

En Passant

We notice that at the general meeting of the Canada Company, held in London on the 2nd inst., considerable stress was laid on the discovery of natural gas on their lands. As our readers are doubtless aware, the company owns some quarter of a million acres in Ontario, on which prospecting and mining has been done, particularly in the Township of Loughboro'. The company has not met with as great success in the last few years as formerly, owing to agricultural depression, and any discoveries that will enhance the value of their lands will be appreciated.

An excellent Report on the mineral resources of the Province of Quebec has been compiled under the supervision of the Geological Survey by Dr. R. W. Ellis, well and favorably known for his connection with the asbestos industry of that Province. As its title implies, it is a compendium of valuable information regarding phosphates, asbestos, copper, iron, gold, etc., and contains besides the history of all the more important mining enterprises undertaken within the Province, together with a variety of other information obtained from early works upon the subject, not now easily accessible. Its economic geological value is great, and it will be found an exceedingly useful book of reference to all engaged in mining operations.

A deputation from the coal section of the Montreal Board of Trade, consisting of Lieut.-Colonel Henshaw, Messrs. H. A. Budden, R. P. McLea, D. Napier, F. P. Brown and R. T. Routh, accompanied by Mr. J. J. Curran, M.P., recently had an interview with the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in reference to the recognition of the English Board of Trade certificates of inspection, requesting the exemption of such vessels holding unexpired English certificates when chartered for coal carrying purposes in Canadian waters, as the imposition of inspection dues on this side in addition to the very heavy dues in England, seriously embarrassed the coal and shipping trade, and to no purpose. Hon. Mr. Tupper, replied that the double imposition has only recently been decided in view of a decision of the Department of Justice, but as there was no apparent necessity for it, he would confer with his colleagues with a view to devising a remedy.

Elsewhere will be found, reproduced in full for the first time in Canada, the report to the United States Government of Commander Folger and Lieut. Buckingham, on the nickel and copper deposits of the Sudbury district. Taking it as a whole, it will be a valuable addition to the literature on this subject and will be read with attention by those interested in mineral properties in that region, but it would appear that the writers, throughout the report, have been somewhat biassed in their consideration of the Canadian Copper Company, and have instituted a number of comparisons disparaging

to the other companies treated of. We are much mistaken if there be not ranges of nickel and copper in the Sudbury country as rich and extensive as those possessed by the Canadian Copper Company. These points we leave to the consideration of our readers, who will draw their own conclusions on perusal of the report. Otherwise it is of interest as affording a comprehensive idea of the workings in the Sudbury region, and as such will be appreciated at its proper value by holders of lands in that vicinity.

The record of shipbuilding done in the United Kingdom within the past year, shows that the total output was 1,271,110 tons, as compared with 1,300,933 in 1889, and 903,687 tons in 1888. The Clyde, as usual, heads the list with 349,995 tons, an increase of 14,974; the Tyne is next with 235,567 tons, a falling off as compared with 1889, of 46,143; the output on the Wear was 197,482 tons, a decrease of 19,854; on the Tees, 127,741 tons, an increase of 17,305; the Hartlepoons 99,847, an increase of 13,792 tons; at Belfast 66,783 tons, a decrease of 16,220; on the Mersey 36,577 tons, a decrease of 5,196; at Barrow, 24,665 tons, a decrease of 2,182; and at Dundee 24,494 tons, an increase of 6,183. In connection with this, it may be interesting to point out that the output for the whole of Scotland during 1890 was 416,617 tons, as compared 395,841 in the previous year, or an increase of 20,776 tons, and that the tonnage of the north-east ports of England, which reached 695,357 in 1889, had fallen last year to 660,637, a decrease of 35,720 tons. Messrs. Russell of Greenock and Port Glasgow are the largest contributors to the grand total, having launched during the year no less than 70,370 tons of shipping. They are followed in the order given by Sir Wm. Gray & Co. (Ltd.), Hartlepool; Messrs. Harland & Wolff, Belfast; and Palmer's Company on the Tyne.

The number of mining companies formed within the past year, sixty-one in all, shows the interest that is awakening in Canada's mineral wealth. From the Atlantic to the Pacific fresh capital has been introduced into the industry, infusing new life into districts previously languishing, and stimulating other sections into increased activity. The greatest number of corporations were instituted in or for the purpose of working mines in Ontario—twenty in all; Nova Scotia comes next with seventeen, while British Columbia, with fourteen, and Quebec, with seven, have received large additions to the amount of capital invested within their borders. Manitoba and the North-West Territories and New Brunswick, show two and one new companies respectively. The sum represented by these concerns is very large but owing to the fact that some are private ventures, that is, not incorporated, the exact aggregate cannot be ascertained; and the capital of one English Company, H. H. Vivian & Co., of Swansea, amounting to over \$1,500,000, can not be included, both from the fact that only a comparatively small portion of its funds are invested in Canada, and also on the ground that, although

incorporated last year, operations had been carried on for some time previously. Even without these, however, the total capital stock of all corporations amounted to \$19,637,750—a sum that, whether taken on its own merits or as indicative of what is to come, is extraordinarily large. Of this, British Columbia received the largest share, \$6,255,000, Quebec, if the General Phosphate Corporation be included, coming next with \$5,334,000 invested. Nova Scotian mines also received a considerable accession of capital, the stock of new companies in that Province aggregating \$4,255,000; \$3,578,750 was put into Ontario enterprises; \$125,000 in Manitoba and the Territories, besides a private concern; and \$100,000 in New Brunswick. From these figures it is evident that the mining industry is rapidly advancing throughout the Dominion, and to a greater degree than is generally known, and as a large influx of outside capital may be looked for, before very long, the present year may be expected to show a still larger sum. A complete list of all companies will be found on another page.

The Excelsior Copper Company, which for two years has been working the well known Harvey Hill mine in Megantic County, Quebec, appears, from the account of the meeting published elsewhere, to have met with no better success than its predecessor. Its chances from the first were very small. To begin with, the capitalization, £450,000, was altogether out of proportion to the value of the mine to be worked, and the real—not prospectus—profits to accrue therefrom; nor have the subsequent operations borne out the expectations entertained. But it is with the statements and promises of the directorate and management that we have at the moment to do. The chairman apparently entertains the most sanguine belief as to the value of the property, and such expressions as "proved beyond the realm of doubt" are liberally interspersed throughout his remarks. The shareholders hardly seem imbued with the same confidence, however, and the response to the call for £20,000 last April was so small that all subscriptions were returned. It is now proposed to wind up the present concern and reconstruct the company upon the basis of imposing on the shareholders a payment in proportion to their several holdings. Captain Davey, the mine manager, made a most eulogistic speech on the future prospects of the mine—prospects that in the light of past experience are unwarranted, and, it seems to us, that would require something akin to a miracle to fulfil. It is an easy matter to say that at a certain rate of production such and such a profit may be realized, but the prime necessity is to obtain the ore for treatment; and past workings do not justify the assumption that such can be mined in anything like paying quantities. The former owners of the property operated it upon a careful and economical basis, and yet found it exceedingly unprofitable; and nothing in Captain Davey's remarks leads one to suppose that any new and rich developments have been made. Of course it is within the bounds of possibility that such a