

THE KETTLE RIVER RAILWAY BILL.

This bill, having run the gauntlet of fierce opposition in the house of commons, now stands for third reading, and seems certain to pass both houses and become law. If, as expected by many, this scheme of Mr. Corbin's should enable the Grand Trunk railway to enter the Boundary country and make a first entry into Pacific Canada, the passage of the bill is of very far-reaching importance indeed, and it were extreme narrowness of mind to regard the endeavor as one destined to benefit American interests at the cost of Canadian welfare. The Hon. Mr. Blair, the Dominion Minister of Railways, clearly regards the undertaking as of far wider and better scope, and he is doubtless possessed of accurate information as to the railway interests that are behind the Kettle river project.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Two well-known English Klondike companies have plenty of trouble on hand just now. The Pioneer Trading Company of Klondike, Limited, finds that several members of its exploring party won't go north, apparently counting the bodily cost too high for the reward offered. As a result there have been police proceedings in Vancouver in respect of retained outfits, and as a result of alleged breach of contract rights. Meanwhile there are clearly still more serious dissensions in the official ranks of that much-boomed organization, the Klondike Mining, Trading & Transportation Company, Limited, which recently, amongst other things, offered to take would-be Yukoners early in spring directly and comfortably to Dawson, under the distinguished guidance of a local director in the person of Ex-Governor Dewdney—all for the moderate sum of \$500 as passage money for the route between British Columbia and the Yukon town on the swamp. As all the world knows, the personally conducted tour broke down at a very early point en route, and the Hon. Mr. Dewdney was only too glad to get back again to comfortable quarters in Victoria so soon as ever he could. Then arose, as it is understood, grave dissensions, all kinds of reasons being given for the failure of an utterly premature effort to make Dawson that should have been postponed at least two mouths. And now, after big loss has doubtless been incurred, the London directors of the Klondike Mining, Trading & Transportation Company have done what they should have arranged at first—substituted for a costly and largely ornamental local board in British Columbia, one practical man as local manager, in the person of a Mr. Strickland. The company thus, it is understood, dispenses with the services of Sir Charles Tupper, who has long been far away and out of Yukon reach at Ottawa; so, too, with the

services of a friend of his, a Mr. Ashworth. The same thing happens to the Hon. Mr. Dewdney, whose efforts were so badly foiled on the Stickine; also to Messrs. Bethune and Lugrin of Victoria. By the change the London company no doubt saves the cost of a rather big salary list, and dispenses with more than one who was little more than an "ornamental" local director. It is, however, difficult to believe, as suggested by our contemporary, the Vancouver Daily Province, that the local directors and other officers now superseded were in receipt of salaries amounting to the large sum of \$66,000 a year. Less than half such a sum would have been large remuneration for all that they did or were expected to do, as men of affairs having in most cases other things to occupy, and this remuneratively, the larger part of their time and energy. However, English Klondike companies are, usually, when backed by substantial capitals, nothing if not lavish, and most of them will, ere they finish, play "ducks and drakes" with the British investors' money.

It seems probable that the difficulty of treating refractory silver-lead ores, containing much zinc, may be solved by a new process. A very strong company styled the Smelting Corporation, Limited, has at last been formed in England for this purpose, with a capital of £600,000. Its directors include the Rt. Hon. Wm. Lidderdale, Ex-Governor of the Bank of England; Henry Allhusen, M. P., a millionaire capitalist; Mr. H. De La Rue, an eminent scientist; and Mr. Wilberforce Bryant, a well-known business man, who has made a huge fortune by the manufacture of patent matches. The company has, therefore, as strong men behind it financially as any undertaking of the kind well can have. It takes over a business already established at Swansea, South Wales, by Mr. H. R. Fry and others, where refractory silver-lead ores containing zinc are stated to have been successfully treated for some time by a patent which involves the use of fluxes composed of sulphate of soda and oxide of iron. It is claimed that by this process 90 per cent. of the silver in refractory ore can be profitably recovered, 87 per cent. of the lead, and 70 per cent. of the zinc, use for a large part of which last mineral can be had in the form of oxide of zinc. The company will, in addition to its works at Swansea, build another and large smelter near Eastham, on the Manchester ship canal.

If this new process proves all that is stated, it means much for undertakings like the Galena mines, where the silver-lead ore is refractory and contains a large percentage of zinc. It may enable even the Galena mines to make a fairly respectable output and pay moderate dividends, if its inordinate amount of watered capital be, as it should, greatly