

tons a year of late. In 1896 it was 1,568,000 tons—ninetenths of it steam—and in that year Germany built and launched 144,000 tons; she is, therefore, growing formidable as a shipowner.

A CENTRAL CANADIAN CHAMBER OF MINES.

Many Canadians have wondered why it is that capitalists in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe showed so little interest in the mineral development of Western Canada. While many Americans have shown their confidence by investing largely in British Columbia and Ontario mines, and while many of our own citizens are putting their comparatively limited means at the disposal of those who are slowly developing our undoubted mineral riches, we have scarcely tapped the great reservoir of European capital. At most it is only here and there that evidences of interest in our mines on the part of English or continental investors can be shown. How comes it that when Australian, African, American mines and prospects have attracted hundreds of millions of European money, Canada has mostly been given the go-by in this respect? Perhaps it is for lack of definite information as to our resources, for there is abundance of capital in European centres ready to flow into any channel whence a good return can be shown.

Not twenty years have elapsed since the riches of the Transvaal in minerals and diamonds were demonstrated broadly to the satisfaction of Europeans. And it needed less than half that period to induce the placing of twelve hundred millions of dollars of European capital and thousands of prospectors and miners within its borders for mining purposes. How was this effected? Largely by the organization of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines, the function of which was to place before the world the mineral resources of South Africa. It began its work, we are told, by a systematic propaganda of reliable, general and statistical information. "This was achieved by supplying the newspaper press of Europe daily with short paragraphs of interesting information upon mining matters, never allowing the interest to flag, until the millions of continental Europe and throughout the world became aware of the fact that there was such a place as Johannesburg and later to the fact that gold was there in payable quantities."

Something of the kind is needed in Canada, and we are pleased to learn of the foundation last week in Winnipeg of the Central Canada Chamber of Mines. This body proposes to do for Canada something like what the Johannesburg Chamber did for South Africa. An interesting address, with comparative statistics, applied to the gold fields of the Lake of the Woods, Ontario, Lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, Port Arthur, etc., upon this subject by Mr. F. H. Malcolm, late president of the Johannesburg Diamond Boring and Developing Company, has already been published by the institution, which can be obtained free upon application. We observe that the gentleman named, whose office is at Winnipeg, has been made secretary of the chamber. There are many influential names in the lengthy list of honorary patrons, but to these we do not attach so much importance as to the working members. These include F. W. Stobart, president; D. W. Bole and C. W. Chadwick, vice-presidents; D. C. Cameron, Senator Cox, of Toronto; Col. Ray, of Port Arthur; R. A. Mather, A. M. Nanton, H. C. Hammond, of Toronto; J. D. Crawford, Montreal; F. W. Heubach, R. J. Whitla, and a score or two of well-known business men of the West. We shall look with interest for results from this body, which from its constitution would seem "to mean business."

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

The plague is not over in the city of Sydney yet. The Government took the matter in hand, quarantined the wharves of Darling Harbor and the adjoining part of the city, and set two thousand men at work to clean it up. As this portion of Sydney did the produce trade of the place, contained some factories, and the wharves were those used by the Intercolonial steamers, the cleaning created a good deal of loss and interruption to business, but the result showed that it had to be done. Filth by hundreds of tons has been dug up, houses discovered in which families were crowded without the slightest lavatory provision, and wharves found to abound with dirt and rats.

This property was, of course, owned by wealthy men and corporations. Had they not been rich and influential these nuisances would have been destroyed long ago.

This city is governed by the most helpless municipal body in Australia. It has a sanitary bureau, and the Mayor used to assure the public from year to year that a house-to-house visitation was made and houses unfit for human habitation condemned. On the outbreak of the plague the same public was assured that every sanitary precaution had been taken, foul places cleansed and suspicious places duly disinfected. The procedure and its result are now known. The process was that when an inspector complained against any offensive premises the influential owner saw one of the aldermen of the Ward, who saw the inspector, and, if that was not sufficient, the Mayor and the inspector were advised not to push matters too hard—and they were not pushed.

Now be it known that this municipal corporation only governs the centre of Sydney, that portion in which the business is done, and it is these business people, the chiefs of commerce and trade, who have votes in proportion to the taxes paid. The maximum number of votes is four. It would be supposed that under such a system in which property, and therefore the leaders of the busy world, control affairs, there would be an ideal council. Never was there a greater mistake. Possibly there is less public spirit amongst the business men of Sydney than is to be found in any other Australian city; the other cities say so, but that indifference and the results that flow from it are by no means limited to this city. About one-fifth of these business people vote, and a large portion of the voters do nothing beyond it. And now Sydney is demanding a reformed city charter. What Sydney really needs is a reformed citizenship.

It was hoped that the activity of the Government had stopped the plague, because the number of new cases had gone down to two per day, but this morning the roll shows nine cases and six deaths. This number probably will not be repeated, and there are good reasons to hope that the end is in sight. The plague here has really not been an epidemic, and has not so far been responsible for one-fourth the number of daily deaths that are due to that other dirt disease—typhoid fever—but the possibilities have created alarm. It has affected business, and Sydney's export trade has suffered very seriously, as Australia does not care to get more from this infected city than is necessary.

New Zealand is the only colony that has yet quarantined against Sydney. The representatives of Messrs. Belding & Paul, of Montreal, and Currie & Co., Toronto, are amongst the sufferers by this procedure, and will have ten days taken from their trip in consequence. Trade in the other colonies is good; New South Wales has been blessed with the best rains that it has enjoyed for some years, and again we are assured the drought is broken. This is a story not to be accepted until confirmed by further rains next spring and summer, but good seed sowing and water for stock to drink is assured, and that is something.

Some two weeks ago a despatch from Adelaide announced the arrival of Dr. Oronhyatekha of your city by a German steamer, and that he had left for Sydney. Since that date the Doctor has been lost to the active news agent. Some of the luggage came here, but was sent back to Melbourne, in which city it is probable the Doctor halted, and thus evaded the plague.

A little over a year ago Mr. Alexander McMillan, of St. Catharines, Ont., came here with his family, and opened an office of the North American Axe and Tool Company. He did remarkably well, but worked too zealously. He passed through an exceedingly hot term in Melbourne and Adelaide, and went on to Western Australia. Drinking bad water brought on an attack of typhoid fever, but instead of going to an hospital he undertook to fight the disease down and steadily pursued his business all the way back to Sydney. At the end of three weeks he returned home, but it was too late, and he died in a week, before his friends had even heard that he was seriously ill. It was a sad end to a promising future. Mr. Yager of the Cock-shutt Plough Company, Brantford, is here. He is managing the business of the company, which hereafter is to be done directly with the farmer instead of selling to the wholesale trade as heretofore.

The steamer "Aorangi" arrived two days late, attributable largely to bad coal supplied at Vancouver. It is not because British Columbia coal is necessarily bad, because the captain says that what he has had before is the best he has used, but