

884697 Kutchok
Creek

New copper find hailed in northern B.C.

By LEN TAYLOR

An extensive copper, silver and zinc discovery, which some mining men interpret as a high-grade copper prospect, has been made in the Pitman River area of the Liard region.

Officials of Imperial Oil Ltd. confirmed Monday that a company exploration team has been working on the site for three years. One of them said it will probably be amenable to open pit recovery. They refused to label it high-grade copper.

The Imperial party and another group from Sumac Mines Ltd. and Sumitomo Metal Mining Canada Ltd. have confirmed the presence of three sulphides in deposits of large but as yet undetermined extent. Imperial and Sumitomo are reported to have agreed that any development will be on a joint basis because of the side-by-side relationship of their claims.

Imperial holds 358 claims and Sumitomo is reported to have about 120. The discovery area is about 250 miles northeast of Prince Rupert.

Although the copper grades are not being announced, Imperial admits it is

considerably richer copper ore than in most known B.C. deposits and better than the 1.2 per cent per ton ore proven at some Stikine River properties owned by several other companies. In B.C. mining considerations such ore would be considered high-grade.

This would make the discovery an important one in a province where the largest mines are open pit working ore with an average copper content of from 0.4 to 0.5 per cent.

Extent of the Imperial discovery is about one mile in length so far but the width and depth of the ore body has not been determined.

Exploratory work is preceding this year with upwards of 8,000 feet of drilling planned.

Imperial's interest in the Pitman River property stemmed from its participation in preliminary exploration in 1968 as part of a consortium. Imperial scientists realized from the anomaly that there was some prospect of a sulphide ore deposit. Electromagnetic surveys confirmed that this was the case.

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In some respects, a company official said, the Pitman River deposits more resemble mineralization in Eastern Canada than the conventional porphyry rock working in B.C.

The majority of copper deposits in B.C. are of the porphyry variety in that there are large tonnages of copper sulphide ore disseminated sparsely through a host rock. Ore grades are typically less than one per cent copper.

Massive sulphide copper deposits also contain copper sulphide ore but in higher concentrations.

Sumitomo, it was learned, had been working independently about the same

time as Imperial and discovered surface ore with the same indications of mineralization as those shown by the Imperial drills.

The present drilling program is the third for Imperial and is expected to produce data about the extent of the orebody on which development decisions can be based.

The find confirms prophetic lines in the 1973 B.C. mines department Geology, Exploration and Mining report (GEM).

This report says the JEFF claims, as they are called, are located about 13 miles south-southeast of Rainbow Lakes near the headwaters of an eastern tributary to Kutchok Creek, at about 4,200 feet elevation.

"Sulphide minerals comprising mainly pyrite and traces of chalcopyrite and sphalerite are found in the quartz-sericite schist and may be localized along a lithologic boundary of volcanic rocks, including acidic units, on the south with sedimentary rocks, including carbonate lenses on the north . . .

"The possibility of massive sulphide

mineralization was indicated by the presence of a crudely banded, high-grade float boulder weighing about 300 pounds located by P. Ziebart. A representative sample of the float boulder assayed copper, 13.7 per cent; zinc, 4.7 per cent; lead, 0.25 per cent; gold, 0.035 ounces per ton; and silver, 3.4 ounces per ton."

Sumitomo is reported to be proceeding with an exploration program for 10,000 feet of diamond drilling this year. The Imperial program will increase its exploratory drilling to more than 18,000 feet by the end of this year.

Last year Texasgulf Inc., exploring the Red group of claims, west of the Klappan River in the Liard district, announced a series of drill hole assays of one per cent copper in feldspar porphyry. The property is being explored by Texasgulf on option from Silver Standard Mines Ltd.

A spokesman for Texasgulf said here Monday that there is nothing new to announce about the property but a drilling program now getting under way may produce a report by July or August.