

THE  
MAIL LINE

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THE TACOMA SMELTER

By G. E. Sherwood

In 1887 a group of five businessmen led by the development of mining and transportation in the Northwest in the 80's, combined to organize a company at Tacoma for the purpose of constructing a lead smelter with a 100 ton daily capacity. The group secured the services of W. R. Rust, for whom the suburb in which the present smelter is located was named, as Manager, and in 1890 the first lead bullion was produced by the Tacoma Smelter. In 1905 the Tacoma Smelter, through the efforts of Bernard M. Baruch, who at that time was one of the influential representatives of the Guggenheim interests, became a part of the American Smelting and Refining Company.

Many copper deposits were discovered in Alaska incident to the gold rush. When the Kennecott Mine was discovered on the Copper River in Alaska, and its ore was shipped to Tacoma for treatment, the company virtually ceased its lead operations and copper became the principal production. Today ores and concentrates are still shipped here from Alaska and British Columbia as well as from other U.S. and Canadian areas, South and Central America and Mexico, and from the Philippines.

In addition to copper; gold, silver, arsenic, nickel sulphate and sulphuric acid are produced by the smelter, which is known in the industry as a custom plant as it handles ores and concentrates produced and owned by other companies. Prices paid for the raw materials are determined by standard assaying practices. Ores received are crushed and then taken to storage together with concentrates which do not require crushing because of previous treatment.

Production of copper in the forms lifted by A.M.L. for export to Japan involves five steps: First is "bedding" which is a process of mixing proper proportion of concentrates and ores to produce a furnace charge that will smelt as easily as possible. "Roasting" is a process of heating this mixture for the purpose of

reducing sulphur content and preheating for the actual smelting. "Smelting" is the actual melting of the furnace charge to produce a copper — iron sulphide mixture which is also a collector for gold and silver. The earthy part of the charge forms the waste or slag. "Converting" is the process in which the metal mixture is blown with air to eliminate the sulphur content, and treated with fluxing ores to slag off the iron, leaving blister copper which contains copper, gold and silver. The blister copper is then refined and cast into anodes for "electrolytic refining". In the tank house, copper is transferred by electric current from the anodes to the pure copper sheets which we call cathodes and which form a substantial part of the copper we carry to Japan. These cathodes are cut into shipping sizes or melted and cast into forms such as the wire bars which make up the balance of the forms A.M.L. carries to Japan. During the electrolytic refining, gold and silver settles in a black sludge in the tank bottom which is then smelted into gold and silver bars for subsequent separation of the gold and silver.

The Tacoma Smelter uses about 425,000 tons of ore and concentrates annually and produces about 95,000 tons of refined copper. An average of 1,050 employees share in the \$4½ million annual payroll.

When we sometimes have a berthing conflict, it may be with one of the vessels bringing in some of the 400,000 barrels of fuel oil and the 17,000 tons of lime rock used annually by the Smelter.

The excellent rail and water connections that were an important factor in the founding of the smelter continue to play a vital roll in the present day operation of this, the largest copper smelter on the Pacific Coast.

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We are indebted to Mr. C. R. Low, General Superintendent of the Tacoma Smelter and Refining Company for the material used in the article on "The Tacoma Smelter".

By G. E. Sherwood

During the first four months of 1957, member lines of the Pacific Westbound Conference carried 30,997 short tons of copper anodes, bars and cathodes to Japan. Of that total figure 25,154 short tons were loaded on Puget Sound. During those months A.M.L. lifted 14,427 short tons - a little over 57% of the Pacific Northwest movement. During May and June, A.M.L. totaled up another 4,130 tons of the red metal on its score card for 1957 - all destined Japan.

Our New York office secures these copper cargoes for A.M.L. The men from Battery Place are on the spot at the market place for metals although the market place is far remote from the world's supply sources and actual end users. The London Metal Exchange, the Belgian, and the New York markets pretty well control the world price levels and demands for copper, tin, lead and zinc. Copper mining news from the Congo will be felt first on the Belgian market. A strike in Rhodesia will trigger a spurt in London prices, and eventually the New York market will probably feel results too. A case occurred during the fourth week in July when news of a strike of 300 European rock breakers in six Northern Rhodesian copper mines, in two days sent London prices up  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent to 27.4 cents per pound for that metal. The rock breakers (who drill holes and blast the ore in underground mines preparatory to hoisting to the surface for processing) asked the mine owners for a 46 as opposed to the present 48 hour week, which would allow the rock breakers to work only six hours on Saturday instead of eight. Negotiations broke down and the union delivered an ultimatum to the effect that the miners would work only six hours on Saturdays. On Saturday, July 20, rock breakers reporting for work were given the option of working the full eight-hour shift or going home. They went home. On Monday the 22nd when they reported for work they were given the option of working a 48 hour week or going home. They went home. With the rock breakers away from work, hoisting at the mines was sure to halt within a few days. The six mines affected produce about 38,000 short tons of copper per month. Although the New York market, which has recently been weak, did not respond to the upturn for refined copper, copper scrap advanced  $\frac{1}{8}$  cent to 22  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents per pound as a result of the London reaction.

