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## M E R C U R Y

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### Pinchi Lake, Omineca, M. D. - B. C.

ANDY OSTREIN

During 1938 a deposit of cinnabar was recorded by Mr. A. Austin. It is situated near the west end of Pinchi Lake on the north shore at the top of a hill at an elevation of 2830 feet which is about 700 feet above the Lake. The property can be reached by water, 12 miles northwest along the north shore of Stuart Lake from Fort St. James to Pinchi village and thence 5 miles north by trail over the divide following along Pinchi Creek to Pinchi Lake and 2 miles northwest across the lake, a total distance of 19 miles from Fort St. James, which is 42 miles north of the railway at Vanderhoof.

The whole of the top of the hill, including the bare exposures overlooking the lake, consist of pale buff coloured highly calcareous rocks. Dolomitic phases exhibiting a darker buff hue as well as local concentrations of small quartz stringers are in considerable evidence.

With the exception of the south and west edges of the summit of the hill the whole area is covered by bush, there being much talus on the steep southerly slope.

At the time of the writer's visit (July 1938) a few very small trenches had been dug in the vicinity of the discovery along the north west edge of the hill, exposing in places good grade cinnabar ore with stibnite association in the richest portions. Owing to the small amount of work done and to the limited rock exposures, the actual direction of the main cinnabar zone was not ascertained, but it appeared to strike approximately north and south for a width of about 20 feet along the west side of the summit, the highest grade being near the discovery post on the northwest side and for 30 feet down this slope of the hill (below which it is covered by bush and overburden). Apart from the discovery zone, there appears to be very little visible cinnabar other than in very small and scattered veinlets, along the west bluff. However, examination under a lens of numerous pieces of apparently barren rocks revealed in most instances minute specs of cinnabar. A few channel samples were taken along the rock exposure, but except in the small discovery zone, they appeared to be too low grade for commercial ore. However, analyses of these indicated considerably better ore than was expected. For example, one channel sample of 60 feet in length along

the edge of the southern bluff, which appeared almost barren, carried 0.23% Mercury.

The following give the results of the samples the locations of which are shown in the accompanying rough sketch.

Pinchi Lake, northwest end, 18 miles direct N.W. of Fort St. James, Horizontal channel samples at top of hill about 700' above lake (July 1938).

- |    |   |                |
|----|---|----------------|
| A. | Across 60 ft. along top of hill at south side, overlooking lake   | 0.23% Mercury. |
| B. | Across 10 ft. about 70 ft. south of original discovery  | 0.25% "        |
| C. | Across 5 ft. of high grade ore, along original discovery, prospect pit No. 1, about 10 ft. below crest of hill on northerly slope | 6.54% "        |
| D. | Across 12 ft. westerly from centre of showing, about 20 ft. below No. 1   | 0.55% "        |
| E. | Across 12 ft. easterly from centre of showing about 20 ft. below No. 1 and in better grade ore                                    | 0.95% "        |

Since the same type of rock and mineral association prevail throughout the whole of the top of the hill, indications are that there is a large area of cinnabar bearing rock and the possibility of discovering higher grade ore farther down the hill is encouraging. It is therefore well worthy of more extensive sampling and prospecting.

The general type of rock occurrence for several miles along the northwest side of Pinchi Lake appears, to be similar to those in which the cinnabar is known to occur, so that there is a possibility of other discoveries in this region.

(V. L. Eardley-Wilmot.)

July, 1938.