

Those plants which have been operating magnetic separating plants of their own are securing prices generally satisfactory these days and, taken as a whole, the closing months of the year see the Wisconsin lead and zinc interests in more favorable condition than they have been in for many years. A number of new concentrating plants are being erected and the production this year has been the heaviest in the history of that district."

During the past month a more than usually large number of "deals" in mining claims are reported to have been made. A significant feature of these transactions is the circumstance that in nearly every instance, while the consideration has been large, no actual cash has been paid, the properties having been acquired on "working-bond" terms. It is an ill wind that blows no one good, and the depression under which the mining industry of the province has suffered for the past few years has at least had the salutary effect of knocking reason into the heads of prospectors and claim-owners, who are now much more ready to treat with capital in a businesslike spirit. The result will be—as has already been shown—that a far greater proportion of claims will be taken over and developed, and thus the chances of a considerable addition being made to our number of productive mines are so much the greater.

In a recent issue the *Nelson Daily Tribune* referring to the higher price of lead on the London market, points out that should the prices go to £15 10s., under the conditions of the Act the Federal Government will discontinue the payment of bounty on lead to Canadian producers, and adds, "Had a duty been imposed on lead and lead products, the lead producer would have received whatever benefit accrued from the duty, whether the price were high or low." While we believe this view is shared by many of the Kootenay mine operators, it can hardly be asserted that the bounty has failed to effect its purpose to a very considerable degree. It is not, however, improbable that eventually a tariff adjustment will be made to further improve the conditions of lead production and manufacture in the Dominion, with a view to aiding in the establishment on a substantial footing, of the industry in the country, and it is not unlikely that the steps recently taken for the inauguration of lead corrodging and manufacture in Canada were made in anticipation of tariff changes.

An effort may again be made shortly to employ Mongolian labour in the Atlin hydraulic mines. Two years or so ago a number of Japanese were taken in to the district for this purpose, but in consequence of the determined opposition of the local miners' unions the mine owners decided to abandon their intention in the matter. Since, however, conditions have considerably changed, there being far fewer white miners in the district than formerly, while it has been clearly shown that it is not possible to profitably operate many of the

Atlin hydraulic properties without largely reducing the costs of labour. Under these circumstances it is probable that there will be less opposition to the contemplated employment of mongolian labour, particularly as it is proposed to increase the wages of white miners now in the district who will be employed as foremen or overseers. In other cases the labour problem is being solved in a different manner by the adoption of a method of placer mining by means of dredging, a practice which, as is well known, has given excellent results in California. This new departure in Atlin is ably described by Mr. Ebbs-Canavan in this issue.

At the annual meeting of the Hall Mining & Smelting Company held in London last month the chairman, Lord Ernest Hamilton, delivered a very sensible speech summarizing the situation, which, as he implied, is now more hopeful than it has been for some years past. This improvement we attribute almost entirely to the, we almost might say heroic, efforts put forward by the Company's local representatives during the past year or more which has resulted not only in the effecting of economies but also in increasing the value of the company's assets. It is gratifying to find that these services are appreciated at their real worth by the directors (who relatively speaking have more or less of an easy time of it), and as recognition and acknowledgment of this sort is somewhat out of the common, we think it quite worth while to quote in full the chairman's remarks on the subject, printed at the conclusion of his address. He said: "Before I sit down I must take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the Board of the services of our excellent representatives on the other side. I do this every year when I address you; so that it becomes a matter of form. I wish it, however, not to be a mere matter of form, but to take the opportunity of saying that we as a Board thoroughly appreciate the services of our representatives on the other side. We think they have worked extremely well over there and they have served the Company in a manner of which I can hardly speak too highly."

Relatively considered the report of the Hall Mining & Smelting Company, Limited, for the year ending June 30th, 1904, may be described as satisfactory. Although the earnings do not represent an adequate return on capital, still the fact that a profit of over thirty thousand dollars has been made during the period reviewed, under circumstances still far from favourable, should appear encouraging to shareholders, and also have the effect of appreciating the market value of the stock, which for some time past has been quoted at rubbish prices, ranging from a shilling to one and six pence. The improved position is attributed largely to greater activity in the silver-lead mining industry, consequent upon the payment of a Government bounty on lead production, the company's purchases of lead ores having been during the year nearly double those made during 1903. We note, however, that Mr. J. J. Campbell, the business manager, states