

reality ascribable as hitherto asserted to the bonder's disappointment as to the value of the ore deposits.

A STICKEEN-
TESLIN
RAILROAD. The C.P.R.'s decision to operate a railroad between Telegraph Creek on the Stickeen and Teslin Lake should give lively satisfaction alike in Victoria and in Vancouver. It means

that the two cities will, by means of Canada's greatest railroad, command the best route to the Yukon and thus divert to British Columbia many thousands of far northern gold seekers. That the railroad will be constructed with the least possible delay is fairly assured by the fact that the contractors will be Messrs. Mann & Mackenzie, whilst the enterprise apparently secured the favourable consideration of the Dominion authorities.

The fact that Messrs. Mann & Mackenzie, who also control the Vancouver, Victoria & Eastern Railroad charter, are co-operating with the C.P.R. in the Stickeen River Railroad project goes far to show that as may some time since have been surmised, Canada's great railway company has at its command, or can have at its command, whenever desired, the Coast-Kootenay Railway charter. Few of the well-informed in Vancouver have ever believed that those behind the Coast-Kootenay scheme would succeed in floating and working their endeavour in opposition to the C.P.R.

MR. SKENE
AND THE
GOLDEN
CACHE. There is much comment in Vancouver over the changed attitude of Mr. Wm. Skene, Vice-President of the Golden Cache Company, who represents on its board the big controlling interest in the company, now held by

Mr. Mark Oldroyd, M.P., of London, England, and who is moreover considerably interested in the venture as a personal investor. Some time since on the first declaration of the disappointing results of recent crushings Mr. Skene gave vent to very pessimistic remarks concerning the future of the undertaking. He now, like others, declares himself of opinion that the mine's prospects are fair, provided only that there be good and economic management. The change of mind thus evidenced is probably, like that of the British Columbia public in general, due to fuller appreciation of the results of the fact that the later operations at the stamp mill quite failed to secure the full gold value of the ore treated, through circumstances which will in future be avoided. It is interesting to note as regards the Golden Cache, that one expert quite expects that the ore bodies will at greater depth prove to be largely composed of smelting ore, the gold being found accompanied by baser metals.

Meanwhile Superintendent Rives reports that his men have found and followed a new ledge, on which the drillings assay \$101.98 a ton in respect of two feet of the quartz and \$15.07 a ton as regards the contents of the other four feet of face matter. He regards this result as highly encouraging.

EXPERTS IN KOOTENAY.

NOTES BY A PROFESSIONAL ASSAYER.

OF late several Canadian mining journals have been adversely criticizing the men and methods employed in the acquirement of certain mining properties. Whilst the rush to form stock companies and purchase prospects continued the air was full of promises. But the time is now coming, Nemesis-like,

when the fulfilment of those promises will be demanded. But fulfilment does not appear in some cases to be near at hand, and consequent enquiry concerning the reasons thereof has brought forth the criticisms referred to.

It is pointed out by the *Canadian Mining Review* that the "open sesame" to professional engagement in the examination of British Columbia ore bodies has been "South African experience."

A visit to South African, West Australian or other far away free milling gold fields, does not serve as a very efficient preparation to deal with the smelting ore bodies of British Columbia. The origin, methods of working and manner of treatment of British Columbia ore bodies is to a great extent different from that of other parts of the British Empire. It is from the methods of mining as carried on in the mountain States to the south of the International Boundary that best object lessons are to be learnt. These ores and ore bodies are much of the same general character and are found under like conditions of a mountainous country; hence it is not extraordinary that the American miner and investor should succeed where the British investor fails. For instance, what does a Johannesburg man know of Slocan silver-lead mining and treatment? Johannesburg and up-country mining of South Africa afford no training for the Slocan. So we see Slocan silver-lead mines cited as bad investments in London. Whilst it is plainly proved that no mines in British Columbia give as large a margin of profit to those who understand how best to operate them, so let us pray that we will be delivered from the self-constituted and itinerant expert who has been over-running the country for the past three years with such deplorable results.

So much depends in the development of a surface prospect on the result of preliminary operations that "false" work may either damn a really valuable property or, on the other hand lead to a large expenditure uselessly. It may be safely premised that local men of respectable professional standing are very much less likely to be guilty of errors in judgment of this description than South African outsiders to whom responsibility carries with it no cares and the loss of reputation often is an impossibility.

THE QUESTION OF CHEAP ASSAYING.

Another question affecting, however, more especially the actual prospector is the matter of cheap assaying. One or two instances have occurred among local assayers in Southern Kootenay of "cut rate" prices coupled with unprofessional advertising. Now the conditions at present existing in British Columbian mining camps are such that the ruling prices for local assaying cannot be reduced and yet pay a fair price for careful work, hence a cut rate invariably means unreliable results. Of course I am only speaking now with regard to the moderately small assaying establishments of the mining camps. In the large works of industrial centres where labour is inexpensive and every possible appliance is provided, perhaps a reduction of the present prices asked might be made and yet leave an adequate remuneration for professional reliability. Meanwhile prospectors will do well to bear in mind that old saying about being "penny wise and pound foolish." The utility of an assay is only relatively valuable—a sort of guide generally to the possible worth of a prospect; unless, however, the assay returns are unquestionably correct the test were better not made at all. G.