

Mining Operations in Utah--A Resumé By Murray Schick

Utah's mining industry lay supine for the first six months of 1908, taking the count. At the call of "six" there were signs of animation. At "seven" the prostrate occupation began to look up. At "eight" it was half way to its feet. By the ninth month the industry was back in the center of the ring handing uppercuts to Hard Times, the champion fright walt.

Our mines and mining companies have been slightly disfigured, to continue the Marquis of Queensbury metaphor, in their contest with depression, but the depression is now breathing heavily and hanging to the ropes. One or two good stiff dividends will put it out.

In view of the gloomy outlook twelve months ago the recovery has come in a remarkably short space of time. In many respects our present state is better than that before the panic. Nineteen hundred and eight has given us better smelting facilities than we formerly possessed, an enlarged milling capacity and greater railroad mileage.

Our valley smelters in the last few months of 1907 led a precarious existence. Harassed by the farmers, threatened by the courts, annoyed by labor demands and denounced by the mine owners, their lot was not an enviable one. Finally the metal market suffered a stroke of apoplexy and the smelting companies found themselves stocked with ore which they had purchased at top notch and which had become unsaleable at any price. This was too much. Anxious to be alone with their grief they barred their doors and untied the dog. Anyone who tried to sell ore to a smelter in those days was lucky to escape with his life.

It is different now. Ore buyers are not clamorous, but anyone with ore to sell can sell it. The American Smelting & Refining company has made terms with the farmers around Murray and is operating its lead smelter there without opposition. It has also expanded its copper treating plant at Garfield. Several new furnaces have been blown in during the past year and the daily capacity is 2,700 as against 1,800 tons twelve months ago.

The United States Smelting, Refining & Mining company has won a scientific as well as an industrial victory at Bingham Junction by perfecting what is virtually a smokeless smelter. By the process there in use the smoke and fumes from the furnaces are condensed into valuable by products and do not escape from the stack.

Since the first of last January the Tintic Development company has doubled the capacity of its copper smelter at Bingham—the Yampa, it is called—and has incorporated with it a converter plant capable of making a carload of blister copper from the unrefined matter every forty-eight hours. With the added furnaces the Yampa is able to handle from 800 to 900 tons of ore every day.

In August the Tintic, or Knight smelter at Silver City, Tintic district, was blown in. After running for a month at half its capacity, it was compelled to draw its fires and not until November was the operation of the plant resumed. The interruption, however, was not due to any defect in construction. Most of the trouble was caused by the instability of the power supply. The power was electrical and came over a long distance transmission line—when it came, but often it did not come. As the modern smelter is not constructed so it can be run by hand the failure of the electrical current brought everything to a standstill. As soon as it became evident that the power supply was the one weak point in the great enterprise the company set about to strengthen it. A second power line was urged to hurry along its construction work and the building of an auxiliary steam plant at the smelter was hastened. Short as has been its period of operation the Tintic smelter has demonstrated that it

can secure plenty of ore and the right kind of ore, and that it can find a ready market for its ingots, bars and bullion.

Much might be said of the prospects for a huge smelter in Tooele county, a rival of the American plants, to be erected under the auspices of the Amalgamated company, but this project properly belongs to 1909, '10 and '11. It will take two years or more to bring such an enterprise to an active stage of existence.

Concentrating, or reduction plants, called for brevity and convenience, "mills," have not increased in number so much as they have in usefulness. The lead in milling operations has been taken by Garfield, the new industrial town south of the Great Salt lake. The big Utah Copper and Boston Consolidated reduction plants were practically completed in 1907, but it is only since the dawning of the present year that they have been permitted to demonstrate their value as profit makers.

Although their methods are radically different the results derived from the two mills are very similar. The savings vary with the excess or deficiency of iron in the ore treated. For this reason it has been impossible to make close comparisons. Some reports give the Boston the advantage and others are more favorable to the Utah.

The Consolidated Mercur slimes plant at Mercur, has been developed to a high degree of efficiency. Lessees of the Sacramento dump at this camp, are building a concentrator and another mill is going up on the property of the Boston Sunshine company west of the Con. Mercur.

