

The Benevolent Leader – C. P. Browning

Browning began at Britannia in 1914 as a rodman on an underground survey crew. His education at the Columbia School of Mines allowed him to quickly move up in rank. In 1917 he was named Superintendent and on February 8, 1922 he was appointed General Manager.

As Superintendant, Browning supported the proposition of converting the disliked company store into a cooperative so that it would better serve the community. This demonstrated his concern for the workers outside of work – a concern that would continue through his entire career.



As General Manager he took a serious interest in improving the social, recreational, and self-improvement opportunities for the workers and their families by establishing social clubs. He also made himself very approachable to the workers and was known to even allow workers to use his weekend cabin located in what is now Murin Park, just north of Britannia Beach.

Browning faced challenges in his early years as General Manager. 1921 saw two disasters strike Britannia – Mill 2 burnt down and a flood washed the middle of the Britannia Beach town site into Howe Sound. Browning worked hard to overcome these setbacks. Under his leadership the town was rebuilt and Mill 3 was constructed.

The 1930's saw "The Great Depression", and Britannia was not immune to its effects. While the world economies suffered, Browning was able to manage the mine so well that in 1931 he was awarded the Randolph Bruce gold medal for the most distinguished service to the mining industry in Canada. Not only was Britannia mining successfully under very difficult copper market conditions, but Browning had managed the work so effectively that there was no reduction in the workforce.

Browning again showed his focus on the well-being of the workers in the 1940's. Copper prices were low again but Browning did not want to lay men off. He decided to target zinc in the mine and stockpile it on the gamble that zinc prices would climb. The gamble paid off in 1950.

In 1948 Browning retired. His impact on the community and the admiration of the workers for him were displayed at his retirement party when he was presented with a leather bound book of memories of his tenure.