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D. M. CARLEY - - - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

L. G. HENDERSON - - BUSINESS MANAGER.
Office—No. 77 Johnson Street.

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B. C. MINERALS.

We are very well pleased to see that at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute held in London, England, on the 14th March ult., Dr. George M. Dawson, who has done a considerable amount of geological surveying in this province, being, perhaps, one of the best posted men in Canada on the subject, presented a paper in which considerable attention was paid to the mineral wealth of British Columbia. He stated, as is well known to many, that in 1851 a discovery of gold was made on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and in 1857 employees of the Hudson's Bay Company found gold on the banks of the Thompson River, which is a tributary of the Fraser. This, within three months, brought 20,000 people to the spot, and before long the Cariboo country was reached which proved to be one of the richest placer mining districts ever found. Although not so extensively worked of late years, Cariboo yielded in 1882 as much as \$200,000 worth of gold. Altogether British Columbia has contributed to the wealth of the world \$50,000,000 worth of bullion. Dr. Dawson testified to what the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway had done for the mineral development of this province, remarking that had it traversed the Cariboo country, we should doubtless have been enabled to note greater developments there.

In his essay, Dr. Dawson dwelt at considerable length on the coal fields of British Columbia, the article for quality being able to hold its own against all competitors. Though the provincial coal production has been mainly confined to the Nanaimo district and along the Pacific coast, deposits of good bituminous coal are known in the inland region, one of the most remarkable of the undeveloped fields being that of the Crow's Nest Pass where a large number of superposed beds of exceptional thickness and quality have been defined. The Doctor went on to say that the coals of British Columbia represent, in regard to quality and composition, every stage from hard and smokeless fuels, such as anthracite, to lignites and brown coals like those of Saxony and Bohemia. Moreover, their very general distribution in different parts of the province is of peculiar importance when considered in connection with the building of railways and the mining and smelting of metalliferous ores, as it insures the most favorable conditions for the development of these ores.

The silver bearing ores of the province were dwelt upon by the learned lecturer at

great length, and, so far as they have yet been examined or opened up, the metalliferous deposits of the Kootenay district—the immediate centre of interest in mining in British Columbia—give every evidence of exceptional value. Besides, the circumstances, which have for the last few years retarded the development of the Kootenay country, are now passing away, and there can be no reasonable doubt that in the next year or two this country will establish its place as one of the most important, not only in British Columbia, but in North America as a whole. "For a man," said the Doctor, "with some knowledge of mines and mining and the command of even a limited amount of capital, who will visit and live in the district himself for a time, the opportunities for a profitable investment are excellent. Moreover, within a few years this province of Canada will undoubtedly hold an important place in the list of quotations of mining stocks in London and elsewhere, and then the further development of its mines will become a subject of common interest from day to day."

But, while the more important products of this western mountain region of Canada are, and seem likely to be, gold, silver and coal, its known minerals are, the lecturer stated, already so varied, that, as it becomes more fully explored, it seems probable that few minerals or ores of value will be found to be altogether wanting. But, as the Doctor says, universal development has been much retarded by the remoteness and difficulties of reaching some of the most important mining fields, it is to be hoped that ere long this will be all removed; and the policy of railway building which has been inaugurated and is now being carried out, cannot fail to have the effect of giving an important impetus to what has already been begun and successfully carried on under such difficulties.

LOBSTERS AND OYSTERS.

Recent reports from the Maritime Province state that the 1893 season for lobster fishing and packing will be a short one; shorter, if anything than that of the years 1882 and 1891. Legal restrictions confine the fishing to the months of May and June, and judging from the experience of several seasons, it is doubtful if the catch of lobsters will exceed the moderate average of the past few years. The fishermen now ask \$1.75 per 100 lbs. against 50c. accepted for several years. This bespeaks an increase of prices to which no one who desires to see lobsters more efficiently protected will object, as so long as they are cheap, or comparatively so, the public will demand to be supplied with this most delectable crustacean. The sooner the pocket nerve of consumers is made to pulsate in sympathy with the declarations of the economists the sooner will the lobster be properly protected and the longer will it continue in existence, at least as a table luxury. Too much cannot be done in connection with the preservation of the eastern oyster, which is getting scarcer every year, and if consumption goes on at the same rate as at present, with no care of the beds in which it lives and breeds the little Olympian must at no distant date be a thing to be little more than read about.

DOMINION PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Since our last issue the announcement has come from Ottawa that the Dominion Parliament had voted \$100,000 in the supplementary estimates towards the erection of a Custom-house and Postoffice. The estimated cost of the building, including the site, was, according to Mr. Ouimet, \$200,000. Of this \$82,000 was to purchase a site, the property on which the Canada Western Hotel was to have been built having been selected. It has been stated that all the site itself actually cost was \$30,000 and \$35,000 for the extensive excavations which have been made there, leaving a profit for some one of close upon \$20,000. Why this sum should be paid we cannot think, since the hotel project is about as dead as Father Abraham, and in consequence the property has been lying idle, figuratively speaking eating off its head in the way of interest on the money expended. Their scheme having proved abortive, the hotel projectors ought to have been content to sell at less than cost, glad to be rid of a bad bargain inasmuch as property is certainly not increasing in value if it be not depreciating. Who worked the little scheme may be asked and by whom is the advance on cost to be absorbed? Seventeen thousand dollars of advance on this transaction or more than 25 per cent. is too big a price to pay, as other property might be had at a lower figure. The present custom house might well be enlarged, while the extension of the post office towards Langley street and an economical lay out of the building would have met all the demands, the site being far more central than the one proposed.

CAUSES OF FAILURE.

Recently, in its comparisons of failures in the different years, Bradstreet's has been endeavoring to discover their cause. Insufficient capital is the great source of failures in both countries, but this is especially true of Canada. While in the United States last year, 32.5 per cent of all the failures were caused by lack of capital, in Canada no less than 65.1 per cent are set down to this cause, or about double as many failures or this account as takes place in the United States. This indicates that persons without sufficient capital can obtain credit to start out in business. The cause which leads to the second largest number of failures is incompetence, which is said to cause 18.6 per cent of the total failures in the States, and 4.7 per cent in Canada. To inexperience 5.2 per cent of the failures in the United States are attributed but only 1.6 in Canada. Fraud caused 10.3 per cent of the disasters among our American neighbors, 5.2 being the proportion of Canada. Commercial disasters in Canada led to 19.2 failures in the United States, the figure for Canada standing at 11.3. On the whole the statement shows a higher percentage of business probity here, though as we have shown the undue and excessive amount of credit accorded tells very heavily against us. In Canada, from 1890 to 1892, the proportion of failures, because of lack of capital, increased from 55.8 to 65.1 per cent., from disaster from 5.9 to 11.3 per cent., from fraudulent disposition of property from 1.8 to 5.2 per cent.