

All this time our mining men and mining companies have had to pay dearly for their machinery and supplies. According to the tariff, machinery used in mines is supposed to be admitted free, but the saving clause, "so long as it is not of a kind made in Canada," practically makes all mining machinery pay a high rate of taxation. The Canadian manufacturer naturally adds the sum he is protected to his price and the foreign made article has to pay a high duty to the Government. In both cases the mine owner is the victim.

The extension for another year of this clause referring to free mining machinery, of which we have heard so much lately is, therefore, a delusion and a snare. It affords no relief to the miner. He is either limited in his choice of machinery and prevented from availing himself of the most improved kinds or he is taxed heavily. This is unfair to an industry which is as yet in its infancy, but which if given a fair chance will be one of the most important in the Dominion. It is in reality taxing one industry for the benefit of others.

If our representative at Ottawa had succeeded in inducing the Government to admit mining machinery free of duty not for one year alone but for all time without any conditions added thereto, he would have earned the thanks of the mining community. But as it is he has actually gained nothing for us, as the concession granted for another year is really no benefit at all. It is making a mountain out of a molehill.

It is admitted east and west, and north and south, that the wealth of British Columbia in minerals, as yet in an undeveloped state, will tend to enrich in a remarkable degree the whole of Canada as soon as our mines can be placed in thorough working order. But while the treasure lies hidden in the rocks it is of no use to anyone, and yet, notwithstanding this—notwithstanding the vast treasure within reach, the Government adopts a policy which prevents our taking hold of it.

The policy of throwing obstacles in the way of a proper development of our mines by means of the tariff is a suicidal one all round. It does not even benefit the Canadian manufacturer in the long run. It simply limits his market. Let the development of our mines be encouraged by enabling mining men to get the best and cheapest machinery and the mining industry will go ahead by leaps and bounds, until machine works in Canada as well as elsewhere will have all the trade they can attend to in this Province, whereas now the demand is comparatively limited.

Besides this the wealth flowing from the Kootenay and other districts, illimitable as it is known to be if properly developed, would turn into and benefit every line of industry and trade throughout the Dominion.

The necessity for free mining machinery is, therefore, a matter to be taken to heart not only by every man in British Columbia but by the people of Canada as a whole, and at this time, on the eve of a general election, when an opportunity is afforded to speak out with force, let there be no uncertain sound on this most important subject.

Another subject of deep importance to the Kootenay country is that of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. Not only will it give us cheaper coke, but it will place us in more direct communication with eastern markets. It is an enterprise which the people of Kootenay have been looking forward to with longing eyes.

It has been all along a matter of conjecture whether the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were really in earnest about building the road, but the proposals they made to the Government show that they are not only willing to undertake the work but they are ready to commence it at once. Under these circumstances it was the duty of the Government, if friendly to us, to have shown no hesitation in aiding so desirable an enterprise, especially as the proposition made to them was a fair one.

Unfortunately, however, they did hesitate and for the time being the opportunity to obtain what we so much desire is lost. It is not to be supposed that the Canadian Pacific managers, who are men noted for their push, energy and decision, delayed till the last moment placing their plans before the Government.

It may be taken for granted that the proposition of the railway company has been before the Ottawa ministry for some time. Yet no move was made by the Government until a day or two before the close of the late session when the proposals were placed before Parliament at a time when it was impossible to properly consider them, and the Government itself withdrew them without dissension.

Parliament is composed of men from all parts of the Dominion who, whether on one side of the house or the other, are not likely to hastily consider a matter involving several millions of dollars. The Government knew this, and that time was necessary for the discussion of so important a question, yet they sat silent upon it during all the many weeks of the session, and only at the last moment brought down the proposals with a full knowledge that they had hesitated too long. The Remedial Bill was of more consequence to them and, in the muddle which they got themselves into over that measure, Kootenay and its interests were lost sight of, and the people will have to wait a little longer for the Crow's Nest Pass Railway.