

in which the dust on the roads is largely composed of non-inflammable material, and gas, if it does come off, may rise to the higher parts of old wastes where it is unlikely to be disturbed. In one case with which the writer is acquainted gas fired by a shot-lighter burnt out in the roof of the "goaf" without spreading at all, and gas lit by the spark from a petroleum pump burnt along the roof of the slope (packed goaf) without finding a particle of coal dust to hang on to. The writer spent several months experimenting with various new explosives in gassy mines in England, and out of many thousand shots fired never saw the least sign of a spark. The worst feature of these new nitro-explosives is the fumes, which require good ventilation and all shots to be fired nearly at one time to drive them off.

As we go to press an important announcement is made of a rich strike of ore at the Silver King mine, by Mr. M. S. Davis, who last year leased the property from the Hall Mining & Smelting Company. It is said that Mr. Davis has by this discovery, encountered the main lead which was lost in 1897, and that the values are very high. We sincerely trust that this report will prove to be true, as under the terms of the lease, the Hall Mining Company can under certain conditions resume operations at the mine, and in consequence may yet have a successful career. Some short time ago a London financial paper made an attack on the company, suggesting fraud, on account of the arrangement with Mr. Davis. We gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity to declare the insinuation to be absolutely foundationless, the company having only ceased to operate the mine upon the advice of two independent mining engineers who were called in to report.

The shareholders of the Snowshoe Gold & Copper Mines, Limited, have every reason to be satisfied with the position of affairs as explained at the second ordinary general meeting last month. The mine is being developed, under a good and careful management, in a very satisfactory manner, and ultimately will without doubt pay handsomely. If all British-owned mines in British Columbia had been administered in the same way as is the Snowshoe, the proportion of successes to failures would have been entirely reversed. The chairman referred in his speech to the "unjust two per cent. tax." This tax bears exceptionally hard on the Snowshoe Company, although the ore is of somewhat higher grade value than most of the other large mines in the Boundary District. The reason for this is, that the Snowshoe has not yet, probably with justifiable caution, followed the example of the other Boundary companies in the matter of estab-

lishing its own smelting works; but we gather that this step is now under contemplation. We have, meanwhile, strong reasons for believing that the Government has already decided to abolish the tax in question, or rather suspend taxation on mines until conditions improve.

It is reported that the Cariboo Consolidated Company has leased, with the option of purchase, the property and works of the ill-fated Golden River Quesnell, on the Quesnell lake and river. As Mr. Hobson never believed that the latter concern could be successfully undertaken, on the grounds that the river had been thoroughly wing damed and mined both by whites and Chinese in the pioneer days, the idea of the present lease is probably that a utilization may be made by conveying to the Cariboo mine the water from Quesnell Lake, at the foot of which the large dam was constructed.

In British Columbia, and in Rossland in particular, the London directorate boards of both Le Roi and Le Roi No. 2 have been suspiciously regarded, the exit of Mr. Whittaker Wright notwithstanding. It has been thought for some time, whether rightly or wrongly, that the mines were being worked with a view more to stock-manipulating purposes rather than with the legitimate object of earning dividends for shareholders, and quite recent events have not tended to better opinion in this regard. We are, therefore, glad to note the election of such men as Mr. G. S. Waterton and Mr. Anthony J. McMillan to directorate positions on the Le Roi Board. It is some assurance at least that this mine will be managed in the future in an honest and businesslike manner.

The half-yearly report of the Mount Lyall (Tasmania) Coy's Reduction Plant should be worth studying. It appears that economies have been effected as the result of experience admitting of the smelting by two furnaces at No. 2 plant of 1,000 tons per day, entirely without coke; at No. 1 plant one furnace is running without coke, the other will be ere long. A saving has thus been made of at least \$100,000 per annum. Furthermore, by reducing the amount of hot air used in the furnaces the number of men firing hot air stoves has been cut down from 24 to 6, and in a few months it is hoped hot air will not be required at all. The air from six blowers is now concentrated into two furnaces, instead of four or five. From the condensed report from which the above is taken it would seem as if the company would soon be able to smelt without furnaces.