



February 3, 1953

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Dear Fay:

I visited Mr. Bruneau's United Mining and Metals Corporation set-up on the High Bar placer at Hereford yesterday. What I saw and heard has left me frankly bewildered. This I will say-the present activity will either result in a major, long life operation roughly comparable to the Sumpter dredge in importance or else it will be one of the most colossal flops carried out in eastern Oregon for a long time now. Frankly, I rather half-way feel optimistic on the score but how much of this due to Bruneau's personality I'm not in a position to say at this time. He is a character plus and a fighter and organizer from the word go. In fact it seems evident that he is usually one jump ahead of the gun on many things. I thoroughly disliked him when he first came into the office last year and that dislike increased on subsequent meetings to the point where I was of a mind to tell him to go plumb to hades. I'm glad now that our paths didn't cross again. He is still a rough, tough, hard-boiled and conceited son of a B, but he is also a working fool with both guts and brains, and now that he is established and has things going with a sense of direction he isn't half so belligerent as per the front he put up when he first came here.

The set-up won't be completed till mid April according to his present schedule, and whereas he didn't say so I am sure he doesn't want any advance excess of publicity, though he is planning on such when he is in operation as he said that when such was completed and the initial face established he planned to phone Ralph to come over and see the thing first-hand and take all the pictures he wanted for our "goddam Ore.-Bin. He particularly likes Ralph and has mentioned one thing or another about him several different times, especially as to how exceptionally accommodating Ralph is when it comes to looking up information and things like that.

I didn't take notes during my visit partly because we were only able to make a partial examination of the set-up due to mud and snow conditions and partly because the installation is still actively in progress so that any report made now would be highly incomplete and obsolete in a couple months anyway. For your immediate information, however, I will highlight the set-up in the following paragraphs.

The property is the High Bar Placer above Pine Creek about which I made a report some years ago when a Mr. Holt had a small dry land doodlebug washes in test operation there. You and I visited the place later in the company of Johnny Wyant as you may recall. Bruneau has purchased the entire deposit which is a couple miles long by an indefinite, but large width. He has made a deal with the local farmers Irrigation district for a year round supply of water from Burnt River. This he pumps through a 1500 foot pipe-line to a 7 million gallon reservoir some 220 feet above the river. From here he pumps, or is installing, a 12 inch line for a mile and another couple hundred foot lift to an initial face site about 1 mile south of the Holt set-up. All pipe is spiral welded high pressure steel. The first pump with a 70 horse excess of power will deliver 700 g.p.m. to the reservoir. The reservoir pump which also has a substantial excess of horse-power is scheduled to deliver water to the giants at the rate of 2500 g.p.m. This water then returns to the reservoir through a series of settling ponds via 4th of July Gulch, and no tailings or muddy water will every return to Burnt River. The schedule of fresh water replacement also allows for a 1/3 loss due to evaporation and seepage which seems quite reasonable unless unexpected crevices are exposed along the return route. He plans to use three giants and his ace in the hole is mechanically rocking sluice boxes which he claims keeps the riffles activated instead of letting them pack dead once they are filled thus requiring a minimum of water for and effecting a far superior fine gold saving in comparison to conventional sluices. The rocking motion keeps the material traveling from side to side in the box, or laterally in the riffles, thus making a 10 foot box roughly equivalent to a 100 foot one in particle distance traveled. For the installation he has three 40 foot mechanized units capable of handling 12 inch boulders. Fully automatic switches are being installed everywhere and telephone communication is being installed between the pit and all pump houses and camp, etc. Electric power consumption will be a minimum of \$800. per month for the pump operations. A diesel electric unit is being installed for floodlights at the pit. The sluices operate by gas engines if I recall correctly. Plus 12 inch boulders will be dumped in Pine Creek Canyon to begin with and for this there is a three drum slusher which will be set-up to operate in conjunction with a dozer in the pit. From all appearances they are rolling in funds as most all equipment is new and standby units are being stocked for many critical pieces. The reservoir must certainly exceed any State requirements by a wide margin, just judging from looking at it. The 6 inch pipe-line is welded to a closely spaced series of buried supports built of heavy rail. The 12 inch line is all on the ground and right-of-way is cleared, but installation is awaiting delivery from Chicago of a special valve designed by Crane. This line is to be wrapped by roofing at the center section of each pipe, and said portion buried, or rather covered over by a mount of earth so that the line will be anchored yet all couplings will be open for inspection. Bruneau placed a cost of \$250,000. on the completed installation, and I don't doubt it judging from the quantity and quality of work done so far. The power supply line cost \$15,000. They have a D-8 and a D-7 and 3 Dodge 4-wheel drive power wagons, not to mention other cars and welding equipment, etc., and the reservoir was a major sized excavation job that certainly cost plenty. The dam is a 130 feet or so across the base and it features a concrete emergency spillway for flash floods. They spent \$35,090. on sampling. The \$90 amuses me, but Bruneau has his wife as bookkeeper on the job and Portland accountants for the rest of the bookkeeping and seems to know exactly what every phase of everything has cost or is going to cost in terms of both dollars and man hours.

The sampling has consisted of yardage samples through a 10 foot trailer edition of his mechanical sluices, plus a couple 60 foot shafts. Bruneau claims to have recovered more money from his sampling of Holt's tailings than Holt did operating. This included both very fine gold and half ounce slugs that couldn't go through Holt's 3/8th's or so washer screen. Bruneau claims to have recovered course gold comparable to Johnny Wyant's Pine Creek stuff all over the best portions of the bar, plus many first sized hunks of quartz plastered full of gold like the 3 foot boulder McChord has that was picked up there 20 to 30 years ago. He claims to have gotten as high as \$450 per yard for some yards, which of course isn't altogether astonishing when one is dealing with slug gold, but what is the screwiest part of the whole deal is that Bruneau claims that his test yardage recovery averaged \$3.60 per yard. This he expresses utter astonishment at as much as you are probably doing now, but as he points out "who in the hell else has ever spent \$35,090. running yardage samples before? All that has ever been done in the past has amounted to little more than piddling around with a couple pounds in a gold pan, except for Holt's testing and I recovered more from his tailings than he did in the first place—course gold too, when Johnny and all the rest of them figured it was fine." To that what can one say.

Sincerely,

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