

Movement working in conjunction with ourselves at the next Trades Congress at Hamilton, Ont., next September."

Dolly Varden.

The Provincial Government has nominated Mr. Justice Clement, of the Supreme Court, to act as referee in connection with the dispute between the Dolly Varden Mines Company and the Taylor Engineering Corporation, the points of which were the subject of investigation during the recent session of the Legislature. Judge Clements will go into the whole question of the financial obligations of both concerns and assess costs, etc., in accordance with the terms of the settlement decided upon by the Provincial House.

Title to Coal Lands.

Another phase of the dispute as to the title to coal rights within what is known as the Esquimaux and Nanaimo Ry. Belt on Vancouver Island has developed. Does the ownership of coal lying under School, Indian, Naval and other reserves, which were created by the province prior to the grant of the so-called belt to the railway company, lie in the province or the company? It is contended that these coal rights did not pass to the company, although, of course, the latter maintain that they, along with all under-surface rights not specifically mentioned in the Settlement Act, became the property of the railway company under the terms of the said Act. The issue has been before the courts which, in one instance, have upheld the contention of the company. There is considerable valuable coal property at stake in this argument and the province proposes to make an investigation of the matter with a view to the passage of legislation, if it should be found justified, declaring the affected areas to be reserves, thus removing them from the control of the railway company.

The Smelter Rates Enquiry.

From an unofficial but authoritative source it is learned that the Committee of Investigation, engaged on the question of custom charges made by the Consolidated Mining & Smelting Company at its Trail Smeltery, has received very little information or serious formal complaint from shippers of ore to Trail. The Committee, however, has proceeded with its work of investigation at the smelter and has acquired a large amount of definite practical data and has so far digested the material as to justify the engagement of the services of R. O. Whitaker, of Denver, Colo., and an accountant to assist him. With this aid the preparation of the committee's report will be carried on with all possible despatch.

Gold Strike on Morley River.

A gold strike which is attracting much attention is reported on the Morley River, about 150 miles to the northeast of the town of the Skagway and just a few miles south of the international boundary. Morley River runs into Teslin Lake. The surface dirt is said to pay from 30 to 50 cents. Bed rock has not yet been struck. It is expected that there will be a rush to the new diggings with the opening of the summer season.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

A Road for Aspen Grove.

A road between the town of Princeton and the Aspen Grove Mining Camp is to be opened by the Provincial Government this season. It is known as the One Mile Road, and will shorten the distance between the towns of Princeton and Merritt by about 17 miles. Besides it will be of special value to the mining camp named and other similar centres.

Abandoned Claims.

The Mining Committee of the Provincial Legislature during the last session discussed the advisability of recommending the cancellation of all Crown Granted Mineral Claims which have reverted to the Crown through non-payment of taxes. The argument of those favoring the proposal was that by the cancellation of their claims, and the consequent eradication of the surveys from the records, the lands involved would become open for pre-emption by the settler. It was stated that land seekers often found it impossible to make up an even block of suitable agricultural land because of the existence of deserted Crown granted mineral claims. While these contentions were given every consideration, it was felt that no hasty action should be taken, more especially as these old Crown granted mineral lands have made substantial contributions of the public treasury, and, under the existing law, are open to the prospector who may feel that their possibilities have not been properly tested, on exceptionally easy terms.

The Peace River Oilfields.

There is no doubt that the Provincial Government's announcement that it proposes prospecting the oil deposits receives the endorsement of the people of this Province, and already there is speculation as to which district it is intended first exploring. As stated before in this correspondence the Peace River Section is generally thought to be the most promising. This is based on the drilling which has been in progress in Northern Alberta for the past ten years, and the results of the same. Within a short distance, comparatively, from the Peace River Country there are a number of small wells from which a certain amount of petroleum may be taken by pumping. Hon. T. D. Pattullo, Minister of Lands, made reference to one of these in addressing the Legislature. That to which he had reference is said to have a productive capacity of 200 barrels per day of a heavy black oil. The same country was drilled by Lord Rhondda, who obtained favorable indications, but found difficulty with salt water under great pressure, preventing drilling to depth. His representatives were strongly of the opinion that below the point reached the prospects would improve. Mr. Charles Camell, of the Geological Survey Branch, with headquarters at Vancouver, B.C., has for some years expressed the opinion that the Mackenzie River basin would prove one of the world's greatest oilfields, there being 350,000 square miles of geological formations favorable to petroleum. The difficulty in connection with the development of the natural resources of this far northern country is lack of transportation in the winter. In the summer the great rivers are navigable, thus rendering the problem of ingress and egress less formidable.