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THE MONTH.

EARLY in February the War Eagle and Centre Star, the Le Roi and the Hall Mines all closed down so far as the production of ore is concerned. The War Eagle and Centre Star reduced their force from 600 to 200 men, the Le Roi from 360 to 200, while the Hall Mines closed down entirely. This action was unquestionably premeditated and concerted, and has been undertaken to gain control of the labour situation. The rapid development of

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CLOSE DOWN
IN ROSSLAND
AND NELSON.

the mines in the Boundary country and for that matter in Rossland also, and the extraordinary activity of mining throughout the Pacific Northwest from which our miners in British Columbia are largely recruited, had caused such a demand for labour that employers found that to hire men at all was difficult, to get skilled men almost impossible. While labour, through the unions, went on from one demand to another, secure in the fact that the demand exceeded the supply, until the conditions under which mines could be worked at all had become exceedingly burdensome. The ostensible reasons given for closing down were not, except in one instance, that of the Hall Mines, connected with the labour question, but a close analysis of the condition of the different mines shows that this was the determining factor, barring

possibly the only case in which it was advanced as such. In the case of the War Eagle and Centre Star the excuse put forward was the heavy cost of mining through defective machinery. This is to a certain extent a valid reason for the action taken. The War Eagle hoist is alleged by the management to be defective, as likewise the new compressor plant to supply power to both the War Eagle and Centre Star. A number of small subsidiary steam compressors have to be maintained as auxiliary forces, while some tons of rock are hoisted and lowered every day in a compensatory skip to enable the hoisting machinery to do its work. This condition of affairs must have added something to the cost of every ton of ore mined and especially affected the Centre Star which could not fairly be asked to bear a proportion of the cost of the War Eagle's apparently disastrous experiment in electrical machinery. While on the other hand the War Eagle could not be expected to supply power to another mine at less than the cost, even if that cost were excessive. The remedy taken has been to close the production from both mines until the Centre Star is equipped with sufficient steam power to supply both and meantime to push ahead development in the properties during the breathing spell. But although this reasoning is conclusive so far as it goes, it does not by any means supply a sufficient argument for the heroic measures adopted. In the first place the blow given to the credit of British Columbia by the sudden stoppage of production is enormous and might be expected to weigh with Mr. Gooderham and his associates. In the second place the blow to their own credit as promoters of mining companies is severe. Look at the facts. That shareholders in the War Eagle have been led to expect a doubled dividend cannot be denied. If they have deluded themselves in this respect they have done so with the connivance of Mr. Gooderham. The rude awakening they have received is attested by the fact that War Eagle Consolidated dropped a dollar in the market on the news of the shut-down coming out. In addition to that it is not so long ago that the Centre Star was promoted for an enormous sum of money. It is hardly going too far to say that Mr. Gooderham and his associates invited the people of Canada to assume the burden of immediate trouble in connection with the mine at a time when the anticipations of such trouble was far from the minds of the people who subscribed for the shares. The comparatively small loss sustained by the increased cost of mining could have been much more easily borne than the staggering depreciation caused by the loss of confidence in the mines and by the all-persuasive doubt as to the integrity of their promoters. The case has only been made so dark against the controlling powers of the War Eagle and