

British Columbia Mining Critic.

"I am Nothing, if Not Critical."—Shakespeare.

British Columbia Mining Critic.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

Devoted to the Interests of Mining and the Protection of Investors.

THURSDAY.....AUG. 19. 1897.

Letters from practical men on topics connected with mining, mining machinery, mining laws, and matters relating to the mineralogical development of Canada, are always welcome.

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Subscription, Two Dollars a year, payable in advance. Remittances should be made by Express, Postal Order or Bank Draft payable to the "British Columbia Mining Critic."

Advertising rates quoted on application.

British Columbia Mining Critic Co., Publishers.

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THE CLONDYKE ROYALTIES.

There can scarcely be two opinions as to the excessiveness of the royalties proposed to be enforced—but unlikely as a rule to be collectible in the case of the Yukon gold fields. The producing season is so short and the cost, difficulty and danger of getting out the gold so great that for the Dominion to claim royalties of 10 and 20 per cent. respectively is to make so big an exaction on the fortunate few, that the attempt is certain to lead to gold dust smuggling on a vast scale, as also to wholesale misrepresentation of the amount of gold gotten by the miners. Nor will the proposed establishment of a Government Treasury at Dawson City, to which all Yukon gold must be sent for melting into bars, prevent more than a part of this smuggling, however big the preventive force employed, whilst, as the News-Advertiser rightly indicates, the setting up of such an establishment will greatly impede the general trade of such a district as the Yukon, where gold dust forms a readily available general currency.

It would be better by far for the Dominion Government either to impose a more moderate royalty which the decent miner will not grudge to meet and which it will scarcely pay him to

increased annual license fee in respect of each productive claim. A five per cent. ad valorem royalty should certainly suffice, if the former plan be adopted, as the necessary revenue for administering the Yukon and yielding to Ottawa the considerable yearly profit, which Canada's dominant eastern politicians seem to expect as a tribute from the Pacific portion of the Dominion, can and will be raised to a very large extent by customs duties under what is still, despite recent modification, a high tariff.

The principle of reserving a proportion of the Yukon claims for the benefit of the State is on the other hand commendable and desirable, but it will need the greatest of care and tact in its working out by the Dominion officials, who will, it is to be hoped, prove both trustworthy and competent. It is also absolutely requisite that there shall be no jobbery nor favoritism in the disposal by sale or lease of these reserve claims. As to the suggestion that the gold of the Yukon should be reserved for British subjects, we hold that under the present circumstances of our relations with our national neighbors, and having regard also to the fact that gold is the only and that an exhaustible resource of the Yukon, there is every justification in principle for the suggestion. There is, however, one broad limitation of its action in this case that is obviously necessitated as a just recognition of vested rights allowed to be obtained for value given to the State by American miners now in the Yukon. These men have paid customs and other dues to Canada, have in some cases acquired in return actual mine rights, and others have what may fairly be called a valid contingent right to acquire such claims. It would be an act of gross injustice that would assuredly and with reason lead to unpleasing international complications, to attempt to exclude these men from Yukon gold mining. Hence the Dominion Government is not at all likely to adopt any such action in their case.

The question therefore arises, whether if the claims of probably at least 7,000 such American miners in the Yukon have to be conceded—as