

**BOTTLED UP BY
SMELTER TRUST**

Coeur d'Alene Miners Powerless to Cope With the Combination.

The mine owners of the Coeur d'Alene held a conference in Spokane last week to devise some means of securing some relief from the exactions of the Smelter Trust—which was heralded as a great philanthropic move in the interest of miners, when organized a year or so ago. Regarding this matter, the Spokesman-Review says:

The fight between the mineowners of the Coeur d'Alene and the smelter trust has reached a crisis, and the mineowners have refused to ship any more ore to the trust until a satisfactory settlement is reached. On Monday the Coeur d'Alene mines, except the Bunker Hill & Sullivan, suspended shipments to the trust, although their contracts will not expire for six months.

The mineowners demand two things. The first and most important is decreased charges for freight and treatment on their ores. For years the costs of smelting have been steadily reduced by the application of more scientific methods, and the facilities which are afforded by combining the ores of widely different fields.

Despite these reductions, however, the smelting trust has doggedly refused to make any cuts in the charges for handling the immense tonnage of the district. To aggravate the situation, it is believed to have made combinations with the railways, whereby freight rates are held up, and it is generally conceded that the trust is getting profits out of the tariffs charged for freights. The mineowners have at last revolted against this situation.

In addition they are demanding an increased tonnage. For months they have been forced by the trust to restrict their output, on the ground that there was a surplus of lead in the country, and that it was necessary to restrict production until the surplus could be worked off. Up to the first of last July, the mines were restricted to a two-thirds production. Then, in response to the urgent demands of the mineowners, the output was increased to about eighty per cent of the normal production. The price, however, was fixed, as before, at 3½ cents a pound.

Meanwhile, the Guggenheims, who control the smelting trust, have been interesting themselves personally on a heavy scale in the lead mines of the Missouri-Kansas fields, which are turning out big tonnage. The mineowners here feel that they are being restricted in output so that the market for Missouri lead will be bolstered up at their expense. Against this condition they are rebelling. They now demand an output at their normal rate of production, and the reduction in rates which will enable them to work at a profit which they consider commensurate with their rank as the producers of 45 per cent of all the argentiferous lead produced in the United States.

The Bunker Hill & Sullivan company is not represented in the conference today, as it has practically its own smelter at Tacoma.

The following day the Spokesman-Review stated: The fight of the Coeur d'Alene lead miners with the smelting trust is still unsettled, and if a settlement was any nearer in sight last evening than it was before the conference of the mineowners, which commenced yes-

terday, none of the officials were willing to say so. Their attitude, however, was pacific, and they were anxious to avoid appearing in the light of antagonizing the big trust.

The smelting trust, or as it is legally known, the American Smelting & Refining company, is now so powerfully entrenched that a fight with it is a serious matter and the mineowners realize it. They would much prefer to make arrangements with the trust satisfactory to both sides, rather than resort to the erection of independent smelters.

Although the smelting trust was organized less than three years ago, it has the smelting industry almost completely buttoned up. Its principal plants are at Denver, Omaha, Kansas City, East Helena and Salt Lake, with refineries at Perth Amboy, N. J., and it is affiliated with the United States Reduction company, which operates the cyanide mills treating the Colorado gold ores. It is in magnificent condition for economic smelting and it has long time contracts with the mineowners of Colorado and Utah, which still further fortify it. Lately, too, the smelting trust has been making long time contracts with large consumers of pig lead, with the idea of heading off the Coeur d'Alene mineowners if they should try building independent smelters. The situation would then be that the trust would have contracts to supply the largest consumers and the new smelters would be seriously handicapped in disposing of their product.

The trust has a capital of \$100,000,000, and it pays dividends of seven per cent annually. Its plants have a cash value of less than \$7,500,000, according to the claims of the attorney general of Colorado, who is fighting the trust. Accordingly its yearly dividends almost equal the cost of the plants.

A curious illustration of the monopoly which it holds is given by the condition of the British Columbia lead miners. The trust in its efforts to restrict production has absolutely refused to smelt lead ores from British Columbia. The present price of lead in this country is 4½ cents, although the trust only pays 3½ cents a pound for lead. There is a duty of 1½ cents a pound on lead ore. Deducting the duty would leave two cents a pound as the price which British Columbia mineowners ought to get for their lead if they could ship it to this country. However, they can not ship it in, and must sell in Europe for \$1.30 a hundred pounds, which is the price based on the London quotation. They would get fifty per cent more for their lead, after paying duty, if they could ship it into the United States, but the trust will not accept it.

Will Reopen the Huronian.

F. J. Hard, secretary of the Oregon Mining and Stock exchange, at Portland, who has been in the city for the past two days, is en route to the Cable Cove district, where he will reopen the Huronian, a promising property adjoining the Ibox. Mr. Hard is jointly interested in the mine with Thomas Bessler, of this city, one of the champion rock drillers of the district, and it is understood the proposition will be worked on an extensive scale, the showing made being excellent.—Herald.

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