

B. C. MINERAL RESOURCES.

Mr. John Aitken, M. E., a mineral and mining expert of some 35 years' experience, has returned from a trip to the Sooke iron beds, and was, the other day, seen by a *Colonist* representative. He came to this country in the interest of a Scotch syndicate, who are anxious to deal in iron ore of a high grade, and, in quest of the desired article, Mr. Aitken has travelled widely over the mining regions of South America.

"It is a grand country," says Mr. Aitken, "I have been here for about eight weeks, and from what I have seen of the Island, I am convinced that there is a great future in store for it. Your climate is good, your geographical position unsurpassed for trade and your mineral and fishery resources immense. I have just been looking at some of your iron deposits, and they are as rich as I have ever seen. I have brought down some samples with me, and although they have not as yet been assayed, I believe that they will run from 60 to 68 per cent. iron. And there seems to be an unlimited quantity of it there. From the base of the mountain, we went to an altitude of 400 or 500 feet, and along the whole way rich ore was visible. These are merely croppings taken here and there, but the oxides appearing on the surface proves the ore to be of great purity. There are some eight or ten steamers engaged at San Nicholas, carrying ore from the famous Bilbao mines, in Spain. These ores carry about 75 per cent. iron, and are, perhaps, the purest in the world. They are used mainly in the Bessemer process of treating iron—for mixing with ores of an inferior grade. I have had some 35 years' experience, and the ore I have seen on this Island is about the best I have seen, except the Bilbao stuff."

A SUCCESSFUL FEMALE DRUMMER.

Omaha commercial circles enjoy the distinction of having among their number a feminine drummer, one of the fair sex who is a member of the guild, not by courtesy, not by the license of newspaper imagination, but by the right of a service which is identified with that imposed upon men. She is not a peddler of novelties, and doesn't deal with her own sex. She carries a staple line, deals with business men and competes with male drummers.

The lady in question is Miss Marie Stocum, who represents the Consolidated Coffee Company of Omaha on the road. It may be well to anticipate doubters right here by stating that Miss Stocum has been a traveling saleswoman for about four years, and has been with her present house well on to two years. That is the best possible evidence that her endeavor is not recent and is not an experiment, but is backed by energy and ability, and has won her a success which entitles her to recognition as a full-fledged veteran in the noble army of drummers.

Miss Stocum is a native of Wisconsin, but removed with her family to Michigan at an early age, and her parents now reside at Hartford. She began her career on the road in 1886, traveling out of Chicago for Chapman & Smith Company, and selling extracts and baking powder. She

worked the Omaha trade for that firm. In September, 1890, she joined the Consolidated Coffee Company of this city, and has met with excellent success. She has traveled all over the west, but at present her territory is Western Iowa, which enables her to return to Omaha every Saturday.

Miss Stocum is only twenty-three years old and a very attractive looking young lady. Even a short acquaintance shows that her physical charms are supplemented with equally attractive graces of mind. In short, Miss Stocum is an exceptionally bright and charming girl.

While there are hardships on the road, as all know who have tried that kind of work, Miss Stocum confesses to a liking for it. She is independent, the trade treats her kindly, and in the travelling man she has found the most chivalric of friends. The Iowa State Traveling Men's Association, by the way, refused Miss Stocum a membership in that organization because the constitution has the word "man," and not "woman."—*Western Merchant*.

SALMON.

The earlier indications of the season have all kept full faith with the salmon packers on the Columbia River. It was seen in many signs familiar to old-time packers that the run of salmon on the Columbia this year was to be small and the pack a light one. Reported forecasts of the season have been subject to more or less ridicule, and cumulative evidence of the probability of a light pack has been thought good material for a joke; but it is getting rather late in the season, and the large dealers who have anticipated liberal packs of salmon by this time in the season begin to wear an anxious expression of countenance.

The best evidence that we have seen of the improbability of even an average pack on the Columbia River is to be found in the fact that some of the canners are taking "bluebacks" from the fishermen in order to keep their forces busy. The "blueback" is an inferior fish, as every canner of any experience will tell, and is packed only when all other species fail. It is estimated by packers of abundant experience to entitle their opinions to weight, that the pack on the Columbia this year of straight "Chinook" salmon will not exceed 250,000 cases.

It is understood that the Alaska Packing Association will keep its pack down to 400,000 cases. The British Columbia packers will make a very significant reduction in their output, the Sacramento River pack is too small to be taken into consideration at all, and altogether if there is not a very large reduction in the pack this year, we may never expect any in years to come.

The market keeps tolerably firm, but it is little less than surprising under all the circumstances that we have not recorded some smart advances for favorite packs before this.

In sales for eastern account prices have been established on the basis \$1.35 to \$1.40 per dozen for tall tins, \$1.50 per dozen for flats, and \$1.60 per dozen for key flats.—*S. F. Herald of Trade*.

THE BANK OF MONTREAL.

The banking interests of Canada are so important and diversified that the annual proceedings of a great institution such as the Bank of Montreal will be widely read and commented upon. And a bank which can show such figures as the following certainly deserves to have its annual report carefully considered by the public as well as by its own directors:

Profits	\$ 1,325,887
Capital	12,000,000
Reserve fund	5,000,000
Deposits	26,977,107
Discounts	31,609,868

The management and prosperity of a financial corporation so large as the Bank of Montreal; having such complicated and far reaching interests; and controlling such immense sums of money, is, indeed, of vital import to Canada. In Sir Donald Smith, the institution has a president who is one of the shrewdest business men in the country, and in Mr. E. S. Clouston, a general manager who is well known as a keen and clear headed banker. It was consequently to have been expected that much of unusual interest would be found in the speeches delivered upon this occasion.

Sir Donald Smith gave some interesting figures of the bank's development from 1817 when its capital was only \$350,000, up to the present time, but it is especially important to note that he speaks in high terms of the general prosperity of the country, and expresses his full confidence in its future. Mr. Clouston refers to the dangerous silver policy of the United States, and intimates that the Bank of Montreal, at least, is guarding against future trouble by requiring contracts for time engagements to be payable in gold coin. Very properly, he criticizes the present tendency to excessive banking competition, which encourages unwise loans, concessions, or obligations in the pursuit of an increased bulk of business. Altogether, the report is an excellent one, and the speeches worthy of the important subject under consideration.—*Toronto Empire*.

RENEWED ACTIVITY IN MINING.

Mr. Wm. Dodd, Government agent at Yale, reports cheering news from that section. The rush of miners and prospectors to Siwash Creek continues, no less than 45 claims being recorded last month. The claims being worked continue to produce rich ore, and the owners are thoroughly satisfied with the prospects. Mr. A. Stevenson, Government superintendent of roads, has arrived at Yale to lay out a trail to the mines up the creek. When the trail is opened it will be a great convenience to miners and greatly reduce the cost of getting in supplies, which is the most serious obstacle to mining enterprise at the present time.

The Government have a force of men at work opening the old trail through from Hope to Skagit, on the Washington boundary. Some rich placer claims were worked many years ago on creeks reached by this trail, and it is expected the making of this road passable will lead to the development of both placer and quartz claims. Prospecting generally in Yale district is being carried on this spring with renewed activity, and some good strikes are looked for before the season closes.—*Inland Sentinel*.