

Miners Get Gold Fever,But Want Some Help

By Caroline Wood

"Gold, gold, gold, gold, gold," was mining consultant Peter Oram's emphatic response when asked yesterday to identify the best mining prospects in the province.~ With the price at \$1,200 an ounce, all of the historic gold mining districts in Nova Scotia can likely be mined at a profit, explained the past president of the 150-member Mining Association of Nova Scotia, who is with Conestoga Rovers. Amherst-raised Oram made the comments while addressing a legislature committee meeting - where he also took the opportunity to express concerns about the competitiveness of the mining scene here. Nova Scotia is the only province which does not offer a "super flow through" incentive program to match a federal rebate, he said. "In Nova Scotia one dollar is worth one dollar," explained his seatmate, association executive director Michelle Landreville, adding that in New Brunswick one dollar is "worth" seven, and in Newfoundland it's worth 10. Fuel tax is also a sore spot for the miners. Oram pointed out heavy equipment only sees a Nova Scotia road at the time of delivery. Fifty-ton mining trucks don't even have turn signals, he said. Miners want to have a say on which tracts of land should be protected as part of the province's 12 per cent conservation mandate. "We are not obstructionists. We like science and we like the facts," said Oram. Mining contributes \$500 million to the province's GDP and employs about 6,300 people. Currently, there is gypsum, salt, oil, coal natural gas limestone and peat being mined here, with prospects for gold, lead, zinc and potash. A decline in exploration over the next one to three years has been identified as a problem which will affect the economy five or 10 years down the road, the miners said.