

A MINING BOOM.

There has been in Western Australia a mining boom that may be called a boom. Between the first day of March 1894 and the last day of December 1896, not fewer than 731 Western Australian gold mining companies with an aggregate nominal capital of £75,871,372, or well on to \$400,000,000, have offered their shares for subscription to British investors.

It may perhaps be worth while to inquire what foundation there was for this boom and what prospect there is for the investors to get a return for their money. It must not for a moment be thought that \$400,000,000 cash was invested in these Western Australian mines. The amount of paid up stock bears but a very small proportion to the total amount of stock offered to the investing public.

In 1892 two prospectors, Bayley and Ford, discovered in Western Australia some rich gold-bearing quartz from which they extracted 700 ounces of gold. "They took this gold," says Mr. S. F. Van Oss, in the Nineteenth Century, "to Northern Cross, then a small mining camp. Within one day every able-bodied person in the town was prospecting and, needless to say, a rush also ensued from the coast."

This was the beginning of the Coolgardie rush. The prospectors were lucky and new fields were discovered. The finds were chiefly pockets that were extremely rich, and led the prospectors to conclude, with apparently good reason, that they had at last discovered a genuine El Dorado.

The principal industry in the new district soon became the formation and the promotion of mining companies. Experts drew up glowing reports and rosi-tinted prospectuses were published, and foreign capital was attracted to the district. Mr. Van Oss, in his account, says of this stage of the boom:

"Many mines were started, although most of them remain in an embryonic state until the present day. And there has been this peculiarity about these enterprises that people often embarked upon them without ascertaining the extent of the mines, their probable permanence or their presumable prospects as commercial ventures. Western mining companies, as I have already shown, were promoted by the hundred rather than by the score; but hardly anybody seems to have taken the trouble to ask for or to provide