A mid-May decline in copper prices in Japan followed the end of earlier strikes this year in Chilean and Rhodesian mines. When these earlier strikes ended and prices softened, total import volume to Japan increased. At present however, the Japanese demand is dull, tied to presumably both a good supply situation and the Trade

Ministry's efforts to improve Japan's balance of payments position through tightening of exchange controls. With the demand low, A.M.L.'s participation also slumps. The SS "CANADA MAIL", Voyage 41, was the last vessel to call at the Smelter to load copper for Japan. A call originally scheduled for the MS "OCEAN MAIL", Voyage 38, was cancelled as shippers were unable to obtain credits. The next scheduled call, for the MS "CHINA MAIL", Voyage 43, may not firm unless a decided change overtakes the Japanese market picture.

When the market firms, those New Yorkers will be twisting our arm for "just another 80 metric", and we will be checking with Operation's to see if another 80 will mean another shift, and we'll be again pulling alongside the Smelter for another 700 or 800 tons of the big bars and cathodes on every vessel. (We hope).

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COPPER THEFT STORY IN ERROR

By G. E. Sherwood

Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle newspapers on July 14 and 15 respectively, carried a story to the effect that a total of some 8,800 pounds of copper bars laden to the M.S. "CHINA MAIL", Voyage 40 and S.S. "INDIA MAIL, Voyage 41 at the Tacoma Smelter, had been stolen from the vessels at Vancouver when they called there enroute to Yokohama. Both of the vessels called at Vancouver prior to the calls at the Smelter. Since the Vancouver police have the copper in their possession, it is apparently stolen from someone..... but apparently not us.

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HAVE A FACT

Every 10,000 ton coal ship sailing for Europe means:

100 days' work for 10 miners - \$24,00 each  
 \$70,000 for coal at the mine  
 \$40,000 in railroad transportation  
 \$65,000 in ocean transportation.

And the delivered price is still lower than that of European coal.

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From time to time since our Management established a group insurance program for its shore-side employees, various improvements have been incorporated into the coverage. These revisions included increase in daily board and room allowance from the original \$10 to \$15, raising of the maximum surgical fee from \$150 to \$300, placing of the minimum amount of life insurance at \$5,000 with higher amounts based upon annual base salary, addition of dependent coverage, and other added benefits advantageous to the employees.

With costs of medical care - particularly hospital charges - having risen sharply within the recent past, it is most gratifying to tell you that effective this month (July 22) Management has again increased the hospital board and room allowance, this time from \$15 to \$20 per day for both employee and dependent.

This will come as welcome news to all, and is the more appreciated because the entire premium cost of our present excellent group coverage is borne by the Company, with no contributory provision whereby the employee must pay a portion of the cost.

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#### ENGINEERING

Mr. Jim Dorney, Chief Engineer, is presently working ashore as Acting Assistant Port Engineer. He will take the "ISLAND MAIL" out on her next voyage.

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#### TERMINATIONS

Geraldine Cochrane - Import Department  
Marion Boyd - PBX

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#### DECISIONS

It is noted that Messrs. Rogers and Wager have given up smoking cigarettes and turned to the pipe. Yours truly is watching closely to see if there are any changes for the better.

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#### VACATIONS

Bob Stolts, Accounting, is spending one week of his vacation in San Francisco - visiting his in-laws.

Wayne Schiffner, Traffic, rented a house trailer and went to Vancouver Island for two weeks. He may run into Mr. Rowland at Brown's Bay.

Mr. H. R. Rowland - to Brown's Bay, Vancouver Island for a week's fishing.

H. A. Greenwood - to Michigan for three weeks vacation with wife's family.

Brad Davis, Engineering, spent a couple of weeks around Orcas Island - as we understand it, he is just plain taking it easy.

Bill McGowan, Traffic, as rumor has it, spent his time viewing the Olympics from Golden Gardens (a very nice beach in Seattle). He also did some fishing at Astoria - caught some too.

Rose Ketterling, Accounting, on a two-week vacation trip to North Dakota with her husband. Hope they don't run into any cold weather.

Olga Johnson, formerly Mr. Bush's Secretary, is taking over Rose's duties during her absence. Nice having her with us again.

Bob McNeil and family just returned from a one-week vacation at Payette Idaho. Hells Canyon was paid a visit. Bob claims that this area is "the best for vacations."

Janet Peters, Operations, and her husband, rented a house trailer and took off for Yellowstone Park. The only sad experience they had was when their car broke down - nothing serious. A few days were also spent at Long Beach, Washington and Vancouver, B.C. Big plans are being laid for next year.

Alta Frohman, Traffic, spent most of her vacation in San Francisco and Seaside Oregon.

Bob Bush, Pier 88, was on vacation last month. We understand that he is spending a part of his time working on his beach cottage and the balance of his free moments on the golf courses and water skiing with his boys.

Bob Bearman just returned from vacation - spent his time moving to a new apartment.

THE VACATIONS

Art Sykes, Accounting, was lounging around on the Oregon Beaches this year - in the vicinity of Depoe Bay - as he put it, "a nice place to go".

