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DUNCAN, B.C.

Gold fever spreading across Island

By GORDON HAMILTON
Southern Vancouver Island could be on the verge of a new resource boom.

Increased interest in geological formations on Vancouver Island has led to a mini-rush, where resource giants are rubbing shoulder to shoulder with weekend geologists in a mad scramble to discover the wealth miners missed the first time around.

High technology has opened the door to a re-exploration of Vancouver Island for gold, silver and copper.

And according to the explorations manager of one of the companies currently seeking minerals on the Island, there are indications leading geologists to believe the big discoveries are still waiting to be found.

Dave Watkins, of Falconbridge Copper, is one of them.

He said the new technology and methodology of exploring for and extracting minerals has re-awakened interest in southern Vancouver Island, an area that produced minerals in the early years of white settlement.

"There is a history of exploration

in the Duncan area that tends to indicate with the new technology and methodology there are discoveries yet to be found," he said in a telephone interview this week with The Cowichan News.

Falconbridge Copper is only one of several companies, some major players and some small juniors that have been registering claims in this area and conducting aerial and land-based explorations.

It is no secret within the industry that Vancouver Island has an untapped potential, Watkins said.

In fact, even the secretary at the

provincial government land registry was aware of the rush to stake claims from Leechtown to Ucluelet.

"There is no doubt about it, staking is up considerably," another employee at the registry said. He listed Falconbridge and Noranda as two companies that have registered claims within the last four months. Most of the claims have been registered by individuals, he pointed out, adding there is nothing unusual in itself that major resource companies are registering claims. They do it all the time, he said.

It is the numbers of claims by "a

variety of individuals" that is of interest at the registry, he said.

Besides Falconbridge and Noranda, Teck and Imperial Oil are two other majors with an interest in this area. Teck is a partner in Multinational, a Vancouver resource company that recently announced its Kennedy Lake property has been assayed at .46 ounces of gold per ton.

Closer to home, Aberford, a Toronto-based resource junior, has been conducting explorations at Copper Canyon. Company geologists are rumored to have been excited about preliminary surveys, locals with their

ear to the mining grapevine have told. The Cowichan News. Those rumors remain unconfirmed.

Exploration is also taking place the Port Renfrew-Jordan River area. Nuspar Resources and Triangle Ventures are co-operating on a project near Jordan River. In a recent announcement, Nuspar president Sam Aikens confirmed there are 250,000 cubic yards of glacial deposit with good potential to produce gold through a placer operation.

"Recent geotechnical studies...report favorably on the potential for developing a large scale recovery plant," Aikens said.

Nuspar is compiling data to provide a detailed projection of its proposed operations, including a pilot plant and, if it proves successful, a recovery plant.

Vancouver stock broker Ken Lynch is optimistic the Nuspar development has potential.

"They feel they have the technology to extract 100 per cent of the precious metal content," he said.

Besides the new technology described by Watkins as a combination of new advances in geophysics and geochemistry, there is another reason mining companies are looking again at Vancouver Island.

It is the discovery two years ago at Buttle Lake of new concentrations of mineralization by Western Mines.

