

### Canada's Gold Fields.

London, Jan. 13.—Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal presided at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, held in the Whitehall rooms of the Hotel Metropole on Tuesday evening, when Mr. Edgar P. Rathbone gave an interesting lecture on the "Gold Fields of Ontario and British Columbia."

Amongst those present were: Mr. T. W. Borden, Dominion minister of militia; the Rt. Hon. James Bryce, M. P.; Major Sir Bartle Frere, Lieut.-General Sir J. Bevan Edwards, Sir H. Cunningham, Sir George Robertson, Sir Frederick Young, Lieut.-General Lowry, Mr. J. G. Colmer, Mr. C. S. Dicken, Mr. C. A. Duff Miller, and Mr. J. S. O'Halloran, secretary.

In introducing the lecturer, Lord Strathcona said that Mr. Rathbone had been several years engaged in mining operations in South Africa, so that he was a competent mining expert. He was sure that those who heard Mr. Rathbone's lecture would know a great deal more about Canada afterwards than they did before.

Mr. Rathbone, in the course of a few introductory remarks, said that his paper would be directed to the discussion of certain subjects relating to the gold-mining industry of Ontario and British Columbia, which was believed would materially advance the growth of those provinces should proper attention be given to them. There could be no doubt that, by taking advantage of the experience gained by other gold-mining countries, the Dominion of Canada would be able to avoid, in its early stages as a gold producer, many of the costly mistakes which had so frequently accompanied the first discovery of payable gold-fields elsewhere. He contended that a country owed its real lasting prosperity to the production of gold from veins rather than from placer deposits, which could of necessity only have a very temporary existence. He entered rather fully into the geological and mineralogical considerations, since it could not be doubted, he said, that in them lay the real proof that Canada was finally destined to occupy an important position as a producer of the rarer metals.

There were some drawbacks, the lecturer said, to what might be termed rapid mining progress, owing principally to the annual heavy snowfall, which much hindered the work of the prospector at the very season when in other countries most prospecting work was usually done owing to the vegetation having died off and thus left a more or less bare surface, so that the outcrops of the veins could be easily traced. In the gold mining districts of Ontario, for instance, the ground for some five months, extending as a rule from about the end of November to the end of April, was practically covered with snow; whilst in the summer months when it had disappeared, vegetation was so thick that an enormous amount of clearing work had to be carried out before the prospector could do any work. In parts of British Columbia, although the ground was also covered with snow during the same months, still in the summer season the prospector had a better chance than he had in the districts of Ontario, especially in the dry belts where there was little vegetation, and the outcrops of veins were easily detected by the mining novice. Again, however, on the coast region of British Columbia the vegetation was so very profligate

that the clearing of the ground by the prospectors became a gigantic task. From all this it followed that of necessity mineral discoveries in Canada were likely to take place slowly.

After explaining the two sources from which gold is derived—viz, "alluvial" and "vein-gold" mining—the lecturer said that, so far as could be ascertained from the government reports of British Columbia and Ontario, the total gross value of gold derived from placer gold-mining in British Columbia, principally from the district of Cariboo, and spread over a period of about forty years—amounted to something like £12,000,000 sterling. The greatest period of prosperity in this class of mining was apparently during the sixties, when the annual output ranged in value from about £500,000 to £1,000,000 sterling. During the past decade, however, it appeared to have ranged only from £80,000 to £120,000. Doubtless in the next few years the gold production derived from placer mining within the Dominion would enormously increase, owing to the recent discoveries in the North-western Territories, on the Yukon and at Klondike. He did not think that the annual production of gold from that district was likely to greatly exceed what was obtained from Cariboo in its palmy days, whilst the natural difficulties of obtaining it would be vastly greater. It was probable that there was just as good deep-level gravel deposits still unworked in Cariboo as would be found in Klondike, with the immense additional advantage of their being some 1,000 miles nearer to civilization. The amount of gold produced from vein-mining in British Columbia had, until quite recently, been hardly worthy of notice, and indeed even at the present time it was largely due to the production of one mine. Thus in 1893 the value of the total production was given at about £5,000, whereas in 1896 it had risen to about £250,000. It was unfortunate that for the purposes of this paper the mineral statistics of the Dominion for 1897 were naturally not yet published, as doubtless the increase in the production of gold during the past year would be found to be very satisfactory, and probably far greater than had ever been recorded in any previous year.

