

The Colonist.

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1897.
THE B. C. SOUTHERN.

So much has been said and so much misrepresentation has been sent abroad concerning the B. C. Southern railway company, its charter and its subsidy that it is time, not only for the information of those persons in this Province, who appear either never to have known or to have completely forgotten the history of this project, but also for the enlightenment of that section of the Eastern press which affects to see a huge scandal in the relations of the company to the provincial government, to give a brief resume of the whole transaction from the beginning. In doing so we feel confident that the case when honestly presented will afford a conclusive answer to carping critics at home and interested scandal-mongers elsewhere. The transaction is one that may be examined in the Roentgen rays of the most searching investigation without the chance of discovery of any rotteness or even of any attempt on the part of its promoters or anyone else to take the slightest advantage of the government, the legislature or the people of British Columbia.

In the year 1887, Col. Baker, who was then a member of the British Columbia legislature, but not a member of the government, in company with another, discovered the coal lands near the Crow's Nest Pass and made application for 10,000 acres of land under the laws of the province as they then, and had for some time, existed. In the regular course of business Col. Baker and his associates purchased the land for which they had applied. Afterwards they organized the Crow's Nest Coal Company, which is still in existence and which contemplates an expenditure of at least half a million dollars for the development of its property and the erection of coke ovens. In this company Messrs. Cox and Jaffray, of Toronto, have purchased an interest. The company, in order to remove all obstacles to the construction of the railway, have agreed to sell their coal at a certain fixed price, which is very moderate, and the Canadian Pacific has agreed, on its part, that in the event of that company constructing the road to haul the coal at a certain specified rate. That is all there is in the matter of the coal company, which, be it remembered, is purely a business organization, wholly distinct in every way from the B. C. Southern railway company. This reference to the affairs of this company, which are in point of fact the private affairs of the stockholders, is made so that no one can say that in the statement in regard to the B. C. Southern, which follows, the Crow's Nest Coal Company has been purposely omitted. The above statement of facts, which is literally correct, shows simply that the discoverers of coal lands obtained them in the ordinary way under the provincial laws, and are proceeding to exploit them in a perfectly legitimate business manner.

In the year 1888 the Crow's Nest Pass Railway Company were organized to build a line from the summit of the Pass to Kootenay Lake, a distance of about 175 miles. The charter was granted to Col. Baker, Col. Prior, Mr. Pemberton and others. The desirability of constructing the road was brought under the attention of Manager Van Horne of the C. P. R., but he declined to entertain the matter on the ground that his company had no interest in that direction. An effort was made to obtain the necessary capital in London, and afterwards in New York, but though the project met with a good reception, it was thwarted by Canadian Pacific influence, for that company, though not then ready to build the road, was not prepared to welcome another Richmond in the field. Later in the same year Mr. Van Horne was persuaded to look into the matter and he dispatched Mr. Reid, G. E., in 1889 to make an observation survey. His report was very favorable. In 1890, in consequence of representations made on behalf of the company, Mr. Stewart, C. E., was directed by the C. P. R. to make a detailed survey. His report more than confirmed that of Mr. Reid. Up to this time the company simply had the naked charter without any subsidy whatever.

In 1890 there was a general demand upon the government for land grants, in aid of railways, and a measure was introduced into the house, and passed, granting 20,000 acres of land per mile to five railway lines, of which the Crow's Nest Pass railway was one. Col. Baker was then a member of the house, but not of the government. He explained that, being interested in one of the companies subsidized, he would not vote on the measure, and did not do so. This subsidy of 20,000 acres per mile was for the 175 miles from the Summit to Kootenay Lake. It was to be taken in alternate blocks, but inasmuch as most of the land along the line of the railway was considered to be of no practical value at that time the company was given its subsidy in the coal district.

In 1891, Mr. Corbin, of the Spokane & Northern proposed to build the road, and went to Ottawa to obtain a subsidy. He said he would not build the line unless the charter authorized him to ex-

tend it to the coast. The legislature accordingly granted the power asked for, but no land grant went with the extension. In order to strengthen Mr. Corbin's hands at Ottawa a resolution was passed under a suspension of the rules by the British Columbia legislature asking that the subsidy be granted. When this resolution was read in the railway committee Sir John Macdonald arose and said that the unanimous wish of the British Columbia legislature could not be ignored. The matter fell through, however, because Mr. Corbin would not agree to the terms imposed.

Up to this time, that is, 1892, the promoters had spent \$38,000 on surveys and other preliminary expenses, and were unable to go any further without assistance. As the charter was soon to expire it was felt that another effort must be made to interest men of strong financial standing in the East, so an arrangement was made with Messrs. Gault, Hanson, Howland and Findlay, of Toronto, to take a controlling interest in the charter and construct the road forthwith, one of the conditions being that \$40,000 should be spent at once on surveys. This was agreed to, and a party was sent on to make the location survey, which was made, and it is upon the line then located that the railway will be built. As work was thus in progress the company were in a position to ask for an extension of the charter which was granted in the session of 1892-93. The financial depression which set in during 1893 completely paralyzed the efforts of the Toronto people, who were interested in the project. As is well known, many of the leading American railways went into the hands of receivers in that year and it was simply impossible to raise money in any financial centre for railway construction. So matters drifted along. In 1895 the several acts relating to the corporation were consolidated and in 1896 the legislature again extended the charter. During 1896 an option on the construction of the road for six months was given, but the party who obtained it was unable to finance the project.

