

It is, we suppose, because up to the present time dredging for gold has relatively speaking received so little attention from mining men in British Columbia that the Provincial laws dealing with this branch of industry are so lax and inadequate. But whatever the reason it is certainly high time that radical and intelligent changes should be made in the law as it now stands and particularly in regard to the conditions now in force and decidedly open to objection governing the granting of leases. Reasonable cause for complaint is also based upon the difficulty of procuring definite information at headquarters concerning the location of leases granted therefrom and the availability of certain areas for application. In the Department of Mines at Victoria, the only record kept of dredging leases is a register in which every kind and description of lease granted by Government is entered without any attempt at classification, and to the enquirer fresh from a country like New Zealand where these matters are more systematically looked after and such necessary departmental equipments as maps properly corrected to date at his immediate service, so slipshod a method of conducting official business appears all the more inexplicable. That dredging may become a very important branch of mining enterprise in this country is easily imaginable, when once conditions are understood, proper appliances are introduced and operations are carried on under skilled and experienced direction. Indeed the success that has been already attained under these favorable auspices is a sufficient warrant for high expectations in this respect, but it may be of interest to many readers of the MINING RECORD to learn that recently a New Zealand mining engineer of considerable reputation as an authority on river dredging pronounced the opinion that gravel beds and sand bars of Fraser River would yield as good results to dredging as some of the richest deposits in the streams of his own country.

The opinions we expressed some months ago with regard to the impracticability of both the Ashcroft and Edmonton trails as routes of travel to the Yukon gold fields, have proved only too correct, and there gold fields, have proved only too correct and there can be no doubt that a majority of the adventurers who attempted to make the journey by either of these once highly extolled trails have undergone appalling hardships. That those who advocated the advantages of the Ashcroft and Edmonton routes were honestly convinced of the correctness of their allegations may however, be allowed, and perhaps the inexperience of the men who set out is responsible for most of the evils that befell them. As an instance, we are informed that men starved on the trail, but none but the inexperienced would have started on such a journey without carrying with them supplies sufficient for at least a year's need.

The prices of the chief Lillooet mining stocks have been greatly depressed by the recent news of the amalgam robbery from the Golden Cache, but it is nevertheless stated, that the new stock of the Ben D'Or Company, which was but recently placed on the market is being quietly sold to a considerable extent, as a result, mainly, of promising preliminary reports by Mr. Pellew-Harvey.

The Provincial Government in reply to a requisition from the Vancouver and Victoria Boards of Trade, has signified that without consent of the Assembly no steps can be taken by the Department of Mines in the way of purchasing gold dust or nuggets from returned Yukon miners this year. As, however, by far the greater proportion of this season's Yukon yield has already been brought out and has found its way into the United States, the benefit to this Province even had the Government been in a position to give a more satisfactory answer to the Boards of Trade would have been, if any, very trifling. But next year some provision should certainly be made for dealing with the matter, and even if the government does not wish to assume responsibility directly, some arrangement could without difficulty be entered into with the banks to purchase the gold after it had been run into bars and stamped by the provincial analyst.

We are glad to learn on very good authority that some slight but nevertheless important amendments to the Mineral Act are likely to be considered at the next session of the Provincial Legislature. Briefly one of these changes will provide that all mineral claims, the locators of which failed to comply with the regulations in regard to annual assessment work or otherwise, will not be open to re-location, but will revert back to the Crown and after being advertised for a certain length of time will be sold by public auction. Another reform will compel owners of claims to purchase, after completing each annual assessment work- requirement for five years, a metal plate with all necessary information of ownership, location and date stencilled thereon. We have had the satisfaction in the MINING RECORD of advocating the adoption of both of these proposed measures.

A large number of prospectors have found their way back from the Cassiar district this month thoroughly disgusted and disheartened after a fruitless season's work in this once famous gold-producing section of the Province. Of the men who have returned many complain, with what degree of truth we are not in a position to say, that while good placer ground is still to be had in Cassiar, wherever good diggings are found, there, too, will be prominently displayed a sort of "Trespassers will be Prosecuted" notice signed by an officer of the Cassiar Central Railway Co. warning the unfortunate prospector off. If these stories are true and granting that the Cassiar Central has the legal right to corral the choicest parts of the country its policy will be very decidedly open to criticism.

The generous assistance rendered by Rossland, Nelson and other up-country mining towns to the sufferers from the recent disastrous fire at New Westminster will not be forgotten by the people of the "Royal City" who are so pluckily rebuilding the homes that were destroyed. Although Westminster is not now as it once was very closely identified with the mining industry of the Province, yet a large number of its citizens have large sums invested in Cariboo and Kootenay mines, and that interest in mining is reviving there may be deduced from the fact that an effort has been made by the managers of the Agricultural Exhibition to secure a display of mineral specimens from different parts of the country for the annual fall show, which, notwithstanding the fire, will still be opened as usual in October.