

Mine May Reopen Soon

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The Jordan River Sunro copper mine, which has been shut down for the past two years, will probably resume operations in February following successful completion this week of a refinancing arrangement, it was announced Saturday.

The first of the 120 miners who will be required for the operation have already been hired, E. C. Dowell, vice-president of Crownex International Ltd. which holds part of the mine's lease, told the Colonist.

The re-opening was made possible after two foreign

firms put up \$500,000 to purchase 50 per cent of the shares in Dison Development Ltd. Dison, which was owned completely by Crownex until the transaction, originally purchased the Sunro lease from Cominco, Dowell said.

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Pechiney Development Ltd. of Canada, a wholly-owned subsidiary of its French parent company, will manage and control the mine, Dowell said. The second-largest company in France, Pechiney has worldwide mining interests and is especially noted as an aluminum producer, although

its operations require large amounts of copper.

The partner company — Aumus, Fergusson and Wild Ltd. of France and England — is an agent for concentrates. Dowell said the company has used smelters in Germany and Spain, but ore from the Jordan River mine might be processed in Tacoma, Wash.

Operations will continue for a minimum of four to five years, Dowell said, but could run for much longer.

"There is about 1.5 million proven tons of ore there and probably another four million," Dowell said, "and that is just in two of 17 zones. The others have not yet been developed to a point at which we can tell what is in them."

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The lease, which is valid until the year 2000, comprises 44 crown grant claims, he said.

A mill at the mine site is presently capable of processing 1,500 tons of ore per day and future development will depend on the size of the claim, Dowell said.

The mill is situated in a tunnel which extends more than 4,000 feet into the side of a hill.

Most of the mining operations to date have been underground and this will continue to be the case, Dowell said, but a "small" surface (strip) operation will also be included this time.

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Mine employees will live in the Sooke area, Dowell said.

The mine has been plagued by what Dowell called "a series of catastrophes" since its opening in 1962.

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At that time, there was some production, but this was halted when the Jordan River flooded the mine in December, 1963. The river has been redirected since then, but Sunro was closed for at least two years following the incident.

An investment company then refinanced the mine, but sold out after managing it for nine months without any production.