This is the whole history of the enterprise up to the negotiations now or lately pending with the Canadian Pacific for the construction of the railway. It contains the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. If there is anything in the facts as stated above, which reflect either upon the good faith or good judgment of the British Columbia government, there is no help for it; but we fancy that no man who possesses the rudimentary instincts of fair play will claim that, in the whole matter, from beginning to end, a single step has been taken by the government which exposes it to censure or even adverse criticism. The B. C. Southern was treated no better, and in fact not nearly so liberally as other railway companies. The policy of the government in regard to the company was discussed over and over again on the floor of the house. Everything was done openly and above board and in the full light of day, and although the Turner administration is not responsible for either the granting of the charter or for the giving of the subsidy, it need not hesitate for a moment in accepting the full responsibility involved in extending the charter and the company's privileges under it. As for Col. Baker and the other gentlemen interested in the project, they have simply done as anyone else would have done under the same circumstances. Having obtained the right to build a piece of railway which would increase the value of their interests, they have sought to have the line built; and when they were disappointed through causes not within their control, they have sought and obtained extensions of their charter in a properly legitimate and regular manner. They have spent what money they could command in prosecuting the work and if they have been able to make arrangements which will now secure the construction of the road it will be an excellent thing for the province and we hope an excellent thing for them. We think we are violating no confidence, however, when we say that by far the principal advantage to the original promoters of the enterprise will be from the opening up of a market for the output of the coal lands which they discovered and acquired from the province by purchase in the regular way and upon which they have paid already \$5,000 in taxes.

A GREAT DISCOVERY.

We reprint elsewhere from the Roseland Miner the result of a test of ten tons of low grade Le Roi ore, to which brief reference was made in our telegram. The result is of a very satisfactory character. It would not be wise to jump hastily at any general conclusion, but it is what proved true of the ten tons of Le Roi rock holds good of any considerable proportion of other low grade British Columbia ores, we are faced to face with possibilities that are simply limitless. The miner says "it is clearly within the range of possibility that ore assaying from \$2 to \$5 per ton may be worked."

The whole mining community has been looking forward to the discovery of a method for treating low grade ores and the most hopeful anticipations have been indulged in as to the consequences that would flow from it. The experiment with the Le Roi ore may not fully settle the question, but it is the first step and a long one in that direction. It proves

that some of the low grade ores are free-milling and concentrating. What proportion such ores bear to the whole remains to be determined. There are probably many deposits on the Coast that would yield good results from similar treatment.

OUTPUT AND REVENUE IN KOOTENAY.

We print below a summary of the imports and exports at the port of Nelson during February. The amount of duties collected is somewhat less than in January, but this is in part accounted for by the fact that there were fewer business days in February. The fact that in the two months in the dead of winter the customs duties of which Nelson is the port of entry contributed over \$37,000 to the federal revenue shows what an important factor the business of our mining districts is going to be, and strengthens the argument for further development. It will pay the Dominion government to open with railways a country which at the very beginning of its progress contributes so great a sum to the revenue.

Comparing the exports of ore and matte with those made in January, we note an increase both in the tonnage and value of ore shipped and a slight decrease in the shipment of matte. The ore that went out via Revelstoke shows a steady increase. In December the value was \$34,012; in January \$85,200, and it will be observed that the shipment for the short month of February was valued at \$87,354. The total output of ore and matte from Kootenay during the first two months of the year thus amounts to \$1,410,913, which is more than half as great as the total output of gold, silver, copper and lead in Canada during the calendar year 1895. We quote the following summary from the Nelson Tribune:

Value of Exports.		
Durable goods.....	\$ 33,000	
Free goods.....	200	
Total.....	\$139,138	
Value of Imports.		
The mines (\$370 tons of ore.....)	\$301,428 00	
Copper, matte (631 tons.....)	201,401 00	
Animals and their produce.....	73 00	
Manufactures.....	1,001 00	
Miscellaneous.....	2,093 00	
Total.....	\$506,900 00	
Of the above exports ore and matte represent \$662,553. The ore and matte exported during January through the port of Nelson was valued at \$875,536, and during the same period there was exported from the Slokan through the output of Revelstoke ore to the value of \$172,378. This makes the total value of Kootenay's shipments \$1,410,913 for the first two months of 1897. The ore that went through Revelstoke is given as follows:		
	Tons.	Value.
Slokan Star.....	480	\$ 36,846
Enterprise.....	200	28,138
Stude.....	20	28,883
Star.....	10	1,017
Enterprise.....	320	25,138
Slokan Star.....	320	25,138
Enterprise.....	100	21,179
Stude.....	20	2,407
Mountain Chief.....	120	2,407
Fisher Maiden.....	20	1,800
Total.....	1897	\$172,378

There is a good deal of talk in the Eastern papers about the agreement that the boundary of Alaska shall begin at the summit of Mount St. Elias, instead of at the point where the 141st meridian intersects the Alaskan panhandle. From this point the line will be drawn so as to meet the meridian at a distance of 20 miles from the summit of the mountain. This involves the surrender by Canada of 45 square miles of territory on the north-west slope of the mountain, a matter of no very great moment probably, as the most of it is undoubtedly covered with eternal snow.