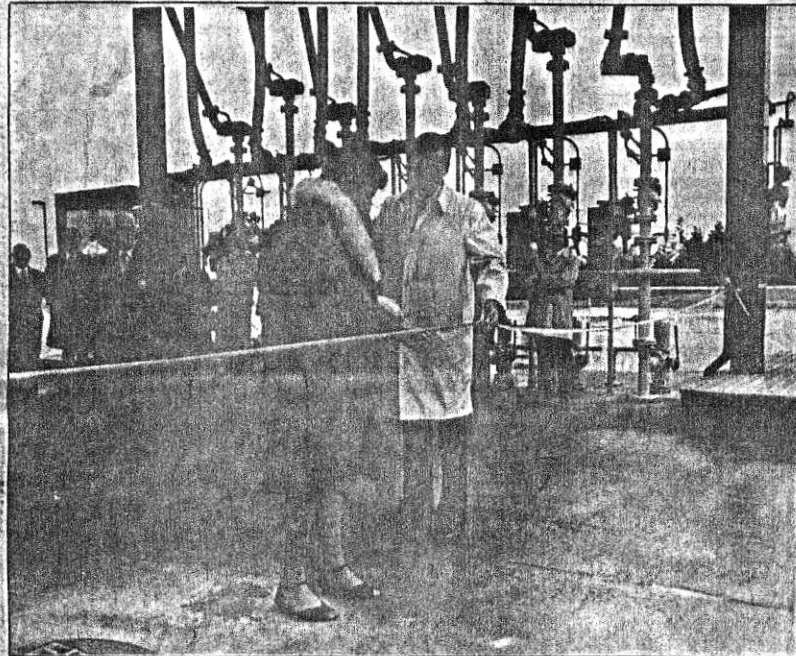
That sent ripples through the resource industry, said amateur geologist Peter Postuk, because the finds were in a type of rock called the Sicker Schist.

Sicker Schist is named after Mount Sicker, where mining operations were carried out in the early years of the century.

Postuk, who has claims himself on Mount Sicker, said the discovery of

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Mt. Sicker



CUTTING RIBBON to officially open Chevron's \$11 million while Chevron president John McIntyre holds ribbon. tank farm. Area C director Gerry Giles holds scissors. More than 100 people attended opening.

BARKER FACES CHALLENGE IN DUNCAN

Ed Williams after mayor's office

Duncan Mayor Doug Barker is going to have to face former Duncan Ald. Ed Williams in a fight for the city's top job.

stimulate the local economy, businessmen and residents alike will be looking forward to a new era of ex-

higher profile. He would also like to see a new tourist committee struck to research "tourist generators" for the

North Cowichan's on top of latest resource boom

North Cowichan is right in the middle of the mineral exploration now taking place on Vancouver Island, and that could spell good news to municipal taxpayers, says Mayor Graham Bruce.

North Cowichan owns not only the land but some mineral rights as well on Mount Sicker, and that is one of the areas Falconbridge Copper is currently exploring.

If there is mineralization there, it could bear fruit in terms of employment and revenue for the municipality, the mayor said.

Falconbridge is interested enough in the North Cowichan lands to initiate negotiations on royalties to the municipality should the explorations prove worthwhile.

Bruce said he is having their proposal examined by a professional familiar with the proposed contract to ensure the municipality will receive a fair share of any resources discovered.

"They gave us a proposal, and since we are brand new at this game, we are getting some advice," Bruce said when asked to comment on an item headed Mineral Claims in the minutes of the municipality's land management committee.

However, Bruce is not about to start counting the dollars beforehand. "If it amounts to something, then it will be another form of resource revenue for the municipal coffers. But one doesn't want to get too excited about it before the exploration is carried out."

He said Falconbridge Copper is serious enough to put a proposal to the municipality on resource exploration and extraction.

Naturally, with the stakes potentially high, he is not about to sign anything without finding out more.

"It really is a new game to us, so we are trying to learn about it in advance. We don't want to lose what we have."

Civic leadership, not personality issue in mayoralty, says Bruce

The November mayoralty in North Cowichan warmed up this week with Mayor Graham Bruce responding to charges levelled at him by challenger Gerry Smith.

Last week, Smith accused Bruce of taking a "one-on-one" approach to government that left aldermen out of the decision-making process while reducing the influence of the municipal administration.

Bruce told The Cowichan News

abhorrent when I first became mayor and had to go through a flood there," he said.

"It was a problem of the municipality, not of the local area."

He said the position of mayor is not a personality contest, but a job.

In reference to comments Smith has made in the past that he enjoyed being mayor and would like to be mayor again, Bruce said he is running again "not because I want to be

ting them with council's proposal to reduce the public works wages by one third.

It is a sore point with some aldermen.

"Anything I have done is as a result of resolution, bylaw, or direction of council," Bruce said referring to his decision to tell the men himself of the cutbacks.

