

MINING.—Continued.

"I venture to draw your attention to that part of the Mines and Minerals Act relating to the granting of Prospecting Licenses for Gold. These licenses are granted for six months, with an option of renewal. Their location and renewal has led to much confusion and trouble in new districts, as they are frequently selected almost at random for speculative purposes, and mistakes arise when portions of them are selected for leasing, etc. In view also of the large extent of ground covered by leases which are practically unforfeitable, the following suggestion may be worth consideration. This is briefly that the system of granting prospecting licenses be abolished, that leases be issued for any term decided on, say 20 or 30 years, to be held by labor or annual rental. That on the non-performance of the labor or non-payment of the rental the lease be thereby forfeited without recourse to any court of investigation or forfeiture. To give an opportunity to those who may be desirous of prospecting, the cost of the lease for the first year could be made the same as that of a prospecting license of equal extent, but if the lessee desired to continue his operations he should then before the close of the first year secure the continuation of the lease for another year by payment of the permanent rental, and so on. An arrangement similar to this would on the basis of a small annual rental, of say \$1.00 an area, prove a boon to the prospector, for under the present arrangement he would pay for a prospecting license of one area for 12 months, 75 cents, then for a lease \$2.00, in all \$2.75. This secures him the ground for say two years; if he did not work his lease would be liable to forfeiture. Under the proposed arrangement the same sum would secure to him his area for three years. This arrangement would also give the Province a revenue from the numerous unworked leases now hindering exploration and probable discovery of valuable ground in all our mining districts, stimulate the holders to work, and give a security and fixity of title to leases which is desirable in the interests of investors. Provision could be made to protect properties on which any temporary cessation of work was necessary, or which were in litigation, and to prevent injustice to any prior occupant who had made any bona fide expenditure."

LAKE CATCHA DISTRICT.—John Anderson is prospecting on his areas northwest of the Cambridge property, and has struck a very rich angular. He had a nasty fall down one of the shafts, cutting his leg badly on a tub at the bottom, but this did not prevent him driving 30 miles to attend the meeting of the Gold-Miners' Association. We are glad to say that he is rapidly recovering from his injuries, and hope that he will be more cautious in the future. Men of his pluck and determination are needed to advance the gold-mining interests of the Province, and should he give up active work he would be sadly missed.

On the Oxford property Manager Reid is "pursuing the even tenor of his ways," and is getting good returns out of the split lead. This lead was for some time abandoned on account of a fault, but has been most cleverly rediscovered with most gratifying results.

Continuing our extracts from Mr. Eugene Costo's report on the "Mineral Statistics of the Dominion of Canada during the year 1886 and previous years," we find the production of manganese ore in 1886 to have been 1,789 tons, valued at the mines at \$41,499. It is supposed that a small quantity from New Brunswick has not been returned, and should be added to that total. In 1885 the production of manganese ore in Nova Scotia is stated, in the report of the Inspector of Mines of the Province, to have been 353½ tons, and the exports from New Brunswick that year were 1,607 tons, valued at the ports of shipment at \$29,595. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are the only provinces of the Dominion where manganese mines have been in active operation. New Brunswick leads in the total product, which in 1886 was 1,515 tons, valued at the mines at \$22,051. There was exported from Nova Scotia from 1873 to 1886, both inclusive, 1,769 tons, valued at \$105,172, and from New Brunswick during the same period, 14,270 tons, valued at \$239,268. The industry both in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, more especially in the latter province, is greatly on the increase, and we are constantly in receipt of information relative to new finds.

MICA.—The quantity of cut mica, of domestic production returned as having been sold in 1886, was 20,361 lbs., valued on the market at \$29,008, the average price thereof being \$1.42 a pound. This represents the production of four different mines, three in Ontario, and one in Quebec, and is believed to be all that was produced in Canada in 1886. The low average price of \$1.42 is due to the fact that the largest producer is not selling a first class quality; but the average price of that from the other mines is between \$2 and \$3. This shows that much of our mica is of very fine quality, as the average price in 1885 of all mica sold in the U. S. was computed at \$1.75 a pound. A very appropriate remark made in the report of the Mineral Resources of the United States (1885) may nevertheless be quoted:—"The fact that fine large sheets of mica have a value of several dollars per pound, reaching in exceptional cases as much as \$10 per pound for special purposes, has led to popular misapprehension in regard to the average value of the mineral, and the average price in 1885 is given, as above stated, at \$1.75 a pound. It must also not be forgotten, in considering the value of a mica mine, that great waste is always to be expected on account of numerous naturally bad portions in the deposits, causing inevitable loss in mining and cutting." As the information above is invaluable, we have quoted Mr. Costo in *extenso*.

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