

Montana Men Return

Marcus Bakken and Iver Hogstad returned home Friday evening from Anaconda, Mont., where they have been working for the past few months for the Anaconda Mining Co. This company is perhaps the largest mining and smelting company in the world as they possess mining properties in several other places in the United States as well as in South America.

There is no mining done at Anaconda but that city is the location of the company's smelters and the ore is shipped there from Butte located about sixty-five miles to the southeast. Some idea of the magnitude of the plant at Anaconda may be gained from the fact that there are eight smelting mills there each capable of handling 700 tons of ore per shift, and as there are three shifts per day the maximum handled when running at full capacity is 16,800 tons of ore per 24 hours, but as a matter of fact, not all the mills are running at full capacity at the present time.

The ore shipped into Anaconda from Butte contains copper, arsenic, gold and silver in varying amounts. The copper and arsenic are removed at Anaconda, then the residue containing the silver and gold is shipped to Great Falls for extraction. This, of course, is only a very small part of the original ore, as the immense slag dumps at Anaconda contains the greater part of the bulk of the ore shipped in.

The plant is equipped with some of the largest and most up-to-date machinery for the handling of ore and tourists come from far and near to see this wonderful establishment.

The company's pay-roll at Anaconda amounts to approximately \$1,000,000 a week, the lowest wages paid to any employee being \$33 a week, and some of the work is not so very hard either. The reason for these extremely high wages is not difficult to discover. The gases liberated during the smelting and refining of the copper and arsenic are extremely poisonous, and at first the men who come there to work soon become deathly sick. Those who stay there for any length of time, so as to become acclimated to the poison, so to speak, do not mind the fumes very much, but they have a sickly appearance, and it is said that if they go to some other part of the country away from the polluted air to which they have become accustomed, they soon sicken and die. The smelters are on a high mountain

and a 600-foot chimney takes the gases to an extremely high altitude, and they are greatly diluted before returning to the ground, but so potent are they that in the city of Anaconda there is hardly a blade of grass to be seen anywhere, and for a radius of 40 miles around the smelters the effects of the gases can be noted on all kinds of vegetation.

Besides the danger to health from fumes those men who work in the neighborhood of the smelting kettles run great danger of death or injury from molten metal. There are big kettles holding tons of metal that are being swung from cranes or switched to and fro, and the least little accident and splashed or spilled metal at that great temperature may cause severe injury. During the months our Hannaford men were there no one was killed, but very few days passed that someone was not taken to the hospital. At one time six men were severely injured at one time. There are, of course, jobs free from this danger, as for instance the men working in the carpenter shops, or on the thirty-five mile long wooden flume which brings water from the mountains to the plant, but even they suffer from the gases.

The gases even effect the clothing of the men, and the company furnishes special overalls for its workmen. Common cotton overalls are eaten up in a few days. They become full of holes and brittle and in a short time are nothing but rags.

Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that wages are high and work steady. But Mr. Bakken says he would not go back there to work even if he were offered twice the wages.

WALUM NEWS NOTES

The Walum Sunday School will have a picnic in connection with the Young Peoples' Society, Sunday, May 13th at noon. The Young Peoples' Society will have their program after the picnic lunch. All are welcome.

The Valley City Boosters in a Special train made quite an impression, giving away many souvenirs. Quite a crowd was at the depot.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl F. Werner motored to Leal Sunday.

E. W. Everson left Friday for Fargo on business.

Mrs. L. Spengler arrived Thursday to visit at the A. M. Hanson home.