

From present appearances, the production of the precious metals, notably of gold, will in the near future far surpass anything that has occurred in the past. Dr. Geo. F. Bricker, a member of the United States geological staff, who has recently returned from the Transvaal, where he went as an expert for a Franco-English syndicate, brings glowing accounts of the golden treasure there, which is capable of being reduced to working estimates. To quote his own words, "the gold that is practically in sight is worth \$8,500,000,000," an amount which he states to be "nearly as much as the present volume of the world's gold coin." This vast mass of gold is all to be found within 15 miles of Johannesburg; and his examinations convince him the gold region extends 1,200 miles, and is probably quite as rich as the neighborhood of Johannesburg. This probability ought, perhaps, to be reduced to a bare possibility; but even so, there is nothing to make unworthy of belief the estimate that, within a quarter of a century, the Transvaal alone may produce gold equal in quantity to the whole stock of gold coin now in the world.

Other countries than South Africa promise, in the near future, to add immensely to the world's stock of gold. A few days ago there was shipped from one point in the Siberian mines of Russia 7,200 lbs. of gold. It would not be at all surprising, from what is now known, if British Columbia were within a few years to equal the gold production of California or Australia in their palmiest days. Gold is found in various parts of Ontario, and the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion, in Newfoundland, in the territory disputed between British Guiana and Venezuela, and many other places. Some of these discoveries are not new, and attempts to work them in the past proved failures. But this does not prove that they cannot be worked now, with the improved inventions and appliances of our day. The cyanide process has itself worked a revolution in gold mining. Low grade ores that could not be worked at all a few years ago are now sometimes made to yield large profits. In Alaska a three-pennyweight ore, worked on a large scale, produced a profit of 62 per cent., aggregating nearly half a million, last year. When such things are possible, it is difficult to put a limit to the gold production of the future.

A discovery of what "practical men" call coal, and which geologists name anthracolite, near Sudbury, has made some noise during the last week. The existence of this substance in small quantities, in different parts of Canada, near Port Arthur, Point Lévis, in Labrador, was previously known. Unfortunately, it has generally been found in small quantities, though probably no complete test of its extension at any point in Canada has been made. Specimens have been brought to Toronto; it has been subjected to analysis, with results which varied with the specimens; trials have shown that it burns freely. The name is nothing; the analysis and the test of burning are much. One specimen, analyzed by the geological staff, last June, produced 55.96 of silicious matter; another 65 per cent. An analysis here is said to give nearly as much carbon as anthracite coal. The outcrop is the least pure; no specimen appears to have been taken from a greater depth than six feet. By all means let the extent and value of the new material be fully tested. This is the thing to do now. When it is done our information will be on a scale from which a conclusion can be drawn as to the economic value of the new find. Meanwhile it is safe to say that the value of the substance will be in the inverse ratio of the quantity of silicious matter it contains.

A SPUR TO CANADIAN ENTERPRISE.

A remark made by an English mining manager who has been three years in British Columbia traveling and developing gold properties, may well make us ask ourselves whether Canadian "enterprise," in supplying our own markets, has not been unduly flattered of late? This gentleman, Mr. Horne Payne, who represents the Lillooet, Fraser River and Cariboo gold fields, limited, tells the Toronto Board of Trade that nothing struck him more forcibly than the remarkable absence of representatives of Eastern Canadian houses in the race for the supply of the mining trade of the Pacific province, a trade which has rapidly assumed gigantic proportions. Now we have been accustomed to be told that the reason Canadian houses did not do more of the trade with the mines was that the Americans, by means of a spur line of railway running into Southwest Kootenay, could run up goods from Tacoma or Spokane Falls promptly, while Canadians were handicapped for lack of railway connection south from Revelstoke to Trail, etc. But there are other mining districts than Rossland or Southwest Kootenay, and Mr. Payne emphasizes the fact that in the Illecillewaet and the Lardeau districts, which are admirably served by the C.P.R., the Canadian has the very same advantages which he complains of the American having in Rossland, and yet he does not avail himself of them. Canadian commercial representatives are rarely seen there, and when seen are not of a type to compare advantageously with the United States goods travelers.

"Eastern Canada does not yet seem to have realized," writes Mr. Payne, who avows himself a Britisher and a friend of Canada, "that already many millions of capital have come into the province, and that there are in the West Kootenay alone not less, probably, than 10,000 miners, and twice as many other workers, to be fed and clothed, and supplied with all the other necessities and luxuries of life. Few manufacturers from Eastern Canada are represented at all; those that are, are for the most part represented by young men of little experience in their work, who devote more time to dabbling in mining claims than to their legitimate business. Against this the manufacturers of the United States are represented by the best and most active men they can command, and every train brings in fresh travelers to almost force American goods down would-be English buyers' throats." Food for thought may be found in this plain statement. Nor is there any question of the ability of the Canadian manufacturer to compete with his American opponent. This Mr. Payne himself tested in a very direct way. "Having," he says, "made up my mind to favor English trade wherever possible, I this year sent our purchasing agent on a month's missionary trip to the Ontario and Quebec manufacturers, with the result that, with the exception of machinery not made in Canada, we satisfactorily filled all our requirements in this market." And the concern which this gentleman represents is one with £250,000 sterling *paid up*, one-fourth of which is already expended in development.

The prevalent impression as to the great majority of the working mines of British Columbia being controlled by Americans, Mr. Payne declares to be a mistake. He is satisfied, on the contrary, that by far the largest share of the mining business of the province to-day is controlled by Englishmen anxious to help English and Canadian trade. But his further statement is significant, namely, that the Americans to-day control 90 per cent. of the supply trade of the British Columbia mining territory. This should not be, and it depends upon our merchants and manufacturers to see that if true it shall not long remain true. When the Crow's Nest Pass road goes through this