

Coal and Petroleum in Ecuador.

W. H. D. Haggard, of Quito, in a report to the Foreign Office on the trade of Ecuador for the year 1891-2, states that the country possesses almost every metal, including coal, which in the probable event of the ultimate completion of the canal across the Isthmus of Panama may, from the necessity and nearness of the supply, become extremely valuable. Petroleum is also found in various places. It is specially abundant in the St. Helena district to the northwest of Guayaquil, where it lies in pools on the ground and is to be seen floating on the adjoining sea. Hitherto, owing to apathy and restrictions of various kinds, it has not been worked save to supply the neighboring town of Guayaquil with light and with pitch for vessels; but a very favorable mining law having been passed in the late Congress, it may be expected that advantage will now be taken of what is described as the unlimited supply of oil—in fact, a syndicate is in course of formation to purchase and dispose of the district to European or North American companies. The petroleum is said to be of exceptionally good quality, and to be, consequently, specially suitable for lubricants, as well as for lighting and fuel.

Port Arthur's Prospects.

At a recent annual meeting of the Port Arthur Board of Trade, retiring president Marks delivered an address upon the prospects and resources of Port Arthur district from which we make the following extracts:

The town is as yet without a flouring mill, and I am more than ever convinced that there is no better place on the continent of America for the building up of this industry than here. When in Montreal in December last, a prominent grain and flour firm told me they would erect here a flouring mill of a capacity of 200 to 500 barrels per day if they could get reasonable terms and a guarantee that their flour and surplus wheat could be forwarded upon a through rate, as is now done with wheat from the elevators here and at Fort William. I think this matter could be arranged with the railway company very easily, and it should be done, so that we could be in a position to continue these negotiations without delay, or initiate others.

The elevator storage capacity at Port Arthur and Fort William is now about 4,000,000 bushels, and the Canadian Pacific Co. proposes to erect during the coming season another elevator of at least 1,000,000 bushels capacity. The establishment here a year ago, in connection with the Port Arthur elevator, of a system of improved grain cleaning machinery has been successful, and during the year 1892 more than 1,000,000 bushels of the Manitoba crops of 1891 and 1892 were handled at this point. This means a great deal of money paid out for wages, besides adding largely to our lake tonnage and exports.

There are said to be at work in the lumber woods of Eastern Algoma this winter some 5000 men, cutting saw logs and pulp wood, all the latter and nearly all the former are taken to the United States to be manufactured. There are so few pulp mills in Canada that the pulp wood has, of necessity, to be exported, but the people of Eastern Algoma think it a grievance, and a most serious one, that the hundreds of thousands of dollars, which are annually paid out for the manufacture of these saw-logs into lumber should go into the pockets of Michigan mill hands, instead of to the hardy workmen of Algoma. When the Ontario Government sold its limits in West Algoma, they wisely inserted a clause in the terms

that the timber so bought should be manufactured within the province.

Quite recently the town was approached by parties who desired to build a blast furnace. It was a pity that those negotiations came to such an abrupt termination. If possible they should be renewed at once. There are many other localities in Canada at work on this same project, and the one which succeeds first will in all probability be the centre for iron manufacturing in this country. It is much better for both Port Arthur and Fort William to have his enterprise located somewhere in either Town than it is to have it 1,000 miles away.

IRON MINING.

Following up the question of making this an iron manufacturing centre, it is only appropriate to draw your attention to the question of iron mining. During the last five years, hundreds of thousands of acres of our iron lands have been located and patented. In the great majority of cases these lands have been bought from the Crown by United States citizens, in other instances large sums have been paid out to the original owners for what are believed to be very valuable iron properties; but I am sorry to say what we have not to day in Algoma a single iron mine in active operation. Various reasons are given for this. The chief and only valid ones are that there is no furnace to treat the ore, and that with the present duty of 75 cents per ton on iron ore going into the United States and ore at its present price, it is not possible to export it at a profit. There are several different iron ranges in the district: The Gunflint, on the line of the Port Arthur, Duluth & Western, the Matawan—which crosses the Canadian Pacific about twenty five miles west of here—and the Atikokan, about one hundred miles due west. I am informed and have every reason to believe the information to be correct, that these ranges are geographically so situated that there should be plenty of ore found on them all, and the evidence from such work and exploration as has already been done corroborates this and proves the ore to be of a Bessemer quality.

