

British Columbia Mining Critic.

"I am Nothing, if Not Critical."—Shakespeare.

British Columbia Mining Critic.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

Devoted to the Interests of Mining and the Protection of Investors.

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Letters from practical men on topics connected with mining, mining machinery, mining laws, and matters relating to the mineralogical development of Canada, are always welcome.

Manufacturers and dealers in appliances used in and about mines are invited to send illustrations and descriptions of new articles.

Views and descriptions of mines and mining localities solicited.

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THEY "MEAN BUSINESS."

There seems to be no doubt that, as already widely noted, leading men of the C. P. R. directorate intend actively to promote the smelting industry at a point or points on the Kootenay branch of their great transcontinental system. Mr. J. H. Sussman is now in West Kootenay, investigating closely for this purpose local and general conditions, as the advisory mining expert of the C. P. R. capitalists. He is naturally and properly not-committal as to possible points of location, but amongst other places the claims of Nelson, Slocan Crossing and Robson are not being overlooked in his survey of possibilities. The proposed smelting industry will be run in the closest and friendliest association with the great railroad, though probably not, as an integral part of its transport system. The smelter or smelters—for there may even be two—will run on supplies of customs ores, as the men of the C. P. R. do not intend to go into mining. They, however, rightly believe, that smelting is, when effectively conducted in such a precious metal country as West Kootenay, not only very profitable per se, but certain also to add abundantly to the freight

business and earnings of their great railroad.

Evidently British investors are now beginning to realise the big future before the C. P. R. in connection with the grain of the Prairies and the gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, coal, lumber and fish of British Columbia, for the value of the Company's stock is steadily rising and may, likely enough, at an early period reach par after falling no long time since, under temporary pressure of adverse circumstances, to points in the "forties."

The Company has a very big opportunity before it, and we hope that those who control it will not forget their indebtedness to B. C., as also to some of the humbler aides in their service and by adopting a broad and liberal policy, not merely add to the Company's none too large present stock of popularity, but also to its earnings. There is good money and will be better in improved local facilities and cheapened fares, as regards increasingly populous districts of British Columbia. The New Denver "Ledge" by the bye complains that "the coast papers are full of compliments to the C. P. R., "their patrons." The "Ledge" is in this respect unjust to some at least amongst us, who cannot rightly be accused of flattery to the C. P. R. or indulging in a macsycophant policy of "bowing" towards the directors of the great railroad. But we are very reluctantly compelled to recognise that whilst others here mean charter mongering, the C. P. R. means and does business, other than selling to the highest bidder Provincial and other charter rights. We on the Coast have—many of us—been fairly nauseated by platform clap-trap cries of "railroads for the people" ending in charter mongering deals with C. P. R. or other contractors. Better far if the great railroad has ultimately to gain statutory concessions of value, that it should acquire them at first hand and not at profit values, passed into the hands of charter broking intermediaries, posing as advocates of people's railroad ownership. The latter is good under honest and capable conditions of business management, divorced from politics, but it is clear as the day that Canada's politicians, whatever they say, have no intent to extend the country's limited state ownership of railroads and it is equally clear that the Dominion electorates as a rule know little of and that unfavorable, and care less at present for such a system. As a Coast paper we frankly face this

fact and admit that as between Mr. Heinze and Sir Wm. Van Horne we have no reason to prefer the former as a railroad magnate. The latter has the greater effective capacity, and is, therefore, likely to do more for B. C. in general and this Coast in particular than the former.

THE GALENA MINES FIASCO.

Mr. P. Comiskey is a gentleman, bearing a name rather suggestive of the commiseration called for by the trying position, in which he was recently placed, as Chairman of a general meeting in London of the shareholders of the Vancouver and British Columbia General Exploration Company, Limited. He then had, unlike Canning's "Needy knife-grinder," quite a "story to tell, sirs," and he told it in just as querulous a tone as the peripatetic razor sharpener of the classic satire. It mostly concerned the Galena Farm, which was to have been an immensely profitable galena mine, as assuredly it needed to be, to justify even in part the conditions of over-capitalisation and extortionate underwriting and general promoting profit, under which the concern first saw the light. But instead of proving very profitable, the Galena Farm, so says poor Mr. Comiskey, isn't developing satisfactorily at all. The lode is, we gather from his faltering words, somehow broken or twisted, and a deuce and all of a lot of zinc is found to be intermingled with the galena, which is by no means so rich as it at first seemed or was stated to be in a prospectus chequered of glazing assurances and exaggerations into veritable mountains of modest molehills of satisfactory first indications. There is now no doubt, says Mr. Comiskey, and in this we quite agree with him, that reports were in the first instance much exaggerated in regard to the amount of ore in sight, though for what purpose he in his simplicity could not say. Then, too, those glowing reports said nothing of the presence of a big body of zinc, rendering the ore most difficult and costly to treat. But there was, he said, hope still. Somebody knew—so he was told—of a new secret process for treating such zinc-bearing galena ores with equal efficiency and cheapness and there was a gentleman in the room who thought he could do something effective with the Galena Farm ore. And if the deposit proved rich enough even the zinc difficulty