

Each day brings its discovery, and each discovery realizes for Great Falls a new industry. Surely for us "Fortune's wheel is turning rapidly," and every revolution discloses a new prize

The Belt Mountain Silver and Lead Mines.

At a distance of from forty to sixty-five miles from Great Falls, in the Little Belt mountains, a trunk of the great Rocky mountain range, in a hitherto isolated and almost neglected part of Montana, there exists a mineral zone extending for a distance of thirty-five or forty miles in length by ten to fifteen in width, which, judging from present indications and the developments already made, is destined to become one of the richest and most extensive bullion-producing sections of the continent. Railroad communication once established between these mines and the centers of trade contiguous to them, which is now an assured fact, the old and expensive systems of working ores, enormous transportation charges, etc., will all be changed. Ores assaying thirty to fifty ounces of silver per ton and fifty to seventy per cent lead, which have heretofore been worthless to the mine owners, will command a good price from the smelters and insure a margin of profit. Mining men and capitalists are beginning to interest themselves in this section. Many mining experts have visited mines this season, all of whom concur in the opinion that, with railroad communication and facilities for the more economic working of the mines, which would naturally result therefrom, the future of this section is full of promise and its possibilities as a mining region far beyond the comprehension of its most sanguine advocates.

The mining districts embraced in the mineral belt referred to are as follows: Running Wolf, Dry Wolf, Yogo, Middle Fork, Barker, Neihart and Carbonate.

BARKEŔ DISTRICT.

This district was organized nearly ten years ago, and rapidly obtained considerable prominence as a mining center. A smelting furnace was erected by the Clendenin Mining Company, and successfully operated for about two years. Labor, fuel, transportation, etc., were at that time enormously high, rendering it impossible to work at a profit anything but the highest grade ores. As an illustration, one

item of expense alone, that of transporting the bullion produced from the works to Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri river and at that time the nearest shipping point, was \$100 per ton. Other expenses were also proportionately heavy. As a natural consequence of this condition of affairs, the smelting works and most of the mines were compelled to suspend operations. For nearly six years but little work has been done in the district.

The building of the Montana smelting works at Great Falls and the commencement of the Belt Mountain railroad (already graded to within fifteen miles of the camp), gave a new impetus to mining matters in this section, and the greater portion of the ores formerly discarded as too low grade for profitable working will soon be in good demand, yielding liberal profits to the owners.

Near the center of the district in a granite belt, are located the Wright & Edwards, the Barker and the Gray Eagle, all of which have produced large quantities of fair-grade smelting ores, carbonate and galena, also carrying considerable iron pyrites. Judging from the character of the veins and the large amount of ore in sight, these properties will in the future rank among the best paying mines in the district. The fact that they were worked years ago at a profit, however small, by the crude and expensive system of mining and smelting then in vogue, is proof positive that with the new and improved milling and mining machinery, steam hoists in place of the old-fashioned whim and windlass, with wages, fuel, mine supplies, transportation of ores, etc., reduced fifty to seventy-five per cent, as will certainly be the case with the advent of the railroad, these mines must be extensively worked at a large profit to the owners.

What has been said in regard to the above-named mines applies equally well to scores of others in this district, which, though less developed, present as good, or even better, prospects than did those particularly referred to, at the same stage of development.

This district is well supplied with water and fuel, with abundance of the finest timber for mining purposes. Altogether, its natural advantages are unsurpassed.

NEIHART.

From ten to fifteen miles in a southwesterly direction from Barker are located the now somewhat famous mines of Neihart (or Montana) district.