

COMMENTS.

The "big gooseberry" season appears to have come in early this year. The first evidences of its presence come from Vancouver, where was recently published "the first really definite news of the output of the mine at Hedley, which is making that part of the Similkameen famous and is pouring wealth into the coffers of the Daly estate, and those associated," the "really definite news" consisting of information, given as the utterance of a well-known Gold Commissioner, who, by the way, has not heretofore (if now, which may be doubted) been in the habit of making public particulars that, if "really definite," could only have come to his knowledge in his official capacity, and therefore were confidential. To this official was attributed the statement "that \$6,000 worth of gold is being recovered every day. This is in addition to concentrates, which are being allowed to accumulate in anticipation of the advent of a railway, when the company will add a smelter to its many enterprises. Then the amount will be increased to a considerable extent." Another emanation from Vancouver, this time from a press correspondent at no time disposed to allow others to outdistance him in chronicling big things and who went one better than his neighbour. From this last source came this information relating to the Iron Mask mine, Kamloops: "It is stated that by the first of May the Iron Mask will be shipping 500 tons of \$30 ore daily." So the Nickel Plate mine may this year be expected to produce between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 (including the value of concentrates) and the Iron Mask, after adding the modest sum of \$325,000 for the first 120 days of the year to the \$3,675,000 to be produced, as above stated, during the remaining 245 days—about \$4,000,000. Now, the total value of the production of metallic minerals in the Similkameen and Yale divisions of Yale district, these including the Similkameen and Kamloops camps, was but \$53,318 in 1903, according to the Report of the Minister of Mines for that year. A rough estimate of \$300,000 for 1904 is, we think, in excess of the actual value of last year's production. But to increase to about \$7,000,000 in 1905 will indeed be a big advance. If this be likely the Minister of Finance may well meet the advocates of a reduction in the two per cent mineral tax, say by inducing the legislature to reduce it to one per cent, but is it? Perhaps the Vancouver optimists will guess again.

The brief report of the annual meeting of shareholders in the Le Roi Mining Company, cabled from London, indicates that the policy pursued under the direction of Mr. Anthony J. McMillan has been approved, that gentleman having been re-appointed managing director. It is evident that the shareholders have taken fresh heart and are encouraged to look for profitable results now that the affairs of the company are in better condition than for several years. A summary of the financial statement, etc., is given on another page, but until the arrival by mail of a full report of the meeting, little comment can be made

upon the reception by the shareholders of the report of Mr. Geo. S. Waterlow, one of the directors of the company, on the proposed amalgamation scheme. This is more comprehensive than is generally known in the province, embracing the acquirement of important properties in addition to those usually mentioned as being included in the project, and looking to the eventual reduction in British Columbia of all ore from the consolidated mines. While the enlarged scheme has the approval of men of high standing in the financial world as well as of those largely interested in the several properties proposed to be amalgamated, it is premature to conclude that it will necessarily be carried out. Though there is little probability of an adverse report being made on the mines it is proposed to consolidate, there is still the difficult question of values for capitalisation of the respective mines and reduction works to be agreed upon. Once get this question satisfactorily settled, there should not be much delay in disposing of other matters preliminary to raising the required working capital. If the undertaking be carried to a successful issue, it will be a distinct advance in the direction of reducing over-capitalisation at present so general; in increasing production, and in so reducing management and operating costs as to ensure the payment of dividends on a less inflated capital. Further, it will be an object lesson to other companies to similarly join forces and by co-operation obtain results that will induce the bringing in of capital for the much more adequate utilisation of the mineral resources of the Province.

A spirit of defiance of the law on the part of members of miners' unions occasionally finds expression in this province in such a way as to demonstrate that with a few there is a disposition to ride rough-shod over the law to gain their own ends. It is but just to acknowledge that the greater number of members of the unions neither sympathise with nor countenance violence nor gross injustice: but there is a small minority not disposed to stop at anything so long as they can carry out their objects and yet escape punishment for actions that are punishable by law. The several acts of violence committed in the Boundary upon either white non-union men or Chinamen have demonstrated the existence of a determination to secure certain ends without regard to either the rights of others or the unlawfulness of such proceedings. Heretofore, though, no such extremes have been gone to as that lately reported from Silverton, Slocan Lake, where a mine manager and lessee narrowly escaped a violent death at the hands of a would-be assassin for no other reason than that, after suffering much inconvenience and loss from the vagaries of white cooks, he adopted the only reasonable alternative open to him and employed Chinamen. That the man now awaiting trial in the superior court on a charge equivalent to attempted murder was president of the local miners' union does not necessarily imply that the unions as a whole approve such a murderous means of attaining the ends they have in view. On the contrary, they