

done, of methods used, of mistakes, and of successes, makes the days and months of early labour infinitely more interesting and valuable. A man's career thus becomes an organic and coherent whole, instead of a disconnected series of incidents.

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The CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL extends to the mining student its heartiest good wishes. May the sessions of 1911-1912 be more instructive than ever before.

THE ENGLISH STEEL INDUSTRY.

Bound by conditions imposed by the International Steel Rail Syndicate, English rail manufacturers are facing a grave situation. The Syndicate is composed largely of Great Britain's competitors. By mutual agreement, no quotations are made below certain figures. In itself this is a sane arrangement. Unfortunately the Syndicate does not now control the world's production. In the year 1907 it had practically all the large producers in a solid phalanx. Since that year, however, large independent concerns in Canada, the United States, and Russia have come into the international market. These new unfettered competitors have brought about a condition that imperils very seriously the steel trade of England. This will be understood when it is stated that Russia has sent rails to Ireland, and Canada has filled contracts in England. England, in other words, is prevented from poaching, but is forced to suffer it.

During the immediate past England's steel trade has been steadily losing ground. Germany, the United States, and Belgium have gained ground. Fourteen years ago England exported about 600,000 tons of steel rails; last year she exported only 435,000 tons. This is true despite the fact that English manufacturers have modernized their plants in every respect.

Present circumstances show that Judge Gary's suggestion of world-wide syndication will hardly appeal to England. The present agreement expires in March next. Until then the English manufacturer must be content to see his rivals forge ahead whilst he remains in statu quo. After the expiry of the syndicate agreement it is highly improbable that England will do anything but hoe her own row, and mind her own business without reference to her competitors.

SICILIAN SULPHUR.

Including the island of Sicily, there are in Italian territory more than 400 producing sulphur mines. Of a total annual output of crude ore exceeding 2,800,000 metric tons, Sicily is credited with more than 2,600,000.

The Sicilian sulphur occurs in argillaceous limestone, associated with gypsum and bituminous marl. The crude ore is brown or yellow in colour. The indication sought for by the miner is the presence of "boiscale," a yellow, porous, crystalline alteration product resulting from the oxidation of the sulphur

and the action of the sulphuric acid thus formed upon the limestone.

The crude ore contains 25 per cent. of sulphur. Extraction is simple. The ore is burned in beehive ovens, or in "calcaroni"; or it is treated with superheated steam. Three grades of sulphur are exported, the first being practically pure, and each of the two other grades being thrown into three sub-grades—"vantageata," or best; "buona," or good; and "corrente," or current.

The effect of the competition offered by Louisiana is seen when it is noticed, that in 1902, the United States and Canada imported about 177,000 metric tons of sulphur from Sicily, whilst in 1909 the imports were only 16,972 metric tons.

MR. THURBER, REDIVIVUS.

An indignant correspondent, evidently a loyal friend of Mr. Thurber, writes us to the effect that we have wrought gross injustice upon that long-suffering person. The accusatory letter has been printed in full on another page. A little explanatory comment will not be out of place.

About two years ago, or more, Mr. Thurber induced some citizens of Kenora to back financially his efforts to extract more gold from ores and rocks than nature had placed there. Or, to put it more fairly, Mr. Thurber asserted that all modern methods of gold extraction, including even the fire-assay, were incomplete and inaccurate, and that he himself could obtain several times the amount even obtained by ordinary workers. Naturally Mr. Thurber failed to substantiate his claims, although he was given every chance.

Now he has former an unholy alliance with a stock-jobbing concern in Winnipeg, and again his process has been advertised.

Our correspondent inveighs against us for our narrowness in refusing to encourage a worthy inventor. Our attitude is attributed to professional jealousy. He makes the mistake here of thinking that any inventor who works in the dark and also aids in bleeding the public can be taken seriously. If Mr. Thurber's process is revolutionary it is also patentable, so that even did we wish to misappropriate his invention it would hardly be feasible to do so. It must be confessed, however, that our time is pretty fully occupied with our various duties. Reasonable doubts exist in our editorial mind that we would swipe Mr. Thurber's secrets in any circumstances. The temptation does not touch us on a weak spot—otherwise the inventor might possibly not be safe. As matters stand, we can assure both correspondent and inventor that they can put everything on the table without danger. We shall go farther. We shall guarantee to have Mr. Thurber and all his heirs and assigns pensioned comfortably for life if he can show the goods. This is not a costly offer. Ourselves also would be furnished with a much-needed bank reserve.