

The Mining Record.

Vol. V.

APRIL, 1899.

No. 4

BRITISH COLUMBIA MINING RECORD.

Devoted to the Mining Interests of British Columbia.

PUBLISHED BY

The Mining Record Limited Liability.

ADVERTISING RATES ON APPLICATION.

H. MORTIMER LAMB, Managing Editor.

London Office : 24 Coleman Street, E.C.
Vancouver Branch Office : Cowderly & Tre
Montreal : Gray's Agency.
Denver, Col. : National Advertising Co.
San Francisco : Duke's Agency.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS:

Canada and the United States, one year - - \$2.00

Great Britain and Foreign, " " - - 2.50

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WE have been favoured with advance proof sheets of an article on the Hall Mines, which in natural course would have appeared in the London *Critic* of the 17th of March. This article is in general a criticism on the management of the Hall Mines, particular stress, however, being laid on the extravagance displayed in the maintenance of the local office at Nelson. The *Critic*, as a rule, is both outspoken and impartial, but on this occasion we regret to say that while there is some truth in the statements that are made, the article contains many serious inaccuracies, showing clearly that the writer has no intimate acquaintance with the mine, or that he has been badly misinformed by the "B.C. correspondent who is well posted in the matter." The Hall Mines smelter, we are told should never have been built until the claims had been thoroughly proved and it was shown that enough ore had been "blocked out" to keep going for a considerable time ahead. All of which, in the abstract, is quite true. But when it is further stated that "the smelter being able to secure ores from outside mines, has been able to work more systematically than the mining department, which has all along been unable to respond to the demand on it for ore to keep the smelter going," it is time to ask where the *Critic* obtained this extraordinary piece of intelligence, in view of the actual facts, i.e. that only 3.36 per cent. of the ore smelted at the Hall smelter has been obtained from outside sources, the remaining 96 per cent. being the product of the company's Silver King mine. Further on it is stated that the Silver King is an extravagantly managed mine with a large pay-roll of men who are largely employed in getting out of one another's way; at least that was the case last summer, when about 160

or 170 men were employed in or about the mine. "There was work," we are informed, "for less than half that number if the mine had been worked with economy. . . . and it is a fact that at the Silver King there were more 'roustabout' carpenters, blacksmiths, timbermen and such-like supernumeries than there were miners." In reply to these very sweeping statements it is only necessary to say that last summer seventy-eight per cent. of the employees at the Hall Mines were underground workers, mostly miners and muckers; seventeen per cent. surface workmen, and five per cent. shift bosses, clerks, assayer, sampler and manager. Moreover, any man who refers to the blacksmiths, carpenters and timbermen employed at a mine as "supernumeries" is either very ignorant, or—well, deficient in other ways. The Hall Mines may have employed an unnecessarily large force of this class of labourers, but this point is not brought out. Carpenters, blacksmiths and timbermen (in due proportion), it need hardly be mentioned, are quite as necessary about a mine as miners and muckers. The writer of the *Critic's* criticism, after speaking in favourable terms of the Silver King mine as a property which, if well managed in future, will no doubt, make a satisfactory showing, next proceeds to offer a few suggestions of his own in the interests of the Hall Mines shareholders. We quote as follows :

"A few suggestions may be of interest to Hall Mines shareholders. The Nelson office of the company costs probably about \$10,000 a year. There is really little reason for its existence. An additional book-keeper at the smelter at a salary of \$1,000 a year could do all that is necessary. The office of general-manager is quite unnecessary and might be abolished. A good mine superintendent at the Silver King and a first-class man at the smelter do not require a general-manager as go-between in their relations with the board of directors. The superintendent at the mines should be instructed to discharge every man employed by him and re-engage about thirty to forty of the best of them. These he should engage on prospecting and development work, employing three eight-hour shifts in the twenty-four hours. The men should do their own timbering, and the large army of carpenters, blacksmiths, shift-bosses and general "roustabouts" should be passed on to the next English company that has "money to burn." The superintendent, with a day and a night foreman, should be able to do all the work at the mines and to keep what trifling accounts are necessary without expecting more of him than is usual of men in similar situations. Any assay work for the mine should be done at the smelter; and if it becomes imperatively necessary that any odd job must be done, men can always be obtained by the day from Nelson and while awaiting such emergencies should not be retained on the permanent staff."

We regret for a second time to be obliged to charge the *Critic's* writer with ignorance. But, really, what