



Brass sign hanging
in Rossland Museum

adding lead smelting to the gold, silver and copper ingots already being produced.



Walter H. Aldridge

...believed that great profit and a great future lay in lead recovery. He took over the Canadian Smelting Works on March 1, 1898. Due to his shrewd leadership, Aldridge's smelter developed beyond his wildest imagination, to become the world's largest producer of zinc and lead.

Rossland and Trail were now booming towns of the 'Old West'. 42 saloons and 17 law firms were part of the

collection of about 1500 people. But the biggest news was yet to come.

In 1892, four prospectors discovered a giant ore body 7000 feet long and 300 feet thick at Kimberley, B.C.

This discovery became The

Sullivan Mine, but its ores were contaminated with zinc (then considered unusable) and ore shipments had to be hand sorted before going to the smelter.

Had they known then what they know now!



Many of Cominco's geologists were trained as pilots, having no navigational equipment other than their own eyes and instincts.

During The First World War, zinc was used extensively, mixing with copper to make brass for rifle cartridges and artillery shells. By 1917, zinc was a major product of the Trail Smelter and thanks to the efforts of Selwyn Blaylock and Ralph Diamond it continued to grow. The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada, now known as Cominco, had become the world's largest lead and zinc complex, and centerpiece of the world's largest mining venture at that time.

In 1986, Teck Corporation gained control of Cominco. Today, Cominco continues to be a world leader in innovative mining, smelting and environmental control technologies.

And it all began right here at the site of the Rossland Museum.



Early 1900s crucible for
molten metals

Trail Smelter
888932

COMINCO

The ore is here,

The vision is here,

The people are here.

THE ROSSLAND MUSEUM

The story of Cominco and the Rossland mines starts about 150 million years ago. The earth was a pretty hot property - erupting volcanoes and red hot magma surging from deep underground. Mineral-rich aqueous solutions welled up into cracks, cooled and crystallized, becoming veins of high-grade metal ores - gold, silver, and copper.



Not much happened after that for a very long time. Then in 1864, someone struck gold in the East Kootenay. Hundreds of prospectors came, hoping to strike it rich. But the fever ended, and things quietened down again.

On July 2, 1890, Joe Moris and Joe Bourgeois



An early 1900s ladle for pouring molten metals.

"Three things are necessary to find a mine - brains, guts and luck."

From surveyor in 1899 to President in 1939, Blaylock's interest in the welfare of the employees never slackened. His stated belief, "...security, comfort and welfare of workmen will be paid for in increased efficiency and good will of employees..." became a benchmark in Canadian industrial relations circles.



Selwyn G. Blaylock
1879-1945

"...I know we can never achieve heaven on earth, but we can make things better. In a selfish way, if you want to call it that, we can make things much better in our own little worlds."

Diamond was responsible for developing "differential flotation" (separating zinc from lead). This technology amazing for the 1920s,

dramatically changed the mining industry. The Sullivan Mine and Trail suddenly became very profitable. Diamond's career with Cominco went from 1913 to 1956, when he retired as executive vice president, western region.

Ralph W. Diamond
1891 - 1978

staked the first successful mining claim in Rossland on Red

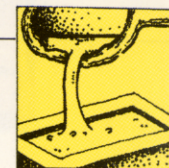
Mountain. Ore was carried out on horseback to a steamboat landing at Trail. In 1890 came the railroad boom. And Fritz Heinze.

Heinze was hard-driving and visionary. By 1896, he had built a gold and copper

Miners possessed physical courage and moral integrity. They were a far cry from the shifty, shady characters once painted.



On August 10, 1897, the Rossland Miner recorded the pouring of the first gold brick at the smelter.



smelter at Trail, and secured three provincial charters to build railways. It wasn't long before the railway giant, CPR, came bargaining



Fritz Heinze
His luck, complemented by an engaging personality and persuasive tongue, brought him victory in every undertaking. CPR regarded him as a thorn in their side.

for Heinze's railway. CPR's negotiator, Walter Aldridge was asked by Heinze to play a hand of poker for the difference between Heinze's asking price and CPR's bid, around \$300,000.

Aldridge turned him

down. Instead, they dragged J.S.C. Fraser, a Rossland bank manager, out of bed in the middle of the night to act as an arbitrator. The next day, CPR acquired Heinze's holdings, and Walter Aldridge stayed on at Trail to expand and improve the smelter,

A 1940s heavy water (deuterium oxide) container. Heavy water slows down the neutrons in an atomic reactor, enabling uranium to be converted into radioactive plutonium. It is ten percent heavier than normal water and has slightly higher boiling and freezing temperatures.

