

In the Fairview camp Tin Horn shares have fallen from \$1 to about 36 cents owing to the very unsatisfactory results of the mill run, but the management claim that most of the ore put through was country rock and they look for better results next time.

In the coast mines several sales have taken place of Victoria-Texada, Consolidated Alberni, Channe and Van Anda. The Consolidated Alberni has been sold to an English company for \$150,000.

Fern shares in the Nelson district have taken a rapid advance from 40 cents to almost 80 cents owing to excellent reports from the mine.

Several enquiries are coming in for Klondyke properties and several claims are reported to have been sold at good prices.

The wonderful increase in the exports of ore from the Kootenay district of British Columbia is attracting the attention of investors from all parts of the world, and it is very evident that the Province of British Columbia is about to experience a wave of unprecedented prosperity.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the opinions which may be expressed in this column. No notice will be taken of communications unless accompanied by the full name and address of the writer.

THE CONDITION OF MINE WORKERS AT ROSSLAND.

TO THE EDITOR:—In sending you a few facts touching some of the conditions under which our underground toilers labour, I do so with the hope that you will give this matter due publicity, and that through the columns of your valuable Mining Journal these grievances may thus be brought to the attention of the proper authorities. I am sorry to say that none of our important local officials care to interfere, so I have to appeal to you. Quite recently the newly appointed inspector of metalliferous mines paid official visits to our working mines. His report so far as known was very favourable all round. But in the face of that I beg to submit the following. And here I may say that I am not a practical quartz miner, nor an expert nor do I covet the position of mine inspectorship, but I have worked in a Rossland mine, and that is sufficient excuse.

In the first place I wish to know if there are any regulations governing the working of quartz mines in B.C.? If not, why not? Is it known that the miners (and they are white men too) of the Le Roi (and other mines) have to climb 675 feet from the workings to the surface on ladders, as the management forbids them the use of the ore car for the purpose, and there is neither cage nor elevator. When an influential visitor has secured the kind permission to go below he does so in the ore car, and he leaves no doubt with the belief that the unfortunate miners make use of the aerial conveyance. I think it should be compulsory that an elevator be run after a depth of 250 or 300 feet has been reached in a mine, or at least the men who do the blasting should be brought up in the ore car. This brings up a matter worth mentioning, and from which some idea be gathered of the loose way things are run in some Rossland mines. On Wednesday evening February 9th a miner named Stonehouse who was employed in the stoop at the 600 foot level in the Le Roi was the cause of the stoppage of work at the mine for a whole hour. It happened in this way: His partner having helped him load the holes previous to blasting had gone on top, leaving Stonehouse to light the fuse. After waiting till he thought the time had arrived to shoot he did so and then climbed down the stoop to the level, when to his horror the blasts set in the other levels and stoops above him commenced going off, the concussion of which blew out his candle. With a dash he made for the straight ladder up the main shaft arriving quickly at the surface uninjured. Coming up this ladder, like making use of the ore car, is contrary to the few rules in force in the mine. Once on top, Stonehouse reported his number to the timekeeper, who keeps tally of all men coming up, and went home. This man's partner, however, did not notice him on top and seeing a coat like Stonehouse's he gave an alarm that Stonehouse must be below, which at that time would have been fatal. The excitement that arose caused the timekeeper to doubt his book entry; so much so that it is thought he rubbed out the tally number. As soon as possible a search party went below and at the powder station on the 500 foot level found the missing man's dinner can, which to them confirmed the idea that he

must be in the mine; and not until another party went to his home and found Stonehouse in bed, did their fears vanish. The poor fellow, no doubt, had rather a hard and rapid climb for his life, and this must have shaken his nerves. To help matters out and to "get even" with some one, poor Stonehouse and his partner were discharged. Now what excuse is possible for allowing men to endanger their lives (this is the third time within a fortnight that men have been caught as in the case described) when a signal by which all the men could fire their holes simultaneously, or nearly so, could be adopted? And by providing a cage or permitting the use of the ore car the danger would be reduced to a minimum. I understand, if not at the present time, only recently quite a large store of powder was kept in the mine. What would be the result if that powder exploded when the men were below, with only two vertical shafts for outlets, and they are within 80 feet of each other?

I am informed that a bill will be introduced during this session of the Provincial Legislature dealing with the question of "the seven days a week" of slavery in mines, and also to compel mine owners to withdraw the thin edge of the "truck system" wedge introduced here whereby employees are obliged to board at the Company boarding houses. This system affords no small profits to employers, the men being charged from \$6.50 to \$7.00 per week, and a further \$1.00 for hospital. Taking into consideration the quantity and quality of the food provided these charges are exorbitant, in fact one Rossland restaurant keeper has said he would give no less than \$900 a month to secure the monopoly of the trade. The Miners' Union and the Trades and Labour Council here are trying in a quiet way to remedy existing abuses, a few of which I have specified, but it remains for the government of the country to deal with the matter intelligently and to take decided action to insure the protection of the working miner.

Rossland, B.C.

A DISGUSTED ONLOOKER.

A VERY SENSIBLE SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR:—In view of the fact that there is likely to be a large influx of prospectors to the province in the spring, I would suggest that some step should be taken by the Legislature to facilitate prospecting operations here in certain necessary directions. For example, provision should be made whereby a prospector might be enabled to tell at a glance when he came across "old stakes" whether they are alive and therefore legally hold ground, or otherwise. In most cases a prospector does not put himself to the trouble to ascertain whether or not a location upon which stakes are standing is legally held (even if the writing on the posts giving the dates of staking is legible, which is seldom the case) and he moves at once to fresh ground, unless, indeed, he has made some remarkably good find on the claim thus staked, when he will probably make further enquiries as to its ownership. But in seventy instances out of a hundred these claims with the "old stakes" have been abandoned, perhaps they were never recorded, for many men stake ground, send a sample of ore therefrom to the assayer, and, the returns not coming up to expectations, the claim is left unrecorded with the stakes standing. Numbers of claims are also located by prospectors who have been grub-staked and have therefore put in time staking ground promiscuously, and of course on the majority of such claims assessment work will never be done. Then again instances are not uncommon when men, without first obtaining a free miner's certificate, have found and staked valuable ledges, hence gaining time to proceed to the nearest recorder's office to obtain the necessary license and return to restake the property, when possibly in the meantime *bona fide* prospectors visited the locality and were thus "done out" of the claim or claims.

Moreover it should also be remembered that it takes a lot of work to thoroughly prospect a full claim, and it may contain rich lodes that were never seen or dreamed of by the original locator, who very likely never found any ore in place at all, which will assuredly never be systematically looked for by anyone else as long as he is confronted by a lot of stakes that may legally hold the ground for all that he knows or can find out to the contrary; for, be it observed, that the writing on these posts is very seldom legible, sometimes intentionally never was so, at others has been obliterated by exposure or by the gum which exudes from the wood—more especially is this the case where the stump of a tree has been used as a stake.

I would submit as an easy and effectual remedy and one that has met with approval generally from prospectors, that all recorders should be supplied with metal plates (say sheets of zinc four inches by eight inches) and that when an applica-