A prominent plank in the platform of the political party now in power in the neighboring Republic was free raw material. We may therefore expect that when the tariff is revised, and it is bound to be soon, that iron ore will be put on the free list. In that case there is no reason why the exportation of Canadian ore should not commence immediately, for undoubtedly the district contiguous to Port Arthur is quite as rich in ore as either of the neighboring States of Minnesota, Wisconsin or Michigan, which, during 1892 mined a grand total of 9,071,243 gross tons, of which 1,176,639 were mined on the Vermillion Range (Minnesota), and hauled by the Duluth & Iron Range Railway to Two Harbors for shipment by vessel.

PORT ARTHUR, DULUTH AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

The completion of the Port Arthur, Duluth & Western railway from Port Arthur to its Canadian terminus at Gunflint Lake, and the further extension of it for six miles to the Gunflint Lake Iron Company's mines situated on the now famous Mesaba Range in Minnesota is a matter we should congratulate ourselves upon. Already a contract has been made extending over a term of years, for the transportation of 1,000,000 of ore from the Gunflint Lake mine. Every effort should now be made to have the short gap between the present terminus of this and the Duluth & Iron Range railway built, in order that the people of this district might have a new outlet to the north. This extension would also tap the Vermillion Range, the output of which has already been referred to.

As you are aware, the Ontario & Rainy River railway has running powers over the Port Arthur Duluth & Western railway to Sand Lake about sixty miles. This company proposes to extend this line to Sturgeon Falls, the head of navigation on Rainy Lake, a dis-

tance of about 135 miles, by way of the Atikokan River, if reasonable aid be granted them by the Dominion and Provincial Governments and such assistance from the local municipalities as the enterprise is considered to deserve. The completion of the line to Sturgeon Falls and a small expenditure on the Fort Francis lock would give direct communication, rail, lake or river, from Port Arthur to Rat Portage, allow our people to get a fair share of the trade of the Huronian Gold district, the Atikokan Iron range, the extensive pine forests of Western Ontario and Northern Minnesota, not to mention the trade caused by the increased settlement in the fertile valley of the Rainy river.

From railway traffic to water communication is but a step. The statement recently made by the Hon. Minister of Railways and Canals, that the "Soo" lock would be completed by May 1st, 1894, and that within three years the St. Lawrence system of canals will be completed so that a boat carrying 2,000 tons of cargo may clear from Port Arthur and without transshipment deliver it in Liverpool or any port in the world, is one that Canadians may well be proud of. Then, and not till then, will the people of the Canadian Northwest know what it is to have a method of transportation from Port Arthur to the sea, by which the product of their prairies can be carried at the rate of one mill per ton per mile, a rate which no railway on earth can commence to compete with. In other words, a rate from here to Montreal, including canal tolls, not to exceed five cents on a bushel of wheat. While I am personally of opinion that the enlargement should have been proceeded with upon the basis of a 20 foot channel, the half loaf is better than no bread, and 14 feet of water is a vast improvement upon a scant 9. However, I hope to see the day when the deep channel will be carried through by the united efforts of both nations and the St. Lawrence route made the outlet for the traffic, not only of Canada, but for the northern and northwestern states.

Present indications are that the district of Algoma will soon be recognized as a great gold field; already from Sudbury to Rat Portage gold mines are being worked, and it only wants capital to start one hundred mines for every one now being developed.

New Post Offices.

The new post offices to be opened on the 1st of March in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are: Bagot, 33, 11, 9, Marquette—Wm. Cairns, postmaster; Buexelles, 32, 6, 11, Selkirk—Rev. G. Williams, postmaster; Hyde, 29, 19, 7, Assiniboia—A. E. Hyde, postmaster; Ingleside, 27, 10, 4, Marquette—A. McShannock, postmaster.

The following transfers have been made to come into effect on March 1st:—Bramley, Jas. Taylor vice George Glen, resigned; Bradenburg—W. W. Wilson vice J. J. Buchanan, resigned; Col—W. E. Jones vice F. Fisher, resigned; Fannystoile—A. Jacques vice A. Veroneau, resigned; Pippstone—John McKinnon vice J. Bothneau, resigned.

Another proposition is up for the establishment of a binder twine factory in Winnipeg.

The Hon. Robt. Watson, Minister of Public Works, reported to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on Thursday the 9th, the result of the calculations and topographical surveys made under the direction of his Department, with a view to ascertaining the probable cost of draining the lands adjacent to the city of Winnipeg. The total cost, it is estimated, would be in the neighborhood of \$212,250.