

# Copper/gold deposits spark mining interest

Work is about to begin in earnest on determining whether there is potential for a bulk copper/gold mine in the Aspen Grove area.

Northair Mines Ltd. of Vancouver has just announced that it has been granted an option on what is known as the Shear property close to the intersection of the Okanagan Connector and

the Princeton highway.

And while it could be years before it is known for certain whether there are sufficient deposits of sufficiently high grade to make a mine economically feasible, excitement among those involved in the venture is high.

The Aspen Grove area is a well-known copper camp, and many years ago pioneer miners extracted small amounts of copper from the area, which is part of a belt of copper-bearing rocks which stretches from the Afton Mine to the north and Copper Mountain to the south.

But, it wasn't until the building of the Okanagan Connector, which exposed the rocks to a greater depth than prospectors had previously explored, that the potential deposit was found by Ab Ablett of Kamloops.

Owner of Amex Exploration Services Ltd., Ablett has been conducting exploration services for some of the 2,800 mining companies in the province for more than 20 years.

After he had had a chance to examine some of the rocks

revealed by the Okanagan Connector cuts, Ablett and two partners staked claims in late 1989 to what he calls the Shear property.

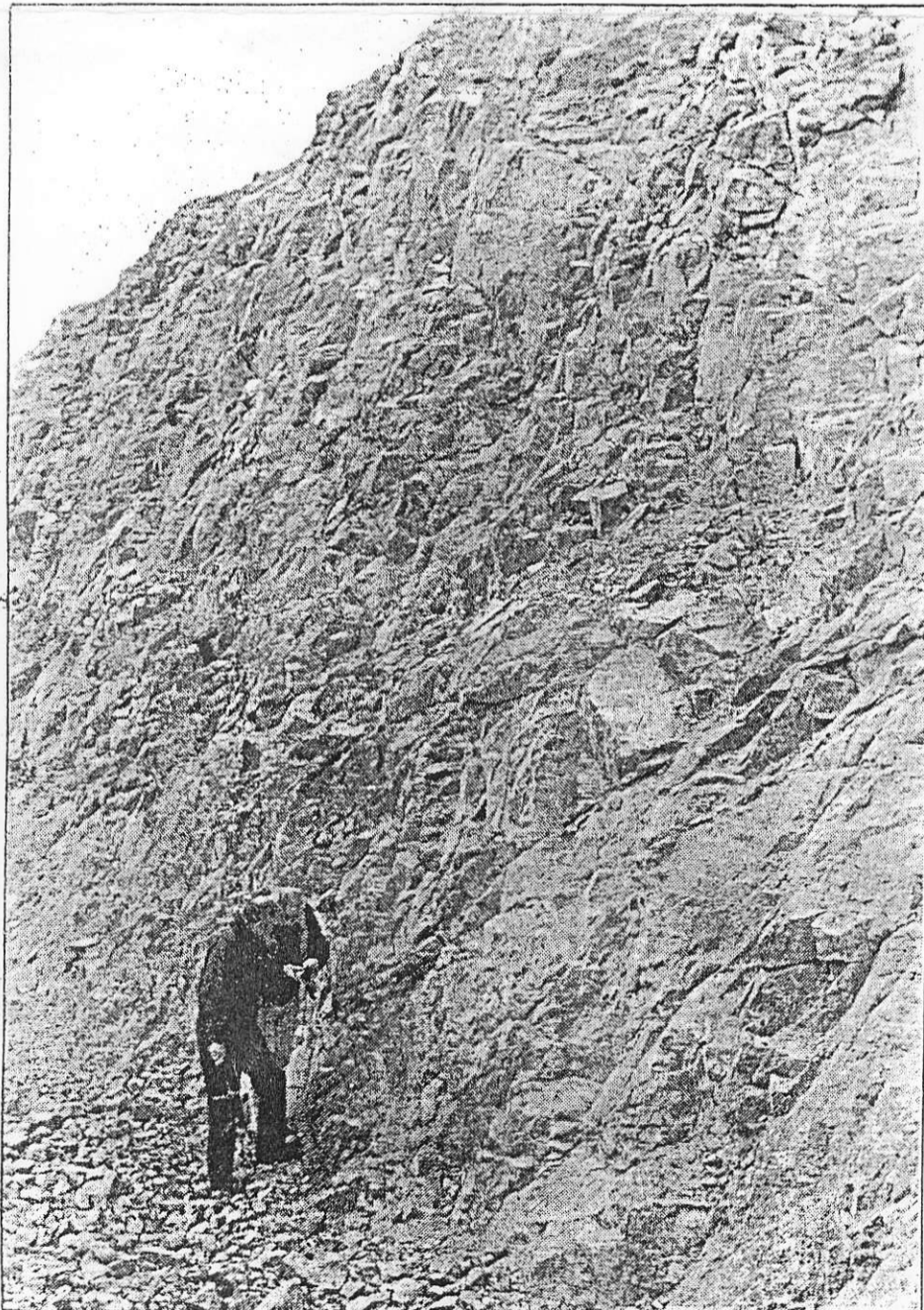
Not being a geologist himself, he commissioned geologist David Miller to take samples from the 300 metre-long exposed rock face just past the Aspen Grove intersection.

