

HON. MR. SLOAN'S VISIT TO OTTAWA. \$100,000 For Ore Testing Plant.

That the Dominion Government is providing \$100,000 for the establishment of an ore testing plant in British Columbia and that legislation is promised by the Federal authorities confirming the Provincial Government's action in throwing open Indian reservations for mining are two important announcements made by Hon. Wm. Sloan on his return to Victoria from the Canadian Capital recently.

In discussing with Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister of Mines for Canada, the matter of ore testing, Mr. Sloan pointed out the advantage of having the same established in connection with the University of British Columbia at Vancouver, B.C., and also suggested that an expenditure of \$100,000 was scarcely adequate, it being probable that twice that amount would be necessary in order that the best results might be assured. Mr. Burrell, in reply, explained that a further grant could be made later if such was found to be the case and that in the meantime the \$100,000 would permit a start to be made. As to the site of the proposed mill that was a question which had not been decided and the Dominion Minister could not concur in the view that it should be made an adjunct of the Provincial University. Mr. Burrell did not deny that it would be, if so placed, of great value in the technical training of western students while, at the same time, serving its purpose to the mining operators and the mining industry generally. But he took the position that if a precedent of the kind were established the central government would be called on to provide similar equipment in connection with all Canadian seats of learning. Mr. Sloan is extremely gratified that the Dominion Government has decided upon the construction of the plant although disappointed on the minor issue of its being made a part of the University. He thinks that it will prove a practical benefit of the utmost importance to those engaged in the development of the complex ores of some sections of the province, affording them a means of obtaining advice, without the expense and inconvenience of shipping ore to Ottawa for test, as to the most economical equipment to install for the treatment of the ores with which they are engaged.

Will Open Indian Reserves to Prospector.

As to the matter of Indian Reserves, of which there are large areas in British Columbia, Mr. Sloan informed the Dominion authorities that the province by legislation had thrown these lands open to the prospector, both under the terms of the Mineral and the Placer Acts, but that these amending Acts were inoperative until proclaimed law by the Lieut.-Governor. The latter's proclamation would be published when the Dominion Parliament passed confirmatory legislation, it being recognized that the Canadian Government was the final authority by virtue of being the guardian of the Indians. Mr. Burrell appeared to see no reason why reservations should not be opened and the Indian Department saw the matter in the same light. It, therefore, is promised that the necessary Dominion Legislation will be introduced at the session now in progress, whereupon Mr. Sloan asserts no time will be lost in recommending that these lands, which in many instances are highly mineralized and offer promising fields to prospectors, be declared free to the miner.

In the same category, almost, is the Dominion Railway Belt, a tract of land extending twenty miles on

both sides of the C. P. R. in this province, and within the limits of which the control of minerals is divided between the Province and the Dominion. The precious metals are vested in the Province and the base in the Dominion. Mr. Sloan represented to the Federal authorities that the administration of these minerals should be in the Province, that until this was done their development would be retarded, and that the present unsatisfactory condition was stultifying the advancement of the mining industry. The Dominion Government, however, did not commit itself, taking the view that immediate action was not imperative and that this had best be left in abeyance until it was decided what course would be pursued in respect of the demand of the Prairie Provinces that large sections of their lands, now in the hands of the central government, be returned.

Another matter taken up at Ottawa by the Provincial Minister was the report that it was intended to remove the duty on fuel oil, to which proposal the coal operators of British Columbia have entered vigorous protest. They contend that the local market would be affected and that, as it is, the mines are not working to capacity. Mr. Sloan states that the viewpoint of the western producers was appreciated and that, in his opinion, the existing duty was not likely to be radically changed, if any amendment were made. The Dominion Government now controlled a large railway mileage in this Province and no doubt would use British Columbia coal, if for no other reason than to patronize home industry. The demand for the removal or reduction of the duty comes from the Prairie Provinces.

In regard to oil flotation Mr. Sloan was much interested in a demonstration of what is termed the alkaline process which he witnessed at Brooklyn. He says that, as far as he could judge, good results seemed to be obtained. While the oil flotation method in the treatment of British Columbia low grade ores had been a success the necessity of importing the oil needed made it somewhat expensive, and there now was an agitation among the companies using it for the reduction of the duty on this oil. If the alkaline process, therefore, proved in practical use to give the results claimed for it the industry might reap a very material benefit. On the probability of otherwise of such a development, however, he was not prepared to commit himself until more was known of the economical possibilities of the new process.

THE GOLD MINES.

In the gold camps of the north, particularly Porcupine, Kirkland Lake, and Boston Creek, the situation is gradually adjusting itself in favor of the gold mines, and all signs point toward the probability of the next few months and years being the most active and profitable ever experienced in the gold mining industry of Canada. In a number of instances the larger mines are adding to the scope of operations, while in numerous instances small mines are opening. In the case of the Hollinger Consolidated, work has assumed great magnitude.

Coke Ovens at Cole Creek Closed Down.

The coke ovens of the Crownscast Pass Coal Company at Coal Creek have been closed down. Those at Michel, B.C., an adjoining colliery town, are expected to be able to produce sufficient to meet the present requirements.