At the present time in Canada there were two separate bureaux for the collection of mineral statistics from British Columbia and Ontario. Much useful work could be accomplished by the establishment of a Chamber of Mines.

In a country like Canada, where the prospector was frequently working under great physical disadvantages, the government should in legislating do everything in its power to encourage him in this respect; however, careful distinction should always be made between the genuine miner who put some good work into the ground and the speculating prospector who did little or no mining work on the ground which he took up, but preferred to sit down on his claims and passively await the time when some greenhorn capitalist came along and offered him some ridiculous sum in cash for what must, from the nature of things, be an entirely unproved industrial problem. Where any real proof of mineral value of ground had been given, he considered that the government should always insist that in order to hold the title the owners should carry out thereon annually some reasonable amount of mining work. This was the case in British Columbia, but in On-

tario, after making a costly survey, large blocks of claims were held by the payment of a small sum and no work was necessarily done, so that prospecting work was in a very backward condition. In connection with the gold production, he suggested that instead of a mint, which he did not consider Canada at all required, it would be a wise provision of the legislature to insist on all gold bars or ingots being officially stamped, producers paying some small duty per ounce of gold.

In his concluding remarks the lecturer said that it was a drawback to mining that engineers were not obliged to qualify in some way, as doctors or lawyers do in their professions. The risks of mismanagement, however, could be greatly minimised in the case of the Canadian mining districts, as any one of them, except it be Klondike, could be easily reached in from fourteen to twenty days after starting from London. He paid a high compliment to the Canadian Pacific Railway company, which, he said, had done more than even the government itself to build up and encourage what he felt assured would prove to be Canada's most important source of revenue.

Mr. Bryce, M. P., said that the moral he drew from Mr. Rathbone's lecture was that Canada should profit by the mining experience of countries in other parts of the world. They would do well to set about their gold mining in a systematic way. Only these veins should be worked which it had been ascertained would be really profitable. (Hear, hear.) That was a moral of great importance to Canada, and it was of no less practical importance to the British investor.

### Toronto Board of Trade.

Toronto, Jan. 25.—The board of trade annual meeting was held this afternoon. Elias Rogers succeeded Edward Gurney, as president, by acclamation, and A. E. Kemp succeeded Rogers as first vice. For second vice and treasurer there were warm contests. M. E. Ellis was elected first vice and A. E. Ames treasurer, defeating Paul Campbell and Ald. John Hallam. The latter had waged a particularly hot fight against Ames, but was defeated by a large majority. Campbell and Hallam headed what was called the anti-gratuity fund ticket, being opposed to the insurance scheme which is connected with the board. Their platform was weak, however; in fact, the retiring council of the board had actually resolved to apply for the necessary legislation to wind up the fund.

Members of the council were elected as follows: Members of council, Edward Gurney, W. D. Matthews, E. B. Osler, H. M. Baird, Stapleton Caldecott, R. Wilkie, W. G. Gooderham, P. Howland, M. McLaughlin, J. Herbert Mason, C. Matthews, Thos. Dannett, James D. Allan, Geo. Keith and Henry Pellatt.

The retiring and incoming presidents spoke in hopeful tones of reviving trade and expanding commerce. Mr. Gurney advocated the establishment of a commercial agency in London. Mr. Rogers announced that the largest chicory producing firm in the world had decided to open a branch business in Ontario, having discovered that certain parts of Ontario are especially adapted to the growth of chicory. Both Gurney and Rogers advocated a Dominion insolvency law.