

10 p.c., or 40 lbs., lost as slimes, too gritty to be cleaned or saved.
 For the No. 1 Flake 4c. a pound might be realized, or 80 x .04c. = \$3 20
 For the No. 2 Flake 2c. a pound might be realized, or 80 x .02c. = 1 60
 For the Gritty stuff, 1c. a pound, or 200 x .01 = 2 00
 \$6 60

The above figures show a total value in 1896, per average ton of ore, of \$6 60 from which must be deducted costs of management, mining, cleaning and *fixed charges*, which at present amount to \$44,000 a year for redemption and \$20,000 a year for interest, or a total of \$64,000.

No attempt is made to name the marketing charges, although this is the rock upon which previous attempts to work this property have foundered. In other words, any attempt to mine these Buckingham graphite deposits on a large scale *must* include a capital, and an organization, sufficient and competent to manufacture and *sell* all the products into which graphite enters as a primary factor; no concern which neglects to make its various grades into stove polish, lubricants, paints, etc., and which does not market them for itself, can expect to obtain any adequate return for its investment. It has been well established that to mine, make and sell only number 1 flake invites deliberate failure for the enterprise. It has also been well said that profitable results cannot be expected without such a large and extensive plant as is necessary for the manufacture of various products; and also without a capital sufficiently large to enable such working, manufacturing and selling to be carried on at a loss, *perhaps for several years*, until the difficulties of introducing the various products into markets which are now well supplied and strongly prejudiced in favor of other brands, are overcome.

If the new Walker Mining Company can call up one half of its capital and, above all, can command a staff which should comprise an *economical* general manager, a skilled concentrating engineer, and several energetic travelling business agents, it may have an even chance for life, but without these requisites in any one respect, it deliberately invites failure and equally deliberately announces its complete ignorance of the past business history of this well known deposit. The facts are open for its share holders to obtain, and the market is not essentially different in its demands to what it was ten years ago. The only new feature which the printed prospectus contains is the possibility of making a desirable product in the shape of a refractory brick, but we do not need to point out to our readers that the waste coming from graphitic gneiss, associated with fragments of gabbro, is not likely to form a suitable binding material for graphite, nor is such material to be designated as "refractory." Clean graphite, suitably mixed with pure silica, might make an excellent material, but graphite waste moulded into bricks will require considerable demonstration.

The Fernie Strike.

It must be a matter of great regret, as it is in every sense a serious one, that the coal miners at Fernie are once more on strike. What the effect may be to the mining and smelting industries of the Province it is impossible to say, and indeed this will entirely depend upon whether the disagreement is speedily settled or not. If it drags on until the very slender supplies of fuel in stock at the various smelters are consumed it is impossible to tell what the consequences may be as supplies cannot be obtained from any other source, and if the smelters are once put out there will be very little encouragement in the present depressed condition of the copper and lead markets to resume operations.

On the merits of the question in dispute we have nothing to say because obviously it would be imprudent to express an opinion on a fair wage or otherwise, without having all the data necessary to arrive

at a fair decision, but there are several aspects of the case to which we wish to refer and which are well worthy of consideration.

The first is that whatever the relative value of the wages paid may be when compared with others it is not denied that the men's earnings are large and in the present depressed state of trade in British Columbia they should at least hesitate before precipitating a struggle that may be both prolonged and disastrous.

In the next place, from a press despatch, dated "Fernie, February 18th," we learn that the actual number of men who voted in favour of a strike constituted a very small minority of the total number employed, as a matter of fact not more than one-fifth. It seems to us that to take so serious a step on such a vote is indefensible. There are occasions on which it is perfectly legitimate to strike and possibly this may have been one, but if so it cannot be denied that steps should have been taken to obtain a much larger vote, and that so serious a course should not have been decided upon by so small a minority. Probably the various unions which took the lead in the strike acted strictly in accordance with the rules of their organization and no doubt a majority of those present at each meeting actually voted in favour of the strike, but this only emphasizes our contention that the Union should improve its organization or it can never gain any public confidence or support; the least that should be done under such circumstances is to follow somewhat upon the lines of the referendum and insist that a majority of the workmen actually employed should vote in favour of a strike before that extreme course is resorted to.

The last consideration and possibly the most important of all is based upon what is alleged to be a fact, namely that the whole agitation has been brought about through the agency of American Representatives who settled at Fernie for the express purpose of fomenting strife. On this point we wish to say that in our judgment Trades Organizations are perfectly legitimate, we only take exception to some of their methods, but not to the principle of organization, which is legitimate in the case of workmen as of employers, but we have always believed that there are most potent economic and political reasons why Canadian Unions should not be controlled by United States organizations. It is not necessary here to recite these reasons, they will be perfectly obvious to the veriest tyro and no one who has considered the matter doubts that there are many points at which they clash. Some effort has recently been made to emancipate Canadian Unions from this control and we can only hope that the effort will be successful, for undoubtedly the Fernie strike is another illustration of the iniquity of the present system under which men who have no stake in the country are able at their will to paralyze an important industry and to plunge a whole district into commercial disaster.

A Minister of Mines.

It will be within the recollection of our readers that at the last Annual Meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute the subject of a new department of mines was freely canvassed, and a resolution adopted urging the Dominion Government to take this matter into consideration. The appointment of Dr. Haanel as Superintendent of Mines raised great expectations amongst mining men in consequence of the well known capacity and acquirements of that gentleman; but it would appear as if there is little probability of such a department being organized unless there is a responsible Minister at the head. This does not reflect in any way upon the ability with which the affairs connected with mining matters have been conducted by the Minister of the Interior, but there is a general consensus of opinion that this work does not properly belong to his department, and that its increasing importance demands the undivided attention of a Minister who