

Marquis of Dufferin for permitting a company under his direction to issue a prospectus full of so many generalities and equipped with relatively few exact details. However, the venture "caught on," the capital being oversubscribed, largely as a result of the exceptional status of the directorate, and the Corporation has before it really brilliant opportunities, provided only that its big capital of £1,500,000 be carefully husbanded and well laid out. And, despite the denials of the men of the Le Roi Company, there is reason to believe that through a strong parent organization—the London and Globe Finance Corporation—the British American Corporation has some kind of an option on the Le Roi mine. The option does not expire until the 21st instant, and in the meanwhile an expert examination of the Le Roi property will be made on behalf of the prospective British purchasers. On the result of this will depend the action of the British America Corporation in the matter. This is vouched by the Spokane Spokesman-Review, which is very likely to know the truth.

Less satisfactory in one all-important respect is the news from the Vancouver Island coal fields, where at the Alexandria and E. & N. Extension, and other collieries of the Dunsmuir companies, cheap Mongol labor is, both above and below ground, steadily taking the place of white workers. Hence, unless the hitherto abortive Provincial law, preventing the underground employment of Mongols, be amended and enforced, only a short time will elapse ere the New Vancouver Coal Company will also, in self-defense against keen business competition, be forced largely to substitute Chinese for white labor. When this happens, serious labor troubles are certain as the day, whilst a heavy blow will be struck at the general trade of the Nanaimo district, which will, if the population become very largely Chinese, shrink to very small proportions, the Mongol being usually a very poor customer of the white merchant, from whom he purchases little and that cheaply.

Interesting developments of the Province's coal mining may shortly be expected. The first shipment of coal from the Crows Nest colliery to Fort Steele, which is just about to be made, marking the beginning of what is sure to prove a huge development of coal mining on the mainland. The coal that is about to be sent to Fort Steele is of special grade for use in smithy work, and will at first be available in modest quantity only. But ere July 10,000 tons of good coal of varying grade will be ready for shipment from the Crows Nest colliery, whence, ere the close of 1898, it is expected that shipments will be made aggregating at least 50,000 tons. A considerable amount of coke will also, later in the year, be produced at ovens which are yet to be built and fired in the Crow's Nest pass. But the colliery's

work of 1898 will, of course, prove but a comparatively small beginning of great things.

Whilst the ultimate fate of the Golden Cache mine remains and will for some time remain in suspense, it is satisfactory to learn that another largely free-milling gold mine, in which Vancouver and other British Columbian capital is interested, the Fern, at Ymir, promises very well indeed, since to \$15,145, the gross value of a recent first clean-up, there are now to be added \$13,200 as the result of a second clean-up at the same mine. As the stamps at work number only 10, an aggregate return of \$28,345 from two short runs of comparatively low-grade ore appears to be quite satisfactory. So the directors evidently esteem it, for they will forthwith double the stamps and prepare, too, for treating a large body of concentrates.

There will evidently be stern-wheel steamers galore afloat on the Stickine this summer, the construction of at least a dozen being already under contract. Two of them will, as regards their machinery, be equipped at the British Columbia Ironworks in Vancouver, their hulks being built by Mr. J. H. Moir, of New Westminster. The Albion Ironworks and Victoria shipbuilders will together construct others. Hence assured and satisfactory developments of our Province's engineering and wooden ship building industries.

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#### OUR COAL SHIPMENTS.

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The Nanaimo district's coal shipments for last month amounted to 59,696 tons, of which the mines of the New Vancouver Coal Company accounted for 27,376 tons, the Wellington collieries for 20,920 tons, and the Union mines for 11,400 tons. The total coal output of the British Columbia collieries for 1897 amounted to 798,458 tons, as against 845,269 tons in 1896. It is, however, practically certain that with the growth of a demand for coke and for coal fuel for the north, as also for the steadily increasing cities of the Province, the Province's coal output of 1898 will greatly exceed that of 1897, and in all probability attain the highest point on record. To this the opening and working of the mainland collieries in the Crows Nest district should noticeably contribute, as these mines are sure to make in 1898 a respectable first output.

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#### CHINESE IN THE ISLAND COLLIERIES.

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The Nanaimo Review notes with alarm—being an advocate of white colliery labor—the fact that Chinese work is steadily increasing in numbers both above and below ground at the E. & N. Extension and Alexandria collieries. Thence white labor is gradually but surely being expelled, except as regards superintendence.