

Under present conditions it is more profitable to market our silver and lead as crude ore than in refined form, taking into consideration high United States bullion duties on the one hand and the comparatively low prices at which lead is quoted in England on the other.

The utter folly of attempting to force an industry like a hot-house plant before due season has been demonstrated in a practical manner so often that it is almost a waste of time to insist upon the truth of such a statement. Nevertheless, Vancouver has its smelter scheme, and our Mainland correspondent writes that a proposition of a similar nature has been submitted to, and is under consideration by the New Westminster Board of Trade. How long a time must necessarily elapse before smelting can be profitably carried on at either of these two towns?

A significant condition of the provisional agreement between the Vancouver City Council and the Evans-Rothschild syndicate of London, England, in regard to the erection and working of a smelter and refinery on Burrard Inlet, is a proviso that neither Chinese nor Japanese shall be employed at the works. The agreement, which, as it stands, will probably be ratified by the necessary majority of the money by-law electors of the city, would but for this proviso very likely be rejected. Most municipal voters of Vancouver are convinced that it is as necessary in the interest of skilled white, and more especially British labour immigration and permanent settlement, to exclude Japanese workers from British Columbia, as it is to keep out the Chinese; in fact, the white workers of Vancouver fear the Japanese more than he does the Chinamen, knowing that the former will readily work for wages almost as low as the remuneration of the Orient, and, if necessary, live under similar poor conditions. The men of Vancouver are also aware that the Japanese are very clannish and specially adaptive, so that if in the absence of restrictive regulations they form the intention of establishing labour colonies in British Columbia, they can easily spare a sufficient number of assisted emigrants from a crowded out population of nearly 50,000,000, as altogether to outweigh the numbers and influence of British workers in many an important provincial industry. The fisheries are already a case in point, for there, admittedly, the white worker has but a very poor time of it, in competition with exploited Japanese labour. Hence the determination of the Vancouver masses to exclude Japanese labour from all municipal or municipally aided employment.

Another point worthy of note in Vancouver's smelter agreement is the fact that the grant of a bonus of \$65,000 on ores treated is not only to be based on actual output, being payable at \$1 per ton, but also conditioned on profit sharing, since for the \$65,000

of bonus thus to be granted, there is to be in return acquired an equivalent interest in the company's stock or shares. This possibility of direct profit-sharing forms an entirely novel precedent, as regards the grant of public aid to an industrial enterprise in British Columbia, and may well point the way to like action in the case of such grants as provincial money subsidies to railways, should any hereafter be granted, as is, of course, likely enough. The city's stock-taking in the smelter company will involve no further liability, for the undertaking will be registered under the British joint stock company laws, as a limited liability concern, and the shares granted as "fully paid," and, therefore, subject to no money liability. The city would, therefore, at worst lose its \$65,000 in the event of the failure of the smelter company.

There is little, if any doubt, that great and varied wonderfully as are our mineral resources, our output of gold, silver, lead, copper and iron will within very few years far exceed the metallic production of much boomed Western Australia, whose turn has come first, too often at heavy loss to British investors, involved in worthless mine schemes, got up by unscrupulous promoters. Nevertheless Western Australia's gold production is large and growing and at present far exceeds our like output. Thus the gold yield of British Columbia throughout 1896 is valued at \$1,788,000, or in round figures £36,000, whilst Western Australia's gold output of last month alone stood £272,750, or more than three-fourths of our corresponding output of the whole of 1896. In September, 1896, however, Western Australia's gold output was much less than that of last month, as it only represented £134,145. Allowing, however, for a like British Columbia gain in gold output that will show for this year a big advance on 1896, it is clear that Western Australia will still for this twelvemonth yield several times our value in gold output. We, however, shrewdly suspect, that when the numerous free milling claims of Lillooet, of Fairview, of Albern, of Harrison Lake and other points and the hydraulic gravels of Cariboo make next year a very great advance of productive development, these and the gold-copper and gold-silver properties of Trail, of Texada, of parts of the Slocan and many another locality, will make such an upward leap in our province's gold yield as should, in this as in other mineral production, cause British Columbia to rank higher than well-advertised Western Australia.

Admitting that of all provincial industries mining is and will continue to be the most important it is eminently essential that only legislation of a character likely to protect its interests and promote its development should be enacted. Now that lately so much discussion has arisen anent party politics and platforms it may not be inappropriate to suggest that a convention be held at (say) Nelson or some