

BRITISH COLUMBIA FINANCIAL TIMES

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The reception of the public to the British Columbia Financial Times was too cordial and sincere to permit the idea that it comes into the orbit of interest in British Columbia to pass out into space again. This Journal is here to stay, and before long it will be recognized as a permanent institution, with steadily growing influence on the financial affairs of the Province. As an organ of investments it will always be an exponent of sound finance and conservatism.

We beg to thank the press for their kind notices both here, Victoria and throughout the Province, and in the East. Their welcome among the fraternity of publications was both cordial and kindly.

We trust that our readers will approve the change of type as some complaint was heard that the heavy type in the previous issue was trying to the eye.

We take pleasure in presenting to our readers two articles on the subject of oil. One by Dr. R. W. Brock, Deputy Minister of Mines, Ottawa, who has kept in close touch with developments in the Calgary fields. We cannot too highly commend to our readers' serious notice a careful perusal of this article. During a period of more or less inflamed imagination a calm statement of just what has been found, and what that find means is desirable. The article of Mr. R. C. Campbell-Johnston covers the geological history of oil, and conditions necessary to its occurrence, as well as the general geology of Alberta and British Columbia. The presence of the Kootanie group of sandstones absolutely fix the occurrence of oil.

While this is an investment journal, and is more concerned with the conservation of principal than is to be afforded by ventures in oil shares, mining shares, and new industrial enterprises, it nevertheless appreciates the necessity of pioneer work such as legitimate promotion within well defined and restricted limitations. We are of the opinion that the pioneer work so far as the sale of oil shares is concerned has gone far enough, if not too far.

Many oil promotions fail because of too heavy capitalization. Others fail because of inadequate available funds with which to prosecute the sinking of a well, and to provide for accidents which are all too common. It costs about \$20 per foot on the average to drill a well. Working night and day not over 20 feet per day can be drilled on the average. A well will have to be sunk at least 3,000 feet to determine whether oil does or does not exist on the property. Therefore, it will require at least \$60,000, and it will take at least 150 days of 24 hours' work, without loss of time or delay by accident to prove the existence of oil on the property.

An oil promotion should be sold on a prospectus pro-

perly sworn to. This prospectus should contain in the first place a signed statement from a reputable geologist stating what are the favorable indications for the sinking of a well on the property of the company. The prospectus should state and produce evidence of title to land or leases of land on which it is proposed to sink a well. This being produced satisfactorily the purchaser should investigate as thoroughly as possible the reliability of the promoters so as to determine the likelihood of the honest administration of the company's funds. With these safeguards taken it must thoroughly be understood that the venture is a gamble, except that the profits, if any, come out of generous Mother Nature.

With every period of excitement of this character there always occur the fraudulent. We think the long arm of the Attorney-General should be extended to investigate the promotions that are being, and will be made. We think that every promotion should satisfy the requirements of good faith, and should have evidence of title, if an extra-provincial corporation. British Columbia insists on title in its own promotions, and less than that in other provinces should not be permitted.

There is one cynicism we cannot point out with too much emphasis at this time, and it is this: "Stocks are made to sell."

The subject of an iron industry in British Columbia is very important to this Province. The paper we present on this subject is by Mr. N. Thompson, manager of Cammell, Laird & Co., who is a practical iron man of wide experience in the making of iron and steel, and one who has a very intimate knowledge of ore supplies and conditions of manufacture in this Province. He is firmly of the opinion that the time is ripe for a beginning to be made toward the establishment of an iron and steel industry in British Columbia.

While we are nearer a commencement of the Second Narrows Bridge project, the actual signing of a contract for its erection has not been done. With the cancellation of the contract of the Burrard Inlet Tunnel and Bridge Company with Sir John Wolf Barry, the directors are now open to the consideration of the alternate tenders submitted with the tenders of the former bridge. The company engineers are now going over the designs, specifications and tenders to determine whether the conditions are fulfilled or not. Rumor has it that the contract lies between the Western Foundation Company and the Dominion Bridge Company. In the former case the fabrication of the steel work will be done in Vancouver; in the latter case this fabrication will be done elsewhere. While we cannot presume to pass judgment, we are heartily in favor of stretching a point if necessary and keep this work in Vancouver. The local mills are certainly equipped and well able to handle this fabrication, and should the work be let here we are sure that it would be as satisfactory as if it were done in the east. The enhanced payroll certainly has a welcome sound during the dull times the mills are at present experiencing.

The Vancouver Chamber of Mines is a public spirited institution, devoted without any self interest to the promotion of the mining industry of British Columbia. Its officers and directors are men of high type who are sincerely devoted to the dissemination of reliable information, and who throw the weight of their influence against the wild-cat, and the illegitimate promotion of mining companies or ventures. Its members comprise the most substantial element in the community. Its meetings during the past winter have done more to promote publicity with the presentation of sound papers by eminent mining engineers and discussions on them, than any other agency that has been at work in this Province. The Chamber of Mines doing this public spirited work calls on the community for public support. It is behind in its accounts, and is in grave danger of passing out of existence unless these obligations are met. The City and Provincial Government as well as the citizens, should come to the support of so worthy an institution.