

The Fernie Free Press

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H. G. WATSON, Editor. J. R. WALLACE, Manager.
THE FERNIE FREE PRESS,
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TO OUR READERS

This Journal has been in existence six years. It was started on a platform not one plank of which has been abandoned or weakened. The principles we advocated in our earliest issues are those for which we ask support today, and whatever our failings may have been our most exacting critic cannot charge us with inconsistency. We have always fought debauchery, gambling and vice and shall continue to do so. We have always fought unfairness and monopoly and are still engaged in the same conflict. We started as an independent journal and have maintained that position. We have fought the C. P. R. for lower freight rates and better accommodation. We have fought the Coal Company on the stores question and more than once when we considered they were wrong in connection with labor disputes we said so in no uncertain voice. We supported W. R. Ross, a conservative, for the Provincial legislature because we believed he was the best man offering for the position. We supported Fred Stork a liberal, for Mayor for the same reason. These are only a few of the instances which might be cited to show that we have been fearless and independent in our policy and have consistently advocated what we believed to be right regardless of the consequences.

It has been maintained that no newspaper can be successfully conducted on these lines. It has been cynically asserted that there must be a considerable admixture of venality if financial disaster is not to result. Our history and experience disproves this theory. In spite of the powerful interests we have at times antagonized we have continued to prosper and each year has found us stronger financially and in every sense. In other words our subscribers have recognized our singleness of purpose and have stood by us.

Because in a recent issue we reiterated the moral principles which it is our duty to enforce, and because we advocated a higher license fee than was at first proposed by the city council we have been attacked by a portion of the liquor interest and dire consequences have been threatened. Because we declared against what all know to be a common evil we have been charged with hostility to a legitimate trade. This is untrue and therefore unfair. We have never said one word against decently conducted hotels. We have always been against cheap saloons. We believe that the way to make the liquor business respectable is to make it too expensive for every Tom, Dick and Harry to get a license and so cut the profits that there is no inducement for the legitimate hotelkeeper to stay in the trade. As to gambling and vice there is surely no need to defend one's action in attacking them. All we urge is that the law should be enforced. Now we ask our readers to consider the situation, if they find anything inconsistent in our position we should like to have it pointed out. We do not for one moment believe that the miners whose reasonable demands we have always supported, or the merchants and other citizens for whose rights we have always stood, would have us one whit more mercenary or one whit less independent. We nailed our colors to the mast six years ago and they are still there. We have stood for independence of thought for the individual, good government for the people, and toleration for all things not inimical to the public weal.

The Department of Mines at Victoria has issued an official bulletin dealing with the mining industry in the province. The book is gotten out in good style with excellent cuts, one of which represents the Fernie Coal plant with the city in the background. The mining industry is treated in a comprehensive manner, with concise statements in figures wherever attainable. The output of the province in mineral wealth has grown from \$3,588,413 in 1893 to \$17,495,954 in 1903. In summing up the situation from last year's output the compiler says: In coal and coke Vancouver Island with its much older collieries leads but the Crows Nest Pass collieries are increasing their output at a

rate that will probably place them first next year if not this. More than three fifths of the lode gold came from Trail Creek (Rossland) Division with Greenwood Division (Boundary District) contributing more than one-fifth. The Slocan (including the adjoining Ainsworth Division) produced more than one-half the silver. The Boundary must be credited with more than one-half the copper production, Rossland coming next with about one-fourth, and Vancouver Island with one-fifth. Tee Slocan and Ainsworth produced nearly four-fifths of the lead, but it is probable East Kootenay will this year take first place in this metal, its big silver-lead mine (St Eugene) being now in operation after a shut-down of three years. Zinc should be worthy of a place in the production statistics for the current year. Mr. E. Jacobs contributes lengthy write-up on the Crows Nest Pass Coal fields. In the beginning of his article he says, "The economic importance of the immense coal fields of the Crows Nest Pass cannot well be over-estimated. It is believed that there exists in that region of British Columbia the largest and most important known coal fields west of Pennsylvania. To this may be added the claim that has been made that the quality of the coal occurring there is admitted by experts to be superior to that of any other bituminous coal yet discovered in large quantities west of the Alleghenies, and that its coking qualities are better than those of other coals in the West."

The date of the Kootenay elections has been fixed for Nov. 22nd. The nomination day will be Nov. 1st, two days before general election. The effect of having the nomination day before the general election will be to insure a contest. The Kootenay liberals are reasonably confident that their party will carry the country. The Conservatives, at least the optimistic Conservatives, entertain a hope that the Laurier administration will be defeated, and the Hon. Chas. McIntosh will be nominated to contest W. A. Gallihers re election.

The proposed nominee for the Socialist party in Kootenay is well known in Fernie where as a member of the Executive of the Western Federation of Miners he took a prominent part in the two strikes which occurred at these collieries.



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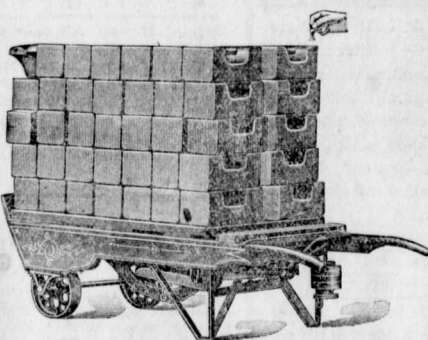
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