

last year, the output being 674,995 ounces, as compared with 281,265 ounces only in 1896. Each succeeding year has shown—despite the discouragement of the investor caused by large numbers of unproductive mine swindles—a big advance of Western Australia's gold yield. Thus 1893 showed an output of 110,890 ounces, 1894 a yield of 207,131, 1895 an advance to 231,512 ounces, 1896 a return of 281,265 ounces, and 1897 a yield of 674,995 ounces, representing a sterling value of £2,564,976, or the equivalent of \$12,364,000. Clearly, therefore, large strides through British Columbia is making as regards gold production, we have yet very much leeway to make up, ere our figures begin to approach those of "golden Western Australia." The thing is not so easy as it seemed in 1896, when Western Australia's gold output was less than half what it proved last year. Fortunately, however, we have in addition to our gold and copper—both of which Western Australia possesses—abundant wealth in silver, lead, iron and coal, so that, taken all round, our mineral record should easily outpace that of Western Australia. Gold is, after all, but one of our many metal and mineral resources.

It is clear that there is about to ensue an enormous development of the world's copper mining, in view of the increasing demand for that metal in connection with electrical and other mechanical appliances. Hence competition will be keener, and the best and most productive mines will probably cause many of those of lower grade to become incapable of profitable working. And now the news comes from the Australian colony of South Australia that there is shortly to be a big expansion of copper mining in the Mammoth Black Ridge district, which fortunately happens to be situated within 100 miles of a fine coal district. The deposits are stated to be very rich, though they have long been neglected, only surface working having been done at intervals during a period of more than 40 years. The ores will now be mined at depth, and, it is stated, will be found richer with depth. From which, amongst other indications, recent valuable finds of copper in Western Australia and Tasmania being also instances in point, it is clear that no time should be lost in pushing our best British Columbia copper-producing claims well to the front, and inducing the incoming of sufficient well directed capital to develop them to the full. It is to be hoped that the present year will afford indications of this. If not, it is quite likely that successful Australian competition in copper mining will for a considerable period "head us off." Of this there would appear to be real danger, for although the Antipodes are much further from the world's chief markets than we, the transport of Australia's ores can be mainly made by water, over which distance counts far less than it does over land.

MOST PROBABLY ANYTHING BUT A BONANZA.

The Klondike Bonanza, Limited, is an English company, organized in London, under a capital of £150,000, with a view to acquire 10 claims of Yukon placer, 7½ of which are stated to be on Bonanza creek and 2½ on Last Chance creek, in the Klondike, from a gentleman named Ironmonger Sola, who has for some time been "booming" the Yukon in London and posing as a Klondike pioneer of great fame, though strange to state, very little can be heard on this Pacific coast of Mr. Sola and his reported big success. The English company is to pay to an intermediary buyer from this Mr. Sola and an undisclosed partner of his no less than £100,000—or about \$485,000—for the claims, and various references in the prospectus show that exceptionally large profits are being made by intermediaries. At least two of the directors of the company are moreover of the "guinea pig" order, and the price asked for the claims is big indeed, if, as the Dawson miners loudly asserted at a recent meeting, the average life of a Bonanza creek claim is only a term of about two years. The Klondike Bonanza, Limited, of which Lieut.-Col. MacGeorge is chairman, appears to us to be a very highly speculative investment indeed, and one distinctly to be avoided by all who cannot afford to run big risks of loss. It will probably take the company most, if not all, its time to get back its large capital, to say nothing of dividends during the short lives of the placer claims which it holds. The wage bill of the mining workers engaged will, moreover, make a huge deduction from the gross value of any gold output gotten.

TELEGRAPH CREEK RAILROAD.

The Dominion Government has, it is stated, arranged that Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, the well-known contractors, shall almost immediately begin the construction of a railroad between Telegraph creek and Teslin lake. The road will, it is expected, be completed by September, but large sections of it will, for the convenience of Yukon traffic, in all probability be opened by the end of May or June. The C. P. R. will operate the line, which will be about 125 miles long, and after September, during those parts of each year when the rivers and lakes are open, enable Yukon travelers to reach Dawson City from Vancouver in about ten days. A week's journey even is suggested, but there is little doubt that in the better part of the traveling season the journey can, when the railroad is completed and river and lake steamboat services are connected therewith, be satisfactorily accomplished in ten days. A longer period would, of course, be required in winter, when the difficulty of travel would be greatly increased.