

the profession and industry of mining in respective localities, and that they shall independently of the institute, hold meetings and read papers as frequently as they like, and be in a position to take prompt and effective measures on any matter affecting the welfare or interests of the mining community. It is not likely that steps will be taken to organise in British Columbia until after the summer season, as it would be hardly possible to get together a representative gathering of mine managers and engineers until September at the earliest. The institute has now an active membership of close upon four hundred, and is doing most excellent work in the interests of the industry.

The shocking disaster at the Crow's Nest colliery on May 22nd last, whereby nearly a hundred and fifty miners lost their lives, has cast a gloom over the whole community. The cause of this distressing accident has not, as we go to press, been fully ascertained, but it is believed the explosion resulted from the ignition of coal dust brought about by faulty tamping. Another explanation, however, is that the fans at the mouth of the tunnel refused to work, and fire-damp thus accumulated in the workings. But this particular spot has always been considered dangerous, and only recently a number of miners from Nanaimo declined to work there on that account. Fire-damp is more than usually prevalent at Coal creek and it is a very difficult task to maintain a supply of pure air. Only the day before the accident the Government Inspector had visited the Crow's Nest mines and pronounced the workings safe, hence it would seem that the company cannot be held in any way to blame for the sad occurrence. The directors have meanwhile voluntarily come forward in a very creditable manner, and have promised to provide permanently for the bereaved families of the men killed or injured in the explosion, and already relief funds have been liberally subscribed to throughout the country.

The New Vancouver Coal Co. declared last month a further dividend of 3 per cent., making with the interim dividend paid in October last, a total distribution of 6 per cent. for the year 1901. Dividends at the same rate were paid during each of the two previous years. Meanwhile in a report to shareholders it is stated that during the half year ended December 31 last, the net output was 229,917 tons, making a total for the year 1901 of 494,488 tons, against 501,474 tons for the year 1900. The sales for the six months were 233,033, bringing the total disposed of during the year up to 509,603 tons, against 496,926 tons for the year 1900. The sum available for dividend is £6,888. The debenture capital remains at £22,850, and the reserve fund is unchanged £45,459, as is also the land sales reserve fund account at £22,272, but the insurance fund account is £100

more at £2,600. The directors also point out that the competition of fuel oil is assuming a more serious aspect.

Mr. R. W. Northey, manager of the Keremeos Copper Mines, writes to the Rossland *Miner* protesting against the article we published last month on the subject of the "Ollala Copper Co." Mr. Northey expresses the opinion that the criticisms of the *MINING RECORD* were neither fair nor just, but he fails to indicate where in the unfairness or injustice lays. He, however, asserts that "the Olalla Copper Company is no fake company" as it owns "some magnificent copper propositions" and intends to erect smelters at suitable points in the vicinity. Mr. Northey admits that he is not personally acquainted with "any of the gentlemen forming the Olalla Company," and yet he vouches for their benevolent intentions. In that case then he could not do better than take advantage of the company's "generous offer," for what is faith without works?

Notwithstanding that business in the interior is still considered to be in a very depressed condition, it is satisfactory to note that during the past few weeks an unusually large number of mining deals have been made in the Kootenay districts. The Lardeau, Ymir and Similkameen divisions appear to be receiving the larger share of attention from the investor at the present time, but in other sections also a considerable amount of capital has lately been invested in the acquisition of promising mineral property. On the Coast, too, enquiry for copper properties continues, and American capital is being heavily invested in East Coast mining.

THE FUEL SUPPLY QUESTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

By W. M. BREWER, M. A., I. M. E., Etc.

AS the smelting industry in British Columbia grows, the question of fuel supply will occupy a very prominent position for the consideration of all engaged in this branch of industrial enterprise.

The visible fuel supply to-day in the Province is confined to the East Coast of Vancouver Island and the Crow's Nest Pass, but probable sources of fuel supply which can be drawn on in the future as development progresses include the Similkameen, the Tulameen or Otter Flat, the Nicola Valley, North Fork of Kettle River, Fairview and Queen Charlotte Islands, and West Coast of Vancouver Island coal fields, besides a limited area near the International boundary which may be designated as the Abbotsford. This area of probable productive fields would appear at first glance to be sufficiently extensive to warrant the assertion that any uneasiness whatever, with regard to the future fuel supply for the Province, was uncalled for.

But when the subject is more carefully considered in