Continued On Page 3A



Ab Ablett

## News



THE BUILDING OF THE OKANAGAN CONNECTOR revealed what may be a very good deposit of copper with a gold association just past the Aspen Grove intersection. On Friday prospector Ab Ablett of Kamloops showed Bob Fullerton, ministerial assistant to Minister of Forests Claude Richmond, what to look for in chunks of rock chipped from a 300-metre long rock face beside the

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Continued From Front Page Analysis, said Ablett last week, showed significant copper levels, along with an association with gold.

"We have no idea what we've really got," said Northair Mines vice-president Fred Hewett last week. "All we know is we've got a highly productive copper belt with a gold association."

But he cautions that it will be at least two years before his company will be able to determine whether the discovery could possibly lead to a mine.

Northair Mines has also taken options on two other claims surrounding Ablett's claim, one held by Charlie Graham of Merritt, and the

other by Bill Grayson of Vancouver, for a total of more than 5,000 acres.

The company will now proceed with a program of gridding the area - all crown land except for a small portion on which the Douglas Lake Cattle Company has grazing rights - then conducting magnetometer surveys, induced polarity surveys and geochemical surveys to determine the extent, depth and quality of the deposits.

Should the results of these tests warrant it, the company would then proceed with diamond drilling to exactly measure the extent and grade of the deposits.

Dr. Vic Preto, manager of district geology for the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Mineral Resources, describes the Aspen Grove property as a "raw prospect" at the present, since no significant drilling has yet been done.

In 1979 Dr. Preto himself completed a description of the geology of the area between Nicola and Princeton. In his report, titled Bulletin 69, Dr. Preto described the Aspen Grove area, called Big Kid, as a breccia pipe representing an intrusive hydrothermal system of volcanic origin.

His report on Big Kid concluded, "Regardless of the lack of success of past exploration efforts, the Big Kid prospect must therefore be rated as one of the most important prospects in the Aspen Grove Camp and

must still be considered as having considerable economic potential."

Ablett said last week that the potential of the site may never have come to light if the Okanagan Connector had not been built, because it was during that building that the rock formations were exposed to a greater depth than before.

In announcing its option Northair Mines reported sampling has shown gold values as high as 1.02 ozs. gold per ton in grab samples from the discovery showing, along with copper values ranging from .77 to 3.86 per cent.

"It's still just a dream but we're close to knowing what we have," says Ablett.

And while Dr. Preto stresses caution, he says the fact that Northair Mines has taken an option on the claims, which commits Northair to spending \$2 million, is a positive sign.

"I would like to see a mine there as much as anybody else," he says, "but lots of dollars have to be spent, lots of work has to be done, and lots of luck has to be gotten," before anyone can even think about a mine.

"The whole process of proving-up a mine can take 10 years or more," he stresses.

Dr. Preto explains that even if diamond drilling produces positive results, there would still have to be many tests and studies made to determine the practical and economic feasibility of a mine.

## Mining regulated

The process of determining whether there is potential for a mine in British Columbia is a lengthy and highly regulated process, says Dr. Vic Preto, manager of district geology for the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

Before any disturbance of the land can take place, such as trenching or drilling, the mining company has to obtain the required permits from the ministry.

Once the company has completed all its testing and drilling, along with all its economic feasibility studies, the decision as to whether or not the company can proceed with mining rests with the Mine Development Review Board.

The board, says Dr. Preto, conducts a "very exhaustive and thorough review," involving the ministries of forests, parks, environment and any other affected agency.

Mining companies have to present complete plans for

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