

have very intimate professional associations with Mr. Helze and his colleagues of the Columbia and Western Railroad, and cannot therefore but regard it in a friendly way; true also that Mr. Helze is or has been "persona grata" with the Provincial Government members in general.

But the Hon. Col. Baker, M.P.P., is, as Minister of Mines, likely, however, associated as he now is with the C. P. R. in colliery and other industrial enterprise, to be by no means unfavorably disposed to Sir William Van Horne and his Company. And it is "quite in the cards" too that the Helze group of capitalists may in the end come to terms with their great railroad competitor, believing in this case that the maxim holds that "it is good to agree with thine adversary quickly"—when the latter is assuredly the stronger.

The Coast-Kootenay railroad projectors can probably be satisfied without grave difficulty by the C. P. R. and their possible opposition may therefore in all probability be regarded as "quantitatively negligible."

Prophecy as to public affairs is hazardous, in a world where, as a world renowned statesman once remarked, "the unexpected always happens." But this notwithstanding, we opine strongly to a belief that the result of the Turner-Van Horne conference will not in the end dis-appoint the C. P. R.

A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE.

Mr. Bratnaber, who has lately visited Alaska in the interests of the Rothschild syndicate, thus speaks from information carefully gathered as to the prospects of the Clondyke. He utterly repudiates the prophecy that the Clondyke will yield \$50,000,000 next year, and says:

"The district will probably produce five to six million dollars during the twelve months we are now entering upon. Considering the age of the camp and the stupendous difficulties to be overcome, \$6,000,000 will be highly creditable to the country and means that the prophesied \$50,000,000 may materialize in the course of a few years."

This is more like the possibilities of the case and bears out exactly what all old Cariboo miners have long asserted, viz., that the Clondyke, whilst a much harder and more expensive country, will probably not better the record of the famous Cariboo placers.

ASHCROFT WATER WORKS.

Now that Ashcroft is again becoming a busy mine supply centre and as such certain to grow speedily in population, waterworks are becoming increasingly necessary. Mr. Shields has, it is learnt, succeeded in raising the necessary capital and he will be in the work at once of putting in an adequate plant.

A TERRIBLE OUTLOOK.

It is just reported on the authority of many a fugitive miner making southwards as fast as he can to winter, that there are now nearly 7000 people in Dawson, with only winter supplies enough for about a third of them and no prospect of provisions getting in. As many will therefore leave as can, though the difficulty of emerging in the winter weather that has now closed in on the Yukon is very great. Grave disaster is consequently feared for many a Dawson, and the worst of consequences are also apprehended for many ill-supplied gold seeking wanderers that are yet on the mountain trails or in the passes. Hundreds, if not thousands, of poor deceived people who made for the Yukon all too late in the season will execrate the very name of the utterly conscienceless boom city of Seattle, which richly deserves in retribution to lose the expected large outfitting trade of the coming spring. Much of this will in any case be diverted to Vancouver, and some also to Victoria, as a result of the combined influence of Canada's import duties and the projected fast and easy rail, steamship and stage service which the C. P. R. will inaugurate ere April next via Vancouver, the Skeena river and Teslin lake.

MANAGEMENT OF MINES.

There is a class of people investing in mines, who, from a somewhat limited acquaintance with the present condition of the industry, imagine that the management of a mine is an occupation which any one, without former experience in the business of mining is capable of making a success. They seem to think that a mine is a synonymous term with a mine of wealth. That because mining is a great wealth-producing industry, their mine will be a flowing spring from which the wealth will pour out, under the management and supervision of a poor reeve who has failed in other lines of business. Investors with this idea are everywhere. They are not resident in the district possibly, the country is located, and naturally they are to be represented in the financial management of the concern by a friend or representative in whom they place implicit trust. This is a good motive, if their representative in charge has sense enough to know his own weakness, and hires a consulting mining engineer to periodically direct his actions and give the necessary technical advice, or employs an experienced manager who knows the mining and metallurgy of the ore the property produces, both of which ways are an extra expense on the mine. This failure of incompetency in mine management has been the most prolific cause of failure of British or foreign capital to earn dividends and make a success of the operation of all kinds of

mines, not only in the United States, but in other countries. Some capitalists do not seem to understand the fact that the successful operation of a mining concern in these times requires a long business training in mining, over and above the necessary qualification of ordinary commercial tact in trade and in the management of workmen.

The use of large plants in the operation of low grade ore has cheapened the mining and metallurgy of almost all minerals, and made experienced management necessary. The bonanza mine which is rich enough, so to speak, as to run itself, is not seeking a purchaser when it is found, for the owners know too well how scarce they are, and will not sell; they prefer to work on a small scale, and increase the enterprise from the profits of mining. At the present time the class of properties requiring the investment of more capital, are of the class which need the most experienced management.

The above quotation from the Metallurgical Journal, of Los Angeles, written with special view to the United States, quite as truly applies to B.C., where already some British capital is in several well-known cases remaining unproductive through lack of capable management.

THE WORLD'S SILVER PRODUCTION.

The past year's silver throughout the world approximated to 172,500,000 oz., compared with 169,180,000 oz. in 1895, 126,095,000 oz. in 1890, 91,610,000 oz. in 1885, and 74,735,000 in 1880. The United States and Mexico are, of course the two leading producers. Bolivia comes third with a year's return of 22,500,000 oz., Australasia comes fourth with a yearly return of 16,200,000 oz.; then Germany, with 6,100,000 oz.; Chile, 5,300,000 oz.; Spain, 3,600,000 oz.; Peru, 3,300,000 oz.; Canada, 3,140,000; Austria-Hungary, 2,300,000 oz.; Japan, 2,250,000 oz.; Colombia, 1,750,000 oz.

THE GREAT WESTERN, OF SLO-CAN.

On the 15th inst., the Two Friends Mine, Limited, of Vancouver, completed the final payment on this mine, and the Great Western is now the absolute property of the Two Friends Company. The price which was paid for the mine (\$50,000 in cash) is, it is believed, the largest cash consideration paid by any local company for its mine. Shipments continue steadily, and development is progressing favorably in No. 3 and 4 tunnels. The buildings for the men have been completed, also snowsheds, and are of a most substantial and comfortable character, and will enable the work in the tunnels to be carried on all winter. The directors are confident as to the increased prosperity of the Company.