

was designed for. Stoppages for repairs have been necessitated from time to time, and also during the period of installing new air compressing and other machinery at the mine. Up to 14th November the smelter has treated 25,969 tons of ore, producing 2,131 tons of copper matte.

The company is now erecting another furnace with a capacity of 250 tons a day, as well as reverberatory furnaces and other adjuncts. In addition to the ore from its own mine, other ore, especially that from Trail Creek will be purchased.

While the establishment of the Nelson smelter has been so successful, bad luck has attended the one at Pilot Bay. This was started in 1894 by a strong American company which also owned the famous Blue Bell mine. After running for more than a year the works, both at mine and mill, were closed down, with no immediate prospect of their being re-opened. There is no reason that the country's reputation should suffer from the stoppage of these works. The real reason thereof is securely locked in the breasts of its proprietors, but certain facts are known and may be recounted. The smelter itself was admirably constructed with all its machinery, its concentrator, and its roasters of the latest pattern, amply capable of doing its work. The Blue Bell ore, however, is of extremely low grade, too low to work at a profit. Possibly its owners may have calculated on an increase in value as depth was gained, or a rise in the price of its products, silver and lead, neither of which has occurred. But it is patent that the mines at Ainsworth just across the lake and in the Slocan were putting out ore of high grade, which was rich enough to pay heavy freight charges to distant smelters of the United States. The freight to Pilot Bay would be infinitesimal. Had the Pilot Bay people thought fit to come to terms with the mine owners of Ainsworth and the Slocan, their smelter would have probably been running at a profit to-day, as it very likely will next year. There is of course some reason why this course was not adopted, and though conjectures as to its nature are numerous, and some probably near the mark, nothing is definitely known about it.

The third active smelter at Trail meanwhile is hard at work. Owing to a change in the character of the ore from Rossland, which occurred as depth was gained in the mines, some little difficulty was experienced at first in getting the furnaces to work properly. But these have been overcome and the works have now a large and increasing output.

Another marked feature of 1896 has been the ready market for mining property. Not only have shares in companies been largely subscribed for by the public, but everyone who owned a prospect or a mine, or any other intermediate development, had no difficulty in finding a purchaser, provided that he was content to accept a price commensurate with the real value of the property. The first large English syndicate to enter the field was the Lillooet, Fraser River & Cariboo Gold Fields Ltd., headed by Mr. Horne-Payne. This company has made extensive purchases not only in the districts covered by its cumbrous title but in Kootenay as well. After throwing up a bond on the Cliff at Rossland, the company acquired the City of Spokane, and then took up large groups of claims in what is called the Waterloo camp. Meanwhile the Northern Belle near Kaslo was acquired by an English syndicate, and more lately the London & British Columbia Gold Fields Ltd. has entered the market and acquired a bond over a group of claims in the Crawford

Creek district. The Vancouver & British Columbia General Exploration Co. Ltd., generally known as the "Vancouver syndicate," has acquired several Slocan properties, including the Read and Tenderfoot, two claims on the divide between Four Mile and Sandon Creeks, and the Galena Farm, another Four Mile claim. The shares of this company are of the nominal value of £1 each, of which ten shillings only is paid up, but their value on the London market at the time of writing (21 Nov.) is £8.

Negotiations have been proceeding for some months for the purchase of the War Eagle at Rossland by an English company of which Mr. Grant Govan is the head. For some reason or other these negotiations have not as yet come to a definite conclusion, but the company has acquired other interests. Several other syndicates and companies have taken bonds on properties and Eastern Canadians have not been backward in securing some of the prizes which their own country offers to them. The Gooderham-Blackstock syndicate, of Toronto, has purchased the Crown Point mine at Rossland for \$200,000 and made further arrangements for the purchase of the Tiger and Uncle Sam, two adjoining claims.

These are only some of the most important deals that have taken place, indicating the willingness of capitalists to purchase Kootenay properties. The country has been full of mining engineers and financiers of the highest reputation, sent out by capitalists to inspect the district. Most of them were on the lookout for established mines in full working order and so far Kootenay has not had many of those to offer. The class of people represented by these engineers will not buy a prospect or a small affair costing one or two hundred thousand dollars. They want big things and are willing to pay millions for them. Unfortunately many of these heralds of capital had strict orders to purchase gold properties only and much as they would have liked to make purchases in the Slocan they were unable to do so.

The War Eagle, Le Roi, Slocan Star, Alamo and Idaho have continued to hold their places in the ranks of dividend payers. Many other Slocan properties have also been pouring dollars into their owners bank accounts, but as they are private property, details are unknown. Recently, however, some of the most noticeable have become joint stock companies and, in future, their progress will be a matter for public information. Of these the Ruecau, Noble Five and Last Chance may be mentioned.

Looking back over the year, those who have pinned their faith on Kootenay have no reason to be dissatisfied. The time has indeed come when its advantages and capabilities have become known far and wide, and there has been in consequence a large influx of capital to reward the toilers for their patience. The future looks brighter still. The older and well known fields are daily attracting more and more attention, and new finds of rich mineral in various directions prove that the wealth of Kootenay is spread over an enormous area. Her rugged mountains and dense forests render prospecting a most difficult task. Only here and there, where avalanches or torrents have laid bare the naked rock, or where some bold bluff pushes its way through the covering of *débris* and bush can the prospector hope to find his search rewarded. While not half the country has been prospected at all, there are still thousands of square miles over which men pass every day, hiding their treasures beneath a deep covering. It is only reasonable to