At Park City the Silver King Coalition mill has been enlarged. A fine reduction plant has been ordered by the American Flag company. The Gracelli Chemical company, after successfully trying out its zinc separating process early in the year, has almost doubled the capacity of the works.

Several new mining districts have been put in touch with the ore markets by the completion of the Utah division of the Western Pacific railroad. Going almost straight west from Salt Lake the new line taps a region long noted for its mineral wealth, but precluded from paying activity by its isolation.

Although open for traffic only a few weeks, the Western Pacific is receiving numerous consignments of ore from properties that have never shipped before owing to the cost of wagon transportation. Encouraged as they will be by the railroad, the Dugway, Silver Island and Deep Creek mining companies will steadily increase their activities and their outputs.

Preparations made for new railroad construction bespeaks lively business in that department next year. The Utah Copper company has staked out a line from Bingham to Garfield and has incorporated a subsidiary company to finance the undertaking. The Cole-Ryan interests have surveyors laying out a route for the "Tooele Valley Railway," which is to extend from the San Pedro railroad to the Utah Consolidated smelter site. The line will be about 28 miles long.

The San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake is said to be planning a branch from its main line to Fish Springs, the home of the Utah mine, and Clifton district.

Of all the Utah mining camps Bingham has made the most rapid and complete recovery from the panic of 1907. Copper was the first of the commercial metals to advance in price, and this redounded to the glory of Bingham. The Utah Copper company, after years of arduous and costly preparation, began the treatment of its low grade porphyry ores mined with steam shovels.

In November the last of the twelve sections of its Garfield mill was put in the harness and the company was producing copper at the rate of 50,000,000 pounds a year.

The Boston Consolidated has discarded the steam shovels in its mining operations and is supplying its big mill from underground workings. About half the units of the mill have been turned on and the results obtained have been more than satisfactory.

Under a contract the Utah Consolidated has been shipping 800 to 1,000 tons a day to the American smelter at Garfield. Experts have reported that the Utah Con. has enough ore blocked out to keep up the present output for five years at least while hundreds of acres along the line of the ore zone have not been penetrated. The latter half of the year has been enlivened by dickering between the Utah Con. and the American Smelting & Refining company, the former desiring a renewal of its present smelting contract for a long term and the smelting company demanding a higher rate.

The Bingham Con., shipwrecked in the panic, has been going to pieces among the breakers, but the Ohio Copper has emerged triumphant from the financial turmoil. It is now provided with ample funds to complete connections with its Mascotte tunnel outlet and to finish its 4,500-ton concentrating mill.

Tintic district has been the happy hunting ground of the trader on change. The familiar issues of 1907—Colorado, Beck Tunnel, Lower Mammoth and May Day—were pushed into the background by such bright particular stars as Sioux Consolidated and Iron Blossom. The scandal which preceded the entry of the Sioux into the ranks of the dividend payers is interesting enough to deserve a chapter by itself, but it cannot be given within the limits of this review. Suffice to say that the Sioux did break into the ranks with a 3-cent dividend which has since been doubled. Iron Blossom has sold chiefly on its future prospects, the buyers believing it the next in succession to the Colorado-Sioux vein.

Colorado Mining stock has been abnormally low all year and its earnings have been curtailed by the misfortunes of the Tintic smelter where many cars of Colorado ore has been awaiting treatment for weeks and months. The Beck-Tunnel has been non-productive all year.

Without making much noise in speculative circles the Uncle Sam has had a very prosperous year, the prices of lead and silver considered. Some of the ore shipped from its deepest workings has been as rich as any taken out in Tintic.

During the past year the Godiva company has increased its capitalization to a million shares and the Bullion Beck has been absorbed by the United States company. The Bullock company has developed a shipping proposition in southeast Tintic and the Victor Con. has gone to shipping again.

The big silver lead mines of Park City resumed operations in June and July. In the former month the last of the caved ground was removed from the Ontario drain tunnel and the accumulated water drawn off from the Daly-West and neighboring mines. The Daly-West promptly started up its mill and also resumed the sinking of its main shaft. Alta's mines have been handicapped by water, low metal prices and other burdens, but the close of the year finds these difficulties largely removed. Beaver county has had a twelve-month of very successful development. Many new producers have come into being there, such as the Red Warrior and the Beaver Carbonate the Majestic company has been restored to solvency.