

Special Correspondence from Mining Centers

News of the Industry Reported by Special Representatives
at Denver, Salt Lake City, San Francisco and London

REVIEWS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

San Francisco

Dec. 4—A fire which occurred in the **Fremont Consolidated gold mine**, at Drytown, Amador county, resulted in the death of 11 miners, who were lowered into the shaft after the noon hour, when no one knew of the fire. The skip jammed in the shaft and but two of 13 men escaped. After the connecting drifts of the Fremont and Gover shafts had been bulkheaded and the collar of the latter had been boarded up to smother the fire, Superintendent Arthur Goodall started to flood the mine. Later, Goodall and a party went down the Gover shaft and found their way to the bulkhead, which they blew open with dynamite. Goodall and the party then went to the Fremont shaft and made an opening. They were able to descend in the skip to the 300-ft. level, when they were driven back to the surface by the stifling smoke. Other attempts made to descend met with the same result. The fire at the mine is now under control, but the miners have been unable to get lower than 300 ft. in the shaft or to enter the tunnels from the Gover shaft, leading to the Fremont, on account of the gases. It is supposed a cave occurred in the Fremont after the timbers had burned, thus preventing circulation. Steam is being used to force the gases out of the mine.

At Keswick, Shasta county, the last of the matte produced at the smelter was shipped away Dec. 3. The shut-down of the great plant is complete and there are less than 50 men on the Mountain Copper Company's payroll at Keswick. These include men employed in operating the Iron Mountain Railroad, which will continue to haul ore from the Iron Mountain and Hornet mines at Keswick station for shipment to the company's reduction plant at Martinez. The foundry will continue in operation. This does work for the Martinez plant and also custom work for the Mammoth Copper Company, at Kennett. A small force is kept at work in the machine shops for the Iron Mountain Railroad.

The Graciosa Oil Company, of this city, owning extensive oil lands at Santa Maria, Santa Barbara county, is in rather a fix to fill its contract of 10,000,000 bbl. of oil for the Japanese government. While the Union and Associated Oil companies had an option each on one-third of the contract, they will hardly take the option up in view of the advancing prices of oil. Oil men say the Graciosa company cannot fill the contract

from its own wells by nearly one-half, and stands to lose \$1,000,000 if forced to purchase oil to fill it. It is doing its utmost to escape the terms of the contract, but an ironbound clause makes it impossible to withdraw without heavy loss. The contract was made a year ago at 42c., and oil has since risen to \$1 in the Santa Maria field, from which the Graciosa draws, and will go higher, it is believed.

Hydraulic mining on a large scale will soon begin at the historic old Nevada mine at Red Dog, Nevada county, where once stood a prosperous village. The new retaining dam is composed of pine and spruce logs built up in compartments and planted on solid bedrock. Each crib is filled with granite boulders. The dam is one of the finest of its kind in California. It is 25 ft. wide on top and 106 ft. long and is so built that as soon as the river bed behind it is filled up it can be raised by adding tiers of logs. It will hold in check six miles of debris, and some idea of the amount of dirt which may be backed up can be obtained when it is stated that at points the river is 600 ft. wide. The pipe-line has been laid and all is in readiness to set the giants going when the rains come. J. S. Goodwin and the Nicholls family own the mine.

On the banks of the Pajaro river, below Watsonville, Santa Cruz county, back of the shores of Monterey bay, experiments are being carried on in the direction of handling auriferous black sands profitably. These are being made by J. J. Morey and others. A rather elaborate plant has been erected.

The electric furnaces at Heroult, Shasta county, for the production of ferro-silicon, will shortly start. Production at Heroult had been suspended temporarily, owing to the necessity of getting all of the power company's transmission lines in order for the winter season, and now that this has been accomplished the high voltage required at Heroult will again be turned on and continued without interruption. The cells for the battery of furnaces to be installed at the electric smelter are in process of construction. In all, 14 are to be erected.

The men at both mine and smelter of the Union Copper Company, at Copperopolis, Calaveras county, have been discharged, though it is expected that work will be resumed in the spring.

The first quartz mill ever brought into Modoc county is now being set up in Hoag district. The mill will be driven by water power, for which a ditch has been

constructed. The fall secured is about 150 ft., which will give ample force to work all the machinery.

Brandy City, in Sierra county, has been virtually deserted since the adverse decision in the matter of hydraulic mining over 20 years ago. At last, however, the Brandy City Mining Company is making preparations to resume work on the old Brandy City gravel mine. These preparations consist of the building of about six miles of wagon road from Indian Valley to Brandy City, a bridge across the North Yuba at Indian Valley, the re-building of the old Hoosier flume, which takes the water from Cañon creek to the mine, and the construction of a long bedrock tunnel for drainage. The company will build restraining dams in accordance with plans already approved by the California Debris Commission. Geo. F. Taylor is superintendent in charge of the work, with Frank Strandberg as general foreman. At present about 75 men are employed at the various camps.

Salt Lake City

Dec. 6—The Utah Consolidated Mining Company is making efforts to prolong the operation of its copper smelter nine miles south of Salt Lake City. Convinced that it is futile to try to continue smelting in the Salt Lake valley, the management is now endeavoring to obtain a stay of execution until a new plant can be built. With this object in view, a conference was held with a committee representing the farmers. The result was the calling of a mass meeting of the farmers who appeared as plaintiffs in the smelter smoke case, which resulted in the decree of injunction forbidding the smelters to operate on ore containing sulphur in the charge in excess of 10 per cent. It is expected that the farmers will join in a stipulation asking the court to modify its decree to permit the smelter to operate until the company has time to erect a new one, which will be about a year. The Utah Consolidated has purchased a site in Tooele county, which can be reached from the mine direct by aerial tramway.

The Bingham Consolidated smelter will go out of commission about Dec. 15. By about that date it is expected that the ores on hand will be cleaned up. The company has recently made a sweeping reduction in its office and mine forces.

A new wage scale will go into commission in Bingham on Jan. 1, amounting to a reduction of 25c. a shift all around.