

OPEN FILE

Princeton, B.C.,
September 10th, 1949.

Chief Inspector of Mines

SEP 14 1949

Referred to _____

Ans'd _____

G.Y.L. Crossley, Esq.,
Field Representative,
Regional Development Division,
Department of Trade and Industry,
286 Bernard Avenue,
Kelowna, B.C.

Dear Mr. Crossley: Re: Industrial Index - 1949.

I am in the receipt of your letter of September 8th advising that at your recent meeting with a Committee of the Board of Trade and business men, including the M.L.A., at Merritt in regard to the above Index they made the statement that mining has been important and merits additional attention with over 50 million tons of coal available. Also note that your Victoria office have asked for an elaboration of this general statement and note your request for comments on this matter.

Since the commencement of recorded output, the collieries operating in the Merritt area have produced (up to December 31st, 1948) a total of 2,610,062 long tons. Coal output was first recorded in 1907 and since that time seven properties are reported to have either mined coal or to have done prospecting or development work. A brief record of these is herewith given:-

- Middlesboro Colliery: operated from 1907 to 1944;
produced 2,061,184 long tons.
- Coal Hill Colliery: operated from 1911 to 1926;
produced 486,407 long tons.
- Diamond Vale Colliery: operated from 1907 at intermittent periods
until 1945. Produced 51,109 long tons.
- Pacific Coast Colliery: operated intermittently from 1911 to 1929;
produced 3,174 long tons.
- Normandale Colliery: operated intermittently from 1922 to 1942;
produced 800 long tons.
- Sunshine Mine: has operated intermittently since 1925;
produced 287 long tons.
- Coldwater Coal Mines: has operated on part of the former Middlesboro property since 1945. Is the only presently producing mine.
Produced, up to Dec. 31, 1948:
7,101 long tons.

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The former importance of coal-mining to the city of Merritt, and the subsequent decline in output and payroll, can perhaps best be illustrated by showing the annual production of coal and the number of men employed in the industry from 1907 to date. This is herewith given:-

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Annual output of coal in long tons:</u>	<u>Total number of men employed at mines:</u>
1907	10,868	50
1908	28,611	98
1909	63,910	165
1910	146,218	375
1911	207,293	524
1912	177,583	410
1913	234,534	520
1914	114,546	373
1915	83,518	280
1916	81,091	285
1917	104,317	314
1918	134,762	241
1919	116,660	237
1920	119,724	238
1921	103,683	275
1922	108,048	272
1923	79,816	228
1924	65,338	196
1925	43,667	148
1926	51,231	128
1927	42,945	115
1928	44,808	128
1929	43,758	116
1930	36,322	115
1931	28,878	105
1932	20,828	93
1933	25,886	108
1934	24,611	109
1935	25,617	109
1936	25,461	110
1937	25,276	100
1938	25,696	100
1939	22,088	99
1940	24,618	100
1941	22,860	83
1942	28,784	90
1943	35,476	122
1944	19,069	108
1945	6,262	30
1946	1,605	18
1947	2,018	5
1948	1,778	5

With regard to the statement, that over fifty million tons are available I would point out that it is not the amount of coal said to be in the ground that is so important as the amount that can be economically mined. Mr. C. F. Thomas, operator of the Coldwater Coal Mines, has been endeavouring during the past four years to get someone interested in the purchase of his property. If he could prove the existence of millions of tons of coal of commercial grade I have no doubt that he would have been able to dispose of the property long ago. However, from the work done at the old Middlesboro Colliery, I believe there is a probability of some mineable coal being available, but a diamond drilling programme or further underground development would be necessary before anyone could make a definite statement on the actual amount of coal that could be economically mined.

Apart from the area presently held by Mr. Thomas, and the adjoining old Coal Hill property, the remainder of the Merritt coal area has accounted for only 2.4% of the coal so far produced. While no doubt there is some coal in other parts of the field there has not yet been sufficient mineable coal discovered to warrant continued mining; although during the period 1943-1945 some activity was seen at the old Diamond Vale colliery and 15,666 long tons of coal was mined.

The existence of large quantities of coal in the Merritt area has been the subject of much discussion during the past 40 years. During 1945-46, six diamond drill holes were put down in this coalfield by at the expense of the Provincial Government in an effort to confirm such supposed reserves. Some 4,508 feet were drilled and the results failed to verify the continuity of any major seams. One hole, on Lot 120, was drilled to a depth of 1,270 feet and did not pass through a workable seam. Five holes drilled in the vicinity of the old Diamond Vale colliery showed several seams but also indicated rapid variations in the thickness and position of the seams. It is possible that if sufficient drilling were done in other parts of the field some workable coal may be found.

I trust that the above information will be of service to you in making your report to your departments Office at Victoria.

Yours very truly,



Inspector of Mines.