

enter into such calculation. If other mining engineers would follow the example set in this particular by the gentleman to whom we have specially referred, or rather, perhaps, if the investing public would insist on promoters publishing evidence in every prospectus issued that the capital asked for had been fixed upon the recommendation of a trained mine expert of admitted ability and judgment there would be fewer disappointed shareholders than is now the case. But reforms of this nature are not too easily brought about.

The present month has been notable for the number of accidents, fatal and otherwise, which have occurred in the mines in more than one section of the Province. The sad fatalities in the Nanaimo coal mines could not, of course, have been well avoided, and it is very well known that in the New Vancouver Company's collieries every possible precaution is taken to protect the lives of the miners, but in the case of the Sunset, No. 2 mine accident, at Rossland, it is quite clear that the law with reference to the placing of stages at regular intervals in the ladderways was disregarded, and two men whose lives might thus possibly have been preserved, were in consequence killed. There are, we are credibly informed, a number of mines throughout West Kootenay in a similar unsafe condition, and instances of gross carelessness in the handling and stoving of explosives are of the commonest occurrence. The Act, passed by the late Government, for the better protection of workmen in the metalliferous mines, while being a step in the right direction has not proved particularly effectual for the reason that one inspector only is appointed to do work which would require the attention of at least six qualified men to adequately perform. If, however, the Government decides that the Province cannot afford to appoint more than one Inspector of Metalliferous Mines, it is some small satisfaction to the working miners to know that the present incumbent of the office, Mr. McGregor, is at least a capable and energetic man, and if he cannot be in two places at once, certainly no fault can be attributed to him on that account. Nevertheless, if Mr. McGregor would seek information from mining engineers in private practice, who are constantly visiting professionally the various districts and are likely, therefore, to learn much as to the provision (or want of it) made in the bigger mines of these localities for the prevention of accidents, he would, we believe, learn very much that would be of the greatest service to him in the execution of his duty. As to the relative safety of our mines with those of other countries one has only to compare the insurance rates paid by mining companies in England under the Employers' Liability Act, of three shillings and sixpence on the hundred pounds with the one per cent. rate in force here to form an opinion, which from this estimate would indicate that a miner in British Columbia is exposed to six times the risk of losing his life as is his confrere in the Motherland.

At last the troublesome litigation of months is settled and the British America Corporation are placed in charge of the Le Roi mine. The history of the proceedings reads like a chapter out of Bret Harte or a page of romance. What has complicated mat-

ters in the past has been the holdings of the Le Roi Company in the State of Washington. This has allowed the peculiar laws of that country to come into operation and we have had the anomaly presented to us of a company working a British mine in British territory and the British shareholders thereof being debarred from their right in participating in the dividends. That this really would have proved to have been the case had the matter been pressed to a judicial arbitrament is seriously open to doubt. Be that as it may, it remains that the minority shareholders of the State of Washington publicly gave out their intention of declaring a dividend which should not be participated in by the British majority. This amusing paradox came to pass because of the Northport smelter. It being situated over the boundary line could not be held, it was declared, by foreigners. How this point is now to be evaded when everything is settled and the lion and the lamb are lying in peace together has not transpired.

Meanwhile, the majority shareholders got \$6 for their stock; the minority \$7.25, plus the ore and matte at the Le Roi smelter at Northport. The value of this latter will probably prove to be about \$200,000. In other words the minority people are selling their shares for \$8.25. A difference of \$2.25, meaning a rise in the selling value of the shares of 37½ per cent. On the other hand, if the majority had not acquiesced in this result the consequence would have been the alternative of a long series of complicated legal trials and decisions which may or may not have run away with more than the amount of money expended. Here also rises the question of "gophering." If the output of the mine had not been increased in the manner which has been witnessed there could have been no such claim raised as \$8.25 per share. Of course the opposite view is that the imposing output has been obtained at the expense of legitimate development and that output will have to be seriously curtailed in order to allow of the development, on this supposition, seriously behind, regaining its place in the mine. But this is again weakened by the fact of the find in October of the high grade of ore in the new chute between the 500 and 600 foot levels. It is at any rate pretty clear why the one party wished to expedite output, for the more the mine was shown capable of producing the higher would be the probable value of the shares and the greater the reserve of ore and the amount of matte at the Northport smelter. On the other side, there was every reason to restrict such output, even if the claim was not correct that the development work was being neglected, and the true interests of the mine made thereby unduly to suffer.

We have always held that it is desirable in the general interest of the Province to minimize British Columbian employment of Mongolian labour, usually engaged at rates below the average standard of Western working life. We, however, recognize at the same time, that the Mongolians in our midst must, so long as they behave as orderly settlers, be permitted to engage without molestation in ordinary occupations at which they are lawfully employed. British freedom must be accorded to them as to all others peacefully resident, temporarily or permanently, within the limits of the Empire. Hence we thoroughly approve the action of the authorities in West Kootenay in prosecuting alleged participants in re-