005553

March 18, 1969.

MEMO TO FILE

NOTES ON A BRIEF VISIT TO OLD WORKINGS IN THE VICINITY OF MOUNT RICHARDS, VANCOUVER ISLAND, MARCH, 1969

The area covered comprises some six square miles, including, besides Mt. Richards itself, the adjacent rounded hills which rise above Westholme and Crofton. The terrain is heavily wooded, with a dense undergrowth of Syringa and salal which makes passage difficult and reduces visibility markedly. However, a network of logging roads allows one to drive a considerable distance into the wooded area.

Mr. G. Highmoor of Duncan, a man in his seventies, was hired for three days as a guide. He directed us to some ten excavations on the north side of the area, between Westholme and Crofton. Some of the workings are 50 years old and the old roads are completely overgrown. The water-filled excavations are unmarked and unprotected, presenting a serious danger to the unwary traveller.

92B049 The Ironclad workings are approached from Westholme via Nimmo Road, thence on a four-wheel drive road, which crosses the water line and power line rights-of-way, for 0.8 miles. From this point one climbs the hill on an overgrown road, now a mass of alder trees, to an elevation of about 500 feet. In this area, in dense bush, are the Ironclad workings, two shafts and an incline, all in a north-south line. The lowest shaft is the most northerly. It measures 8' x 8' x 30' deep, and is filled to the top with water. The material on the dump is silicified and pyritic, but no trace of copper was noted. About 30 feet southeast of the shaft there are four claim posts, numbered 459959 - 459962, marking claims Catherine 1 and 2 and Velma 1 and 2, staked by H.W. Gardner, April 24, 1964.

The main working on the Ironclad showings is a 30° incline, reported to be 120 feet long, but now full of water. The rails are still in place. The entrance is heavily overgrown with salal. Much of the dump was snow-covered, but the material available showed heavy pyrite mineralization in strongly sheared and silicified gabbroic (?) country rock, with minor patches of chalcopyrite. Malachite staining was not observed. The dump will be re-examined by Denis Douglas once the snow melts.

The upper shaft or pit, a short distance above the incline, is in similar material.

The Tidal Wave showing may be approached by the same route. It occurs on the summit of the ridge above Westholme, and is probably on Lot 93. Here, the gabbro porphyry is exposed and trees are somewhat more sparse. The pit, 8' x 4' x 20' deep, in a three-foot quartz vein trending east-west, is dry. The vein is virtually barren, but the occasional speck of bornite occurs and one tiny malachite stain was observed.

The Phoenix showing is on the same ridge, but on the east side, above Crofton, virtually due west of the southern end of Osborn Bay. A pit, 20' x 4' x 5' deep has been cut in a three-foot quartz vein, trending east-west, in sheared gabbro porphyry. About 200 feet north of the pit, the rock is much more schistose. The mineralization is identical to that at the Tidal Wave pit.

Mr. Highmoor took us up the road from Crofton past Crofton Lake and alongside an upper lake, now drained, in search of old diggings. We failed to find them. A quarry for riprap between the two lakes shows pyrite mineralization in sheared silicified gabbroic rocks. It is suspected that traces of bornite occur in these rocks. The road, as it passes the upper lake, follows the grade of the old Lenora railway which connected the mines on Mt. Sicker with the Crofton smelter.

The Yreka workings are on Mt. Richards' southeast flank at a low elevation (450' est.). The water-filled pit plumbed only five feet, but it is suspected that an incline must start from the pit. The ore is chalcopyrite, in a quartz vein at least three feet wide, trending east-west. Specimens found beside the pit are estimated to run 3% Cu.

Cornucopia?

Another shaft with a considerable spoil pile is located about one-quarter of a mile west of the Yreka. Pyrite mineralization was observed, but little sign of copper.

This very brief investigation was sufficient to show that there is considerable silicification and shearing in the basic rocks of the area, accompanied by pyrite mineralization. Quartz veins and lenses are of fairly common occurrence, but are generally unmineralized. The Yreka showing is a noteworthy exception. There is enough promise in the area, particularly on Mt. Richards proper, to justify the expenditure of time and effort on a geochemical survey. A useful by-product of the survey will no doubt be a map showing the locations of the showings described above and all the access roads, many of which are not visible on air photos.

J. Y. Wright

J.Y. WRIGHT,
Mining Geologist.

JYW:LS