

would he listen to any one, in fact he told Mr. Keynton he did not want any assistance, neither did he spend time enough on any one of the claims to prospect it, let alone the seventeen he reported on. Captain Black asked me if I would take my partner and help to prospect the ground by sinking shafts and running open cuts. I told him "Yes"; but Mr. Rathbone refused the help, saying that he could make the examination that he wished to from the surface. He had two Indians and a cousin of his. They went to the top of the bank of gravel and took enough dirt to fill a gold pan, then he went down the hill about thirty feet and took another pan of dirt from the surface and repeated the operation until he came to the bottom of the bank. By doing that he had the same kind of gravel in the last pan as he had in the first, as the gravel keeps rolling from the top of the hill down. He did not take any gravel to prospect at a greater depth than 18 inches from the surface. . . . From my working on the creek and benches I find that a man cannot tell anything about the ground by the surface prospects, as I can get gold in most any place, but it is fine. I also find that the gold is scattered all through the ground, but that the most is on bedrock. . . . I have hydraulic mined from here to Colorado River, California, and know what a hydraulic mine is. (At this point the writer again indulges in personal reference to Mr. Rathbone's professional capabilities, and these it is not advisable, or perhaps fair to publish). What I say is square, and I can give you references both here, in California and also in the State of Washington, where I have mined."

These letters do not, we think, require any comment. However, we do not desire to be understood as meaning that Mr. Rathbone was wrong in condemning the properties in question. He may have had strong reasons for arriving at the conclusion that the ground was valueless, that the unquestioned inaccessibility of the country would render the profitable working of these claims a matter of great difficulty. If he held these views, after making a careful and systematic investigation, it was clearly his duty to report accordingly to his employers, the North Western Pioneers, Limited. Mr. Rathbone, of course, may, as he states, have made what in his judgment was a careful examination of the ground, but we are reluctantly compelled to admit that after reading his report, any hydraulic mining engineer to whom it might be submitted, would come to the conclusions that Mr. Rathbone's idea of what constituted a "careful investigation" of hydraulic ground differed strangely from his own. A mining engineer's report to be of any value should be so worded that when it is submitted, those for whom it was prepared—provided they possess the slightest technical knowledge of the subject—should be able to form as accurate an opinion regarding the nature and value of the property on which the report is based, as the expert who examined it. How can this be accomplished but by the closest attention to detail and salient facts? It often, however, happens that while an engineer may recognize this fundamental principle of mine reporting, he is loath to follow it. If a man is ignorant of his subject he is wise to talk as little as possible, and it is also easier and safer to condemn than to commend. Many mines that are now on a substantial dividend-paying basis have been at one time pronounced worthless, and in the case of a British Columbia mine, we have the Rossland Le Roi as an example. The properties upon which Mr. Rathbone reported in the Omenica District are now owned by a syndicate of Americans who are expending large sums for machinery and equipment. It is yet possible that this American syndicate will demonstrate to Mr. Rathbone's English company that a practical hydraulic engineer and miner, who has learnt his business in the hydraulic gold fields of California, is a superior judge of alluvial bench ground than a Witwatersrand Inspector of Mines.

All duly qualified assayers practising in this Province will, we think, have every cause to be well pleased with the eminently proper and sensible legislation which has just been passed by the Provincial Parliament to provide in future against the performance of as

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work by incompetent and unfit persons. That there was real need for legislative action in this regard we have repeatedly shown in these columns, and while expressing our gratification that measures have been taken to remedy the evil complained of we at the same time derive some natural satisfaction in the knowledge that the efforts put forward through the MINING RECORD to secure legislation of this character have not been unavailing. Briefly, the Act provides for the bi-annual institution of examinations under Government for efficiency in the practice of assaying and "other kindred subjects as may be deemed advisable; and after the expiration of two years from the 1st of March, 1899, no one not holding a Government certificate of efficiency will be allowed to practice as an assayer in the Province; but in order to save men of recognized professional standing the annoyance of undergoing a test of this kind provision is made that any person applying for a certificate of efficiency on satisfying the duly appointed examiners that he has passed a course of practical analytical or assay work in any school of mines or college in Canada, Great Britain or Ireland, shall be entitled to receive such a certificate on recommendation of the examiners; or, in other words, the Government certificates will be granted to all applicants able to produce satisfactory credentials. The passage of this measure will unquestionably have the effect of raising the standard of efficiency among assayers in British Columbia, and by debarring incompetent men from practising as assayers in the Province, it will furthermore, to a considerable extent, achieve the purpose for which it was really intended, namely, the protection of the public against imposition at the hands of ignorant and fraudulently disposed persons assuming a knowledge of analytical chemistry. It is, however, we think, to be regretted that so long a time as two years must expire before the Act can become operative. This, notwithstanding, legislation upon such lines is, in British Columbia, a step in the right direction, and we hope before long to see measures of a similar nature introduced in the Provincial Legislature applying to the professions of both mine managers and mining engineers. Incompetency in either of these callings may, and very often does, lead to the most serious consequences, not only as regards ill-directed effort and misapplied expenditures, but often in the loss of human life. We shall take an early opportunity of referring more fully to this important subject.

The amendments placed upon the statutes of this Province with regard to the Coal Mines Regulation Act will prove of the greatest possible benefit to the coal miners of this Province. The first amendment has for its object the exclusion of Japanese from coal mines. Some years ago an act was passed prohibiting the employment of Chinese in these mines, but by reason of a technical flaw in the wording of the act it was not enforced until last year, when the necessary alterations were made rendering the act effective. Finding that the law prohibited the employment of Chinese the coal companies at once proceeded to engage