"The reason council passed it

Gold fever hits Island - cont'd from P.1

mineralization in Sicker Schist has led to speculation that there could be more. Much more. Sicker Schist can be found from Buttle Lake south to Shawnigan Lake.

"Ever since that discovery, there



ART MORTON...could be something

has been a mad rush on Vancouver Island," he said.

Another factor that has led to increased exploration on the Island, Postuk said, was the releasing by CP Rail of its mineral claims to base metals within the E&N land grant. CP let its claims go in 1973, when the Barrett government introduced a mineral tax.

All the interest in Vancouver Island has not gone unnoticed on the stock market, says Duncan stockbroker Art Morton.

Morton said trading has been active in the companies involved in Vancouver Island exploration.

Morton is familiar with Nuspar, Multinational, Aberford, Imperial and a host of other companies with claims on the Island. His clients are buying them.

While there have been no "finds" yet that have pushed the juniors into the limelight, he said rumors are continually circulating throughout the Midland Doherty offices about assay results.

In Vancouver, Lynch has also noticed an increasing number of Islanders jumping into the stock market.

"A lot of local people are aware of it," he said, referring particularly to the Nuspar explorations.

For Morton, the interest and the rumors are all pieces. So far, they are not coming together to form any sort of picture.

He is monitoring the developments, but he is non-committal on any single one of them.

"Put them all together and any one of them could develop into something. If that happens, then it will make a big difference to the south end of Vancouver Island.

"But," he says, drawing on a time-worn stock broker's phrase "It could be something or it could be nothing."

"Right now, that sums up the exploration boom. It is still too early to tell what the future holds.

But there is enough interest that investors are willing to put their dollars down to find out the answer.

Teachers awaiting strike vote results

Cowichan district teachers took a strike vote Oct. 20, but the results of it will not be known until later this week.

The strike vote was organized by the B.C. Teachers' Federation and results will be released by the BCET, a Duncan spokesman for the Cowichan District Teachers' Association said Monday.

The strike vote is part of the teachers' campaign to ally themselves with other labor groups in Operation Solidarity opposing government legislation through job action.

Board cuts bus costs, parents want more

Cowichan school board has reduced the cost of busing courtesy riders from \$9 to \$4.50 per month, but the reduction does not solve the problem, according to Mill Bay parents concerned over the safety of their children who must cross the Trans-Canada Highway daily.

The service should be provided at no cost by the board because at Mill Bay the busing is for safety reasons, not as a courtesy to students, said Mike Renning a spokesman for the parents.

At last Monday's board meeting, trustees agreed to reduce the cost of the busing as a result of pressure parents have put on the board.

"I never thought for one minute I would be putting children out on the Trans-Canada Highway," said Trustee Janice Duncan, in explaining why she was in favor of the reduction.

She said some parents do not have a car to drive their children to school nor do they have the money, particularly if there is more than one child in the family.

Trustee Ann Andersen, who proposed the reduction, was less candid in explaining why she supported a reduced cost for busing the children across

"It's like watching a game of froggers," quipped one of the reporters at the press table referring to the video game that features frogs trying to cross a highway.

Truck driver Randy Hill explained the hazard he

faces daily while operating his vehicle with children darting across the road.

"On the highway I have three near-misses a week in that area with kids, and we know where to look for them."

Other parents objected

to the levying of any transportation fee.

"The extraction of money from an individual for their own or their family's safety is called a protection racket in New York or Chicago," said David Garnett. "It's called

courtesy busing in Mill Bay."

Renning told the board the parents have received nothing but "token sympathy" from the trustees.

While trustees have been informed by Cowichan-Malahat MLA Barbara Wallace of a promise from Education Minister Jack Heinrich to provide money for transportation to Cowichan school district, board chairman Anne Murray said she has received nothing to that effect from the minister.

The money had been promised by Nov. 1. However, said secretary-treasurer Bill Brown, it will be mid-November before the province makes its revised budget available. That, he said, is probably when any additional funds would be released.

It was pointed out the school board is currently operating with a five per cent surplus for 1983.

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