West Coast Silver-Lead Syndicate.

W. J. TURNER

DEC. 1936

34