Clem Bursett, Traffic, has gone into the hospital for a few days - nothing serious - it is believed that he just wanted a good rest before starting his vacation in Montana

Capt. Ken McAlpin dropped in the other week to pay his respects. He is now permanently anchored in Astoria, where as you know, he is Columbia River Bar Pilot. He says he loves his new job.

Mr. Frank Howard dropped in the other week after returning from a three-week vacation in Florida. He drove all the way, through the South, and said he just missed some of those hurricanes. He is certainly glad to be back in the good old Pacific Northwest.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Speaking about vacations, your Editor is going on vacation for three weeks, starting August 5, 1957, therefore, please send your news items for the "Mailiner" during this period to Miss Lina Re".

Those who are members of the King County Medical Service will be able to obtain the "Request for Treatment" forms from Miss Marilyn Stewart - Room 701 or Extension 56.

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TRAVELERS

Capt. S. Swanson and Wm. Baptie have gone to Washington D.C. on July 30, 1957 to attend a symposium on Nuclear Energy for Merchant ships. The conference is held for the purpose of acquainting all interested groups in the progress made in the adoption of nuclear power to merchant ships.

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PORTLAND OFFICE

It is reported that the office arrangements at Terminal One, where Messrs. Lawrence, Paine and Page hang their hats has been "done over". Also new office furniture, similar to our own, has been installed in the main up-town office.

Don Page, Portland, just returned from a nice refreshing vacation on the Oregon Beaches. We are not certain whether he did any fishing or just "loafed" on the sand

John Lavato, also Portland, is on vacation - it is evidently a secret as to what he is up to - however, regardless of the way it is spent, you always, well almost always, return with new life and vigor with which to face the next year.

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SAN FRANCISCO REPORTING . . .

Vacation is once again "off and running" -- and Bill Purnell got a head start, and ran first.

Bill took his wife and three children to Honolulu aboard the SS "MATSONIA". We closed the office (shake you up?) on SATURDAY, July 6, and dashed madly aboard to wish them "Aloha". We, Marge Lawn, her husband Ray and son Thomas, Harley and his fiancée (oh! don't tell me you hadn't heard!) and Hazel Nelson, were having such a good time, and we were just about ready to settle down for a pleasant voyage -- when suddenly we were rudely brought back to earth by the sound of the "subtle" chimes inviting us to take our leave. Well, I suppose if we hadn't left when we did -- before the vessel sailed - you wouldn't be receiving this news item.

Bill should be returning on July 30, and needless to say, we shall certainly welcome him back. We'll just have to be patient with him, though, for a while, because he probably will be slowly coming out of the "heady realm" -- to which we all aspire.

Mr. Byrne will be leaving on his vacation the first week in August -- and we hope that he will thoroughly enjoy many pleasantries and a complete rest to the fullest.

Harley will be leaving shortly thereafter -- and NOW, just to "clue you in", Harley has become engaged to a CALIFORNIA girl, Sandra Kindred, a Moore-McCormack-ITE. She is the able secretary to Mr. Grady, Pacific Coast Traffic Manager, and we feel certain that he has given his blessing. We all heartily wish them both (Harley and Sandra, that is) every possible happiness -- and they are off to a good start right now; and our sincere congratulations to them, (and we remind Harley of that daily).

FRANCISCO STILL REPORTING

LO! THE POOR EDITOR

Now for Marge Lawn and Hazel Nelson -- plans are afoot for a "jolly - good time" - we trust. Where????? Can't tell you yet.

Publishing a newspaper is no picnic. If we print jokes, people say we are silly; if we don't they say we are too serious.

By the way, a bit of news has reached our ears concerning one of our "alumni", Leo Kowalski, He's going to travel "Honeymoon Lane" too, on September 2.

If we stick close to the office all day, we ought to be out hunting interesting things to publish; if we go out and try to hustle, we ought to be on the job at the office.

\* \* \* \* \*

If we don't accept contributions we don't appreciate genius, and if we do print them, the newspaper is filled with junk!

THAT'S US!!!!

If we edit the other fellow's story, we are too critical, if we don't we're asleep.

For those who like statistics, here is a set that will throw you for a loss. We pass it along for what it's worth:

If we clip things from other publications we're too lazy to write them, if we don't we're stuck on our own stuff.

Population of the U.S. ....	170,000,000
People 65-years, or older.....	49,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	121,000,000
People 21-years, or younger.....	66,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	55,000,000
People working for the government..	29,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	26,000,000
People in the armed services.....	5,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	21,000,000
People in state, or city offices...	18,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	2,200,000
Bums, drunks, and other who won't	
work.....	2,000,000
Balance left to do the work.....	200,000
People in hospitals, or otherwise	
afflicted.....	126,000
Balance left to do the work.....	74,000
People in jail.....	73,998
Balance left to do the work....	<u>2</u>

Now, like as not some guys will say we swiped this from some other publication.\*

\* We did!

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Just two!! That's you, and me. Get going -- I'm tired of running this country by myself.

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