

of Fort Steele, there has been made a discovery which at present has the appearance of being the most important mineral belt in the district, consisting of three or four parallel ledges of free gold quartz, which can be traced for upwards of a distance of seven or eight miles. There are now about one hundred locations on this belt the original claims being a group of four staked off by Sherwood & Co. in July, 1895; three ledges cross this block, being 8, 10 and 20 feet in width, three crosscuts and a tunnel 18 feet in length have been run in shewing up $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 feet of high grade gold quartz, average assay being about \$50. To the south comes the Thompson block of seven claims with three crosscuts, one cross cutting the lead from the footwall, no hanging wall has as yet been reached, the other two shewing the continuation of the lead but no foot or hanging wall. The next is the Hoskin block of seven claims with fourteen crosscuts shewing five leads averaging from 4 to 8 feet, and in some places wider. The Ellwood block consisting of seven claims, adjoins the Sherwood block to the north, with four leads crossing it, two of them opened up, one shewing an 8-foot lead. On the other there are five crosscuts about 100 feet apart, with a depth of 10 or 12 feet, shewing at least 25 feet of a lead in one place without a hanging wall. A tunnel has been started which is at present in 70 feet, and in about another 5 feet will strike the lead which it is the intention to follow, and at a distance of 600 feet they will have a depth of 400 feet on the lead; a couple of men will be at work on this tunnel all winter. The rock here averages from \$6 to \$8 in free gold. Simmons, Petley & Co. have altogether about thirteen claims; on one block of six they have four or five leads, one lead opened up by a 14-foot shaft shewing an 11-foot ledge averaging \$29. On two other claims they have struck the big lead which runs through the Thompson block shewing a width of 30 feet. On the Moffatt block of four claims adjoining the Hoskins block, the big Thompson lead has also been struck, 30 feet in width. On the Queen Anne group adjoining the last mentioned block, there are cross veins from the big lead which assay very well. There are numerous other blocks of three or four claims each, namely: The Jennings, Walsh, Young, Lamont, Waters, Scott and another Thompson, besides quite a lot of single claims, while only a short distance across the divide in different directions, on Weaver Creek, Hell's Roaring Creek and tributaries of the Upper Moyie there are quite a number of locations, all being of the same character of gold quartz, in fact this whole region seems to be a zone of free gold quartz, easily accessible for waggon roads, with lots of water power in the numerous streams and any quantity of timber for mining purposes.

The townsites have been staked off on Perry Creek close to the gold quartz claims and just above the old placer diggings, as next year there will in all probability be a large number of men at work on these properties, besides, the Perry Creek Placer Company expect to commence work early in the spring on their ground.

Below the placer leases and not far from the old town, on a branch of the creek, there are six or seven more quartz claims, assaying \$13 in free milling gold. Some very good prospects have been obtained from a couple of claims belonging to Jack Lamont, the assay going as high as \$65. These claims are on the other side of the main creek, from the Ellwood block.

There is another most important mineral belt con-

sisting of silver lead ore, down on the Moyie Lake, about thirty miles south from Fort Steele. As these properties have been described in the October number it will be only necessary to state that a large amount of development work has been done, but no ore shipped, as at present they have no means of transportation. Messrs. Finch and Cronin have at least 5,000 tons of ore on the dump, with over 15,000 in sight in their various tunnels and shafts. On the adjoining claims work has been progressing favourably, Houghton & Co. having run in a 100-foot tunnel on one of their claims, showing up a large body of ore, while on the other a couple of men will be employed all winter in running in a tunnel to strike the lead at a lower elevation. A tunnel is also being run in on the ledge on a claim belonging to Farrell & Co., where the indications are very good.

From the above descriptions it will readily be seen that there is a vast area of country still to be gone over. The prospectors so far have generally been contented to confine themselves to those streams and their tributaries which are comparatively easy of access, leaving the more inaccessible places for some future occasion. There are large areas remaining practically unexplored, all that region lying between the upper reaches of Elk River and the western slope of the Rockies, which forms the eastern boundary of the Kootenay Valley, comprising the headwaters of Bull River, Wild Horse Creek, Sheep Creek and other streams. Then there is also the country around the head waters of the Yalik River and Gold Creek, lying between the international boundary to the south, the St. Mary's to the north, the Moyie to the west, and the Kootenay to the east; and again the whole Purcell range, extending from the North Star and Sullivan group on the south to the northern boundary of the division, and from the Kootenay River to the summit of the mountains. Of course it has to be borne in mind that the present claim owners and prospectors are in a manner forced to confine their operations to the claims they have already staked off, doing their assessment work and waiting for the railroad. For it is not to be denied that it is a very difficult matter to induce capitalists to invest their money in silver lead properties in this country, considering the state of our transportation facilities. No doubt the late discoveries of free gold quartz on Perry Creek, Wild Horse, and other streams, will help us out immensely, as transportation is not of so much consequence in connection with gold quartz as it is with silver lead propositions. Nevertheless the fact still remains that until the Crows' Nest road is built our mineral interests must of necessity continue to be handicapped to a great extent. It is sincerely to be hoped that this road will soon be commenced and pushed through to West Kootenay. Then six months will see a greater change and more material progress, not only in this section, but over the whole of the two districts than has taken place within the last thirty years. It therefore behooves every man who has an interest or stake in the country to bestir himself and impress on the powers that be the absolute necessity for the immediate construction of the Crow's Nest Railroad.

The Slocan During 1896.

ANY attempt to enumerate even the main features of the year's progress in the Slocan, must necessarily be incomplete with the short space at my disposal. The known mineralized region is