

United States is ascribable to a system which we have more or less nearly imitated in Canada, and if other reasons were wanting this should almost be sufficient warrant to demand for the institution of our public service upon a less questionable basis. We would therefore desire to be allowed to point out to the present Government of British Columbia the honour that would certainly be given to the Administration first instituting a reform in this direction, and the benefit the Province would derive if its civil service were modelled somewhat after the admirable system which has proved so successful in Great Britain. Competitive examinations not only insure the filling of public posts of trust and responsibility by the most capable men, but they practically preclude, or at any rate greatly lessen the practice of political favoritism, and like evils. In the mining districts especially it is necessary that officials holding positions under Government should have received suitable educations to fit them for their duties, and no better testimony in support of this contention could be advanced than that afforded by some of the wild and unscientific statements that may be found contained in the published reports from Gold Commissioners and Mining Recorders to the Minister of Mines. On more than one occasion, too, extracts from these reports have appeared in company prospectuses of exceedingly dubious semblance for the purpose of bolstering up wild-cat concerns, and it is to be feared that unintentional but grave wrong has resulted therefrom. With a civil service, an entrance to which could only be gained by special ability displayed under conditions of competition; the payment of adequate salaries and the creation of a pension fund for the reward of long and meritorious service, it would be rare indeed when disgraceful charges would be preferred, as they lately have been, against members of the Canadian Civil Service of dishonesty or mal-administration of their offices.

The formation in London last month of the Kootenay Railway and Navigation Co., Limited, with an authorized capital of £500,000, and a five per cent. debenture issue of £480,000 will

A PROMISING LONDON FLOTATION AT LAST. represent the heaviest investment of British capital as yet made in a railroad and steamship navigation company enterprise in this Province. The directors include Mr. Lubbock, the well-known London banker and director of the Bank of British North America; Mr. Henry William Foster, M.P., another well-known English capitalist, and as the bankers of the undertaking are Messrs. Glynn, Mills, Currie & Co., and the solicitors, Messrs. Kenshaw, Kekewich & Co., and Freshfield and Williams are amongst the most noted and best reputed in the British metropolis, there should be little doubt of the success of the promoters of the new company in securing their capital.

The company is to acquire the Kaslo & Slocan Railroad and also the undertaking of the International Navigation and Trading Co., Limited, which runs connecting steamers on Kootenay Lake. It will also take over and construct the Nelson & Bedlington Railroad to the international boundary and the connecting line on the American side to Bonner's Ferry, where the line will join the Great Northern system. The Kaslo & Slocan Railroad runs over a course of thirty miles and is stated to be now making

profits of \$93,000—or about £19,000 a year—and it is estimated that the two new connecting lines of 53½ miles in length that are to be constructed should realise £25,000 a year of additional profit, as they will open up a further stretch of fine mineral country, and connect not only as above stated, with the Great Northern at Bonner's Ferry, but also on the Northern Pacific at Sand Point. The steamers and a land ownership of 220,000 acres in the Slocan country should also yield additional profits.

Having regard to these facts, it would seem that the issue of £480,000 five per cent. debentures, as a first charge on the joint undertaking and all its profits, should be a safe enough investment, as profit-earning power of the concern should certainly yield far more than the £24,000 of interest required on the debentures. As regards the ordinary stock of the company, the investment is open of course to more risk, as in respect of the system generally, there will be determined competition, no doubt, from the C.P.R., which by its Nakusp and Slocan branch already very keenly opposes the Kaslo & Slocan undertaking. The payment of an average five or six per cent. dividend on the £500,000 of ordinary stock of the Kootenay Railway and Navigation Co., is therefore less assured than the payment of the interest on the debenture issue, though it represents a fair speculative investment, which, whilst it cannot be reckoned as an absolutely safe five or six per cent. payer as ordinary stock, may yield even more thereon, if the new country that is to be opened by the railroad should prove as good as large numbers of South Kootenay men anticipate. The line will be worked by a strong management in the persons of the Great Northern Railroad Company's directorate and managing staff of this and the fact that the promotion is in good and capable hands, and the undertaking one that will take over successful profit earning ventures distinguish the endeavor very markedly from many of the B.C. joint-stock ventures recently floated in London.

In a speech to his constituents at Greenwood City the other day, Mr. Hewitt Bostock, M.P., referring to the defeat of the Kettle River Railway Bill at the last session of the Federal Parliament, expressed very strongly his opinion that notwithstanding the fact that by the extension of the Columbia & Western Railway the Boundary Creek District would now ere long enjoy the advantages of rail transportation facilities, the lack of which had so long retarded the development of this rich mineral area, still mine-owners here would fail to experience the full benefit of improved conditions in this respect until the time arrived when rates would be regulated by the wholesome restrictions of competition following the introduction of a rival system into the district. While recognizing that the Canadian Pacific Company has of late adopted a very much more liberal, and therefore in our judgment a wiser, policy in regard to the operation of the Kootenay sections of this road, few we imagine, directly interested in the question will be disposed to quarrel with the position assumed by Mr. Bostock. As we have before pointed out the engineering difficulties of the Columbia & Western construction work and the consequent costly nature of the undertaking may and very likely will be used as an argument by the railway company in defending their right to impose a high scale of hauling charges should any appeal be made for government interference or regulation, and although, of course, no one