

EXPERIMENTAL MINING STATIONS

An important bill has just been introduced in congress by Senator Gamble, of South Dakota, referring to the establishing of mining experiment stations in all of the mining districts of the United States. The bill is practically a facsimile of the one which James A. George, of Deadwood, S. D. introduced last summer at the session of the American Mining Congress, which received favorable comment at the time.

The bill provides for the establishing of experimental stations in each of the mining districts and territories of the United States where the prospector, locator or, in fact, any one can have mineral samples assayed at a nominal cost. The only restriction the bill places on those making application for such assays is that they are citizens of the United States. The provision is made that the stations be under the jurisdiction of the Treasury department and it is specified that the appointments are to be made by the secretary of the treasury.

No particular designation is given to these offices except that they are referred to as "experimental stations." Each station is to be under the supervision of an expert geologist who is to receive a compensation of \$3,000 a year. Provision also is made for the appointing of a chemist at each station who will assist the geologist in carrying out the work as provided by the bill. These officials will be required, at a nominal cost to be determined by the secretary of the treasury, to furnish a full report and assay upon any rock submitted.

Each station also will be required to keep a complete record of the work accomplished and when not engaged in making analysis it is stipulated that it shall be the duty of the geologist in charge to make tours around the surrounding mineral sections and submit reports upon them.

A clause in the bill which compels those in charge of the station to maintain strict secrecy for a period of fifteen days as to the location of any rock or other mineral substance which has been delivered for assay. This section is evidently intended to prevent those performing the assay to take advantage of the information thus secured in case a particularly rich sample would be submitted.

The secretary of the treasury is empowered to spend \$5,000 for equipping and maintaining each experimental outfit.

The object of the bill evidently is to help the prospector without means to have all his samples assayed at a nominal cost. While today most western camps have several assay offices and while the charges for assays for either gold, silver, copper, lead or zinc, ores range between \$2 to fifty cents, still if many assays are to be secured the expense becomes immediately a burden. The result is that prospectors are reluctant to have many assays made and thus frequently, rock which might be valuable and which might be the means of leading to further discoveries, is discarded.

One of the recent striking illustrations of the point is that Tonopah, Nevada, would have revealed its wealth at least six months earlier than

it did, if the original locator could have had his rock assayed at the time.

As it was in order to secure an assay he was obliged to assign an interest in the claims which he had discovered, having no other means at his disposal.

The bill has been read twice and referred to the committee on Mines and Mining.

GEOLOGY OF PARTS OF IDAHO AND OREGON.

The United States Geological Survey, C. D. Walcott director, has just issued a pamphlet on the Geology of Southwestern Idaho and Southeastern Oregon, prepared by Israel C. Russell. The field work was done in the summer of '92, the principal purpose of which was to determine in what localities artesian water can be obtained.

In Oregon the survey was confined to Malheur and Harney counties. The authors' investigation convinces him that there is an artesian basin of large extent extending into both counties, surrounding lakes Harney and Malheur.

Incidentally, it is stated that those who have bored for oil in that region, both in Idaho and Oregon, have ignored geological conditions in locating their wells and in every instance they have selected spots where it is seemingly impossible to find oil. It is the opinion of Mr. Russell that the most favorable locality for oil is in Canyon county, Idaho, near Pickles butte. He is skeptical, however of it ever being found, in that region, in commercially paying quantities.

The book contains a number of valuable maps and photographs, and all who are interested in the geological formations of the Inland Empire will be entertained by its perusal.

TAILINGS TABLE DESIGNED BY MR. WILFLEY ACCEPTED

A dispatch from Wallace says: The Federal Mining and Smelting company is experimenting with a tailings table, which, if it proves a success, will replace the canvas plant at the Standard mill. The canvas plant at the Standard is the only one in the Coeur d'Alenes and is used to treat the slimes that the vanners and the other tables do not save. Notwithstanding the fact that this plant is in use, the tailings from the Standard are said to carry higher values than any of the other properties of the district.

The tailings table which the company is considering placing in the mill is designed by Mr. Wilfley, the inventor of the Wilfley tables. He was in Wallace this week and superintended the installation of one of the tables in the mill. It has been in operation for five or six days, and thus far it is working with remarkable success. If it continues to run successfully others will be installed, and if all prove satisfactory the mill will be thoroughly equipped with the new invention.

The tailings table is something new in this part of the country. They have been used in Mexico and a few other mining sections and have met with wonderful success. They are much more effective than a canvas plant, several of the tables treating more of the slimes than the entire canvas plant.

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