

## REFINING GOLD IN AUSTRALIA.

The process employed in refining gold at the Australian mints, according to the London Mining Journal, is different from that resorted to at the British mint. It seems in Australia that when gold is melted in the crucibles, which are first heated to a dead-red, borax is placed upon the metal in a melted state, then chlorine gas is passed through a pipe, which is gradually depressed until it reaches the bottom, and when the compressor is relaxed, so that the gas bubbles up through the gold in its molten state, but without causing the projection of any globules. Hydrochloric acid from time to time is also introduced into the generator, and by this means a rapid evolution of chlorine is kept up. When the gas first passes into the gold, fumes escape from the holes in the crucible. These consist only of the chlorides of inferior metals that are attached to the valuable ones, none of the chloride of silver escaping. When any silver remains in the gold nearly the whole of the chlorine continues to be absorbed; afterwards, when the refining is nearly completed fumes of a darker color make their appearance, and the end of the operation is indicated by the flame or luminous vapor appearing first of a bright yellow color, and gradually growing into a deep, reddish brown. The value of chlorine in gold refining is certainly not a novelty, but it is claimed it has not before been put into practical use, though its action on gold has been no secret to chemists, for it does not mix with it at a red heat.

## AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION.

The Edinburgh Scotsman does not despair of a fruitful issue of the deliberations in which the Australians are now engaged, although conscious of the many difficulties that confront them. It says:

"Granting the goodwill of the members, there are difficulties both substantial and sentimental. Agreeing upon the general proposition that the best interests and the future prosperity of Australian colonies will be promoted by an early union under the British Crown, differences of opinion will emerge as soon as the Convention begins to discuss the shape which this union should take. The perils of the new Australasian constitution will only be beginning when it emerges from the maker's hands and has its trial trip in the troubled waters of South Sea politics. On that account, should we despair of the future of a Federal Union of Australian colonies? Not at all. Difficulties as great, or greater, have been faced and overcome by those who framed the constitutions of the American Republic, and of the Dominion of Canada. At the opening banquet in the Centennial hall, the Governor of New South Wales spoke for the heart of the mother country when he said: 'The men are here. Is the hour about to strike?' The answer to that question can be awaited with hope and with unanimity. The men who have the task in hand are of the same strain as those who built up the great offices of self governing states beyond the Atlantic. They know all that invites, and all that impedes, union better than we could teach them. They have the genius

and the experience of self government, and the habitude of looking upon difficulties as things not to be shirked, but to be overcome or removed. The issue may be safely left in their hands. If not now, at some date not very remote federation will be secured, and Australia, will in outward body as well as in inward spirit, become a nation."

## A WEALTHY INSTITUTION.

The greatest man in London to-day, in the estimation of his countrymen, says a dispatch of the 24th inst., is neither a military hero, a scion of royalty, nor a popular idol in statecraft. He is a plain, typical English banker. His name is Lidderdale, and his position is that of governor of the Bank of England. The story of the financial difficulties of the House of Baring Brothers is still fresh in the public mind, but full details of the manner in which they and scores of other minor firms were involved in their success or failure were saved from disaster were not made known until Mr. Lidderdale submitted the facts to the general court of the Bank of England to-day.

The attendance was very large, and those present evidently had an inkling of what was coming, for they greeted the entrance of the self-possessed banker with cheers, such as were never heard before at a meeting of staid financiers and proverbially suspicious stockholders. The men listened with keenest interest as he told how \$85,000,000 were raised in four days, one of the greatest financial feats on record, and cheered again and again when he had concluded.

## COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' TAX.

As indicative of the interest which is taken in the east on the subject of the Commercial Travellers' Tax, the following extract from a report of the last meeting of the Montreal Board of Trade, will be of interest: "A communication was read from the secretary of the Hamilton Board of Trade which contained the following resolution passed by that body: 'That the question of license fees on commercial travellers now charged in Victoria, B. C., be referred to the president and vice-president to communicate with the Boards of Trade of Montreal and Toronto to agree on joint action looking to its removal.' The letter asked for information as to what action the Montreal Board would take. The council expressed its willingness to co-operate with the Toronto and Hamilton Boards, if such action was deemed necessary, but it was understood that in other places, notably St. John, N. B., and Quebec, the question had been decided in the courts." The council of the Board was requested to do its utmost to secure an amicable adjustment of the matter, it being held in the east that the general trade of Victoria and this Province is advantaged, rather than prejudiced by the periodical visits of the travellers.—Colonist.

It is stated that the New Vancouver Coal Co., Nanaimo, has advanced the price of lots from \$400 to \$450. Purchasers must erect buildings on the lots, and not hold them for speculative purposes.

## GENERAL NEWS NOTES.

The Canadian Pacific's new townsite, above Sproat, has been named Robson in honor of John Robson, premier of the Province. The railway grade is completed to the townsite, and the track laid across the Pass creek bridge.

Little or no progress is being made on the trestle work on the Columbia & Kootenay, because of the lack of material. Contractor Campbell returned this week from a trip east, and is now praying for warm weather to come to his aid. The timber is up the outlet, near Balfour, and the ice will have to move before the timber can be moved.

Nelson Miner: Reports from Hot Springs district are that development work is proving the claims and mines of that section to be wonders. The shaft of the United is down 100 feet, and in solid ore. The Tenderfoot shaft is down 60 feet, with good ore in its bottom. The drift in the No. 1 is in high grade carbonate ore. Altogether, the prospects of the camp were never brighter.

A special cablegram says: The British treasury is expected to accede to the proposal of the House of Commons Colonization committee, which asks that £150,000 be loaned to the Province of British Columbia at a low rate of interest for the settlement of 1,250 Scotch crofters in the San Juan district of Vancouver Island. The Secretary of State for Scotland is now strongly urging Right Hon. Mr. Goschen to give an early consent to the loan, in order that a pioneer party may start this season. It is suggested that the Northwest Territories, Manitoba and, perhaps, some of the older colonies, should follow British Columbia's example in this matter.

News Advertiser: Mr. J. Sykes arrived in this city about six weeks ago from Australia, and being very favorably impressed with Vancouver, decided to open up business here. He has accordingly rented two stores on Oppenheimer street, Nos. 20 and 22, and has started in a general crockery business. Some alterations are now being made, and as soon as these are completed he will also deal in new and second hand furniture. Mr. Sykes says that he thinks several other people will come over to British Columbia and engage in business here. These are the people that are wanted in this Province, and men of his class are sure to get on well.

Mr. D. McGillivray, the well-known contractor, has been awarded the contract for clearing and grading the right-of-way of the Westminster-Vancouver tramway from end to end. The right-of-way is 66 feet wide, and is to be cleared its entire width, graded and ready for the ties within 60 days from date. It is learned that Mr. McGillivray will put on a force of some 400 men, and attack the work at half a dozen different places. The next move to be made by the company is the erection of the power house, tenders for which will be called for at an early date. The plant and equipment for the line is reaching Westminster at the rate of several car loads per week, and the whole of it will have arrived within 30 days. If nothing happens to disarrange the present plans of the company, the line will be in operation much earlier than most people anticipated, and it is quite probable a regular service will be established before Dominion Day.—Columbian.