

*Hemlo Gold Mines is searching for possible new orebodies with a \$3-million exploration budget for 1989.*

ing an average 0.402% copper with recoverable amounts of molybdenum, silver and gold.

### 093M001 Noranda's Bell Mine

**T**he Bell open pit may be the only mine in Canada to which work-

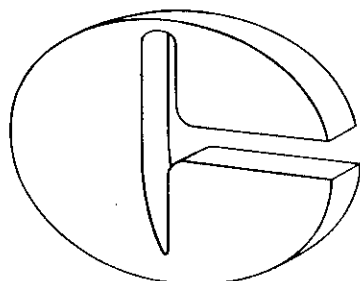
ers must commute by boat every day. Situated on a peninsula that juts out into Babine Lake in northern British Columbia, the Noranda-owned operation draws its workers chiefly from Granisle, which sits across the lake from the mine. The ferry ride takes about 20 minutes.

Noranda Exploration discovered the Bell back in the early 1960s, but production didn't start until 1972, says Senior Mine Engineer Ross McArthur. It produced continuously (except for an interruption during a strike) until 1982, when low copper prices forced its closure until a late-1985 re-opening.

This year, the company will spend \$120,000 on exploration to find separate orebodies and investigate the horizontal and vertical extensions of the known deposit. Most of the work will entail reviewing previous data compiled on the Bell and Granisle pits and some minor prospecting in the general area. Later, a consultant will make recommendations based on the review. Current mine reserves are 18 million tons (16.4 million tonnes) of proven ore grading an average 0.513% copper. The mining rate is 40,000 tons (36,000 tonnes) per day, 17,000 tons (15,000 tonnes) of which are ore and 23,000 tons (20,909 tonnes) waste.

The Bell orebody is crescent-shaped on plan, dips steeply to the northwest, is 150 m to 300 m wide by 1,000 m long and is dated at 48 million years old. Its depth has yet to be determined. The orebody follows and over-

Hemlo Gold Mines



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laps the west and north edges of an Eocene plug of biotite-hornblende-plagioclase porphyry. The orebody is enclosed in a halo of hydrothermal alteration and is in a zone of hydrothermal biotitization. Chalcopyrite, the main copper mineral, is finely disseminated or occurs as fracture coatings and stringers.

### Equity Silver Mines

**E**quity Silver's mining operation in the heart of northern British Columbia got off to a rough start. Discovered in the late 1960s, the deposit didn't start producing until 1980. Even then, arsenic and antimony in the ore caused marketing problems and metallurgical headaches, the latter stemming from a leach plant that was to remove the contaminants. On top of that, silver prices nosedived after the Hunt brothers' bid to corner the silver market failed. So Equity has had its struggles.

The worst of it seems to be behind it. However, the necessity of finding new reserves will start to loom large very soon. Current reserves (as of Jan. 1, 1988) stand at 14,696,000 tonnes grading 86.5 g per tonne silver, 1.08 g per tonne gold and 0.255% copper. Mine production is 30,000 tonnes per day and mill throughput is 9,000 tonnes per day.

The current exploration program (budget not established by presstime) will concentrate on the down-dip extension of the Southern Tail open pit, one of three orebodies on the Equity ground. The hope is that reserves might be found below Southern Tail to warrant underground production, senior exploration geologist Daryl Hanson says. (Mining-grade material has already been intersected by drills.) The diamond drilling from surface this year could precede a feasibility study if all goes well. The Southern Tail open pit has been mined out. Most of the current production comes from the Main zone and from another, smaller deposit.

Equity Silver has been drawing ore from three separate deposits along the same trend. The orebodies have been defined within dominantly pyroclastic volcanic rocks in a mesozoic inlier. The sequence is intruded by a quartz-monzonite stock and a gabbro-monzonite complex which is coeval with the surrounding Tertiary volcanic flows.

### Cassiar Mining Corp.

**A**fter operating as an open pit for more than 35 years, Cassiar is in the midst of moving underground. The pit that has provided asbestos for nearly four decades will be exhausted by 1991. By that time, development will have been well advanced on the McDame underground asbestos deposit, which has an initial reserve to sustain the operation to the year 2000 at least.

Underground development began last year. Part of the program, set at a

\$50-million expenditure over the two years, will include diamond drilling and bulk-sampling this year.

Less advanced but of extreme interest to the mining community is Cassiar's Similkameen operation, the purchase of which (from Newmont Mining) probably was the bargain mining acquisition of 1988. Simileo, as the Cassiar subsidiary is called, will explore the existing orebody along strike and in other areas peripheral to the mine for separate orebodies.

"When we took it over from Newmont, the mine was scheduled to close



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