

pectations, and instead of a profit the company was called upon to face a loss of nearly thirty-five thousand dollars. We do not say that the failure of the reindeer skin contract is entirely responsible for the company's present position, but we maintain that had this loss not been incurred it would have at least deferred the possibilities of liquidation, or at best reconstruction, until perhaps a more opportune moment. The proverb "It never rains but it pours" has lugubrious point in its present application to the affairs of British Columbia mines on the London market, though whether an unsuccessful deal in reindeer skins can rightly be ascribed to the worthlessness of mineral occurrences in the province can remain an open question. It is fair to add that the Dominion Mining Development & Agency Co. has a large holding of shares in the Kettle River Power Company, which may prove a very valuable asset while ultimately the Queen Bess may pay respectable dividends, and the prospects in Athlun are by no means unpromising. Hence it is quite possible that with ordinary luck and providing the present difficulties are tided over, the chairman of this company may have a more satisfactory statement for the shareholders at the next annual meeting.

Mr. J. McEvoy, of the Canadian Geological Survey Department, has prepared an interesting and very complete report on the Crow's Nest coal fields. This report, which is the third that has been issued on the subject, justifies the estimation formed by Dr. Selwyn in respect to the enormous extent and value of the measures, it being computed that there are available 22,000,000,000 tons of possible working coal of exceptional coking character while the fields are so situated as to be in the centre of a metalliferous mining area whose boundaries are rapidly being extended. The report, however, proceeds to state that great skill and care will evidently be needed in properly developing and fully utilizing the field, which in some respects presents peculiar conditions. The highly bituminous character of the coal, already gives evidence that very effective ventilating apparatus will require to be installed as the workings extend, in order to avoid dangerous accumulation of gas. The great thickness of some of the seams, with the often tender character of the coal composing them, will present difficulties in the way of cheap and complete extraction; while the fact that levels run in the seams from the bottom of the intersecting valleys are at a depth of 3,000 feet or more below the general level of the intervening plateau-like areas, may probably render it necessary to contend with exceptional pressure upon the workings as these progress. The output of the Crow's Nest Pass coal mines is at present nearly 2,000 tons per diem. Coking ovens to the number of 360 are in operation and large additions are in contemplation.

The agreement between the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company and the Dominion Government, in conse-

quence of which opposition was removed to the granting of a railway charter to the Crow's Nest Southern, is very wisely drawn and will undoubtedly effectively protect the British Columbia smelting interests against any possible discrimination on the part of the coal company. Under these circumstances the construction of the branch line from Fernie southward, to the international boundary, is desirable in the extreme and should be directly instrumental in creating an unprecedented industrial development and activity throughout that section of the country. Under the terms of the agreement the coal company is obliged, under a penalty of \$3 per ton of coal or coke sold for consumption outside of Canada, not to discriminate against the Canadian consumer, neither in regard to the prices at which coal or coke shall be sold, nor by the action of the railway company respecting the cost of transportation rates or otherwise. It is, however, provided that in the event of "effective and satisfactory" competition by other coal and coke producers in Canada, the agreement may be suspended.

In a bill, just brought down by the Hon. the Minister of Mines, amending the Mineral act, several important changes are introduced. One of these is drawn up on lines suggested in the *Mining Record* some months ago, and provides against the immediate forfeiture of mining property by the failure either on the part of an individual or a joint stock company to renew a free miner's certificate at the time of its expiration. By taking advantage of the provisions of this clause, the individual owner of mining property may renew his certificate within six months from the date of the lapse, by payment of what amounts to a penalty or fine of ten dollars or in all fifteen dollars, purchase a special free miner's certificate which has the effect of reviving his title to property, which under the present law would be forfeited. In the case of a joint stock company the fee is placed at three hundred dollars. Another admirable substitution, manifestly in the interest of the prospector, provides that work on the construction of roads or trails in the immediate vicinity of a claim shall be allowed to apply in lieu of assessment on the property, if permission is first obtained from the gold commissioner or mining recorder of the district in that regard. The other proposed changes are not particularly important, though section 14 of the amending act is perhaps open to objection and criticism. It reads as follows:—

In every application for record of a mineral claim located by an agent on behalf of another free miner shall appear the following paragraph:—

"That on the _____ day of _____ 19____, a power of attorney authorizing me to locate and record the said claim on behalf of the said _____, was recorded in the office of the Mining Recorder at _____, and that I located and applied to record the said mineral claim in the name of the said _____, and that the said claim was located for his sole and only use and benefit, and that I have no interest, express or implied, therein."

The question is here raised, what constitutes an agent? In the case when a prospector is "grubstaked" to locate mineral claims for another, is he not