

be of little moment. There were bad and unjust mining laws, a thousand times more arduous than our B. C. laws, which merely require a little overhauling to make them good, in force in South Africa before the war, but capital flowed in in a steady stream in spite of bad laws and inequitable taxation. But a very little unfortunately just now is sufficient to keep capital out of British Columbia, and the Tange case may easily enough be cited as an instance of the inadequacy of our law to protect the purchaser of mineral property. It is possible Mr. Keen in the final paragraph quoted, intends some reference to the policy pursued by the Government in the issuance of oil licences in East Kootenay. If so, we do not agree with his conclusion. In issuing these licences, it was impossible for the Government to tell, for reasons that are quite obvious, whether one or more applicants had applied for the same location, and consequently quiet enjoyment of title could not be guaranteed. Here plainly were questions for the courts to decide. Meanwhile the Province would derive great benefit if it were possible for the Mining Association to work with the Government and not seemingly against it. But if there is a lack of sympathy and a spirit of antagonism, the fault, we think, does not lay with the Mining Association.

Those who are of opinion that the Provincial Government and Legislature have little practical sympathy with the mining industry and, consequently, show no disposition to assist it, may feel a trifle envious of those engaged in mining in the State of Victoria, Australia, where, in opening the State Parliament recently the Governor of Victoria, in the course of his address to the Legislature said, "It is intended to provide plant to carry on boring operations in various parts of the State for prospecting for gold and coal. It is also intended to extend the provisions of the Mines Development Act and to provide loans for the assistance of companies and parties developing auriferous areas." State aid to mining is no new-fangled notion in Australia. For many years Victoria has assisted, by a Government annual appropriation, *bona fide* underground prospecting, such monetary aid having been first recommended by a board or council appointed for that purpose. Not a few times have good results ensued that otherwise would not have been secured; nor was the repayment of the money thus advanced by the Government an unheard-of thing, when the company or parties assisted made a financial success of the venture that had received the timely help to enable it to be carried through to success. In other directions aid is freely given to mining by one or the other of the Australian Governments (we are not referring to the Federal or Commonwealth Government)—State reduction works, schools of mines, mining publications, etc. New Zealand has during 18 years to 1903 expended 36,114 pounds (more than a yearly average of \$10,000 over the whole period) in aiding schools of mines, and other like useful expenditures might be cited. What a contrast to the attitude of the British Columbia Legislature generally, and the Provincial Govern-

ment particularly, towards the mining industry of the 'Mineral Province' of the Dominion. It is consoling, though, to think that neglect to foster the mining industry cannot be perpetuated indefinitely. The mining sections of the Province are steadily becoming more populous, so that there is little doubt the industry will eventually be aided in deserving directions.

The withdrawal of the reserve in the case of mineral-oil and coal lands in the Flathead Valley district of East Kootenay, has resulted already in the organization of companies and syndicates to exploit this promising territory. Of these the first, we believe, to incorporate under the laws of the Province, is the Flathead Valley Oil Lands Development Co., capitalized at \$250,000, whose prospectus is now before us. The objects of this company are those of acquiring "prospecting licenses, prospecting for oil, and buying and selling oil lands" in the district in question, arrangements having been made to acquire licenses over 1,280 acres of oil lands on Akamina Creek and over 2,500 acres of lands on Squaw Creek, which enters the Flathead River north of Sage Creek, the locators of these areas having agreed to accept shares in the company in exchange for their rights thereto. The company also contemplates the acquisition of other lands in Sage and Calder Creeks as well as the securing of at least ten claims, involving an acreage of 6,400 acres, and by the sale of portions, the promotion of dependent companies, or by the application of its own funds, to vigorously prosecute the development of its holdings. It is for this purpose the above options have been secured, and others are now being negotiated. The prospectus points out that as the country is developed, the company's resources for the acquisition of valuable property and its profitable exploitation will increase and, provided the territory does not entirely disappoint reasonable and well-grounded hopes, its profits should be increasing every year in a very remarkable degree. However, the first discovery of oil, whether it is found on the lands being acquired by this company or not, will greatly enhance the value of these lands, and will enable the company to dispose of them on advantageous terms, as well as to retain a large interest in the oil industry of British Columbia to be established, it is hoped, through the development of the Flathead Valley. In subscribing for shares in this or any other company formed to exploit the oil resources of the Flathead Valley the investor is manifestly taking large speculative risks. All that at present is known in respect to oil occurrences in East Kootenay, is that the indications are remarkably, we might say pungently, promising, and that an eminent authority, the late Dr. Selwyn, supported since by other testimony, encourages the supposition that a development of the oil resources of the district may be profitably undertaken. The fact has yet to be established, and the investor in the shares of the development companies now being formed is speculating on that likelihood, and the assurance that if oil is found in commercial quantities his investment will be an extraordinarily remunerative one. In the case of the pre-