The Toronto Star speaks of the Crow's Nest Pass as "the one remaining and available portal to the Pacific." It is a pity that the Star would not take the trouble to find out just a little about the geography of this country. When did the Yellow Head Pass and the Pine River Pass cease to be "available portals to the Pacific"? Probably when it comes down to a simple question of transcontinental traffic both these "portals" will be found to be far more "available" than either the Kicking Horse or Crow's Nest passes.

A cry is going up from the American press for an immediate assertion of the rights of American citizens in Cuba. It has been well pointed out by some of the more level-headed papers that there is a distinction between a person who is the citizen of another country and engages in lawful business in Cuba, and one who becomes naturalized in the United States simply that he may have some privileges as a rebel that are not available to ordinary Cubans.

The Portland Oregonian regrets that Congress did not pass a law prohibiting the carriage by the United States mails of papers giving accounts of prize fights, and then to show how it despises news of that kind, prints a column and a half about the sayings and doings of Corbett and Finnemore.

Three times this morning the incident occurred in the legislature on Thursday is a serious reflection on the government. Since this matter has been opened up, when did it become the prerogative of

Mr. Speaker to require the representation of the Crown to wait upon him, and when did it cease to be the prerogative of the Crown or the representative to summons Mr. Speaker into its presence?

The indications of a great influx of people to Kootenay grow stronger every day. One of the representatives of an important Eastern road said to-day that he expected to see a greater boom than Cripple Creek witnessed in its palmy days. He had lately visited Kootenay and could hardly find words to express his surprise at the evidences of coming greatness observable on every hand.

The Cretin news continues exciting. In fact the identical note of the powers of waste paper. Things cannot long continue at the present rate, and what will happen next is beyond the grasp of any one. Any day may bring news that the peace of Europe has been broken.

Apocryphos of the woman's suffrage movement in the Province it may be mentioned that a bill to enfranchise widows and spinners has been introduced into the New Brunswick legislature. Why married women should be omitted from its provisions is not very clear.

The people of Northport, Wash., have given up all hope of a smelter to handle Kootenay ore now that the McKinley duty on ore is to be restored. What's one man's meat is another man's poison. If the ore cannot be smelted in the United States it will be in Canada.

If the British government withdraws from the European concert, there will not be very much left of it.

THE CANADIAN PRESS.

LET THE C. P. R. BUILD IT.

The general attitude of the Kootenays favors the construction of the Crow's Nest railway under almost any conditions. It may be said, too, that they favor the construction by the Canadian Pacific, believing that the service would be more generally satisfactory. The Kootenayan.

MR. HEINZE'S PLANS.

The Miner published the news a month ago that F. Aug. Heinze would extend his railway from the Columbia river as far west as Penticton and thence probably to Vancouver. It now transpires that he will do so at an early date. Instead of the people at the Coast building a railway to Kootenay, Mr. Heinze, of Kootenay, will build a railroad to the Coast. Thus, the good folk of Victoria fall in the promotion of the only worthy railway scheme that they ever attempted.—New Miners.

FORTUNATE VERNON.

It will astonish nobody if many of the mineral districts in the vicinity of Vernon turn out to be in the course of the next year or so divided paying mines and, Le Roi has some wonderful showings at Camp Hewitt, and reports therefrom have recently been most encouraging. The people of Vernon seem to have been blessed with more than a fair share of Nature's bounties.—Boundary Creek Times.

BY WAY OF VARIETY.

"How did Nell Glynn look in her new ball dress?" she asked. "I don't know," that was out of it looked stunning." Cleveland Leader.

Master Vell, Tommy, you were not present yesterday. Where were you? In consequence of the inclemency of the weather. Tommy—No, sir; 'cause of the rain.—Tit-Bite.

CHEAP MONEY FOR FARMERS.

To the Editor:—In this morning's Colonist I noticed a letter signed "Cumtux," calling attention to the cheap money (so called) for the farmer. From first to last his arguments against the lending of money to farmers on the security of their holdings, and for the purpose of improvements upon them, are absolutely so. He starts by depicting the farmer grovelling before the lender while asking for a loan. Now why should the farmer have to show his holdings in order to get a loan of cash. If he has to, surely there is something "rotten in Denmark," for another earth and the cattle that graze upon her are as good security as the security of their holdings, and for the purpose of improvements upon them, are absolutely so. He starts by depicting the farmer grovelling before the lender while asking for a loan. Now why should the farmer have to show his holdings in order to get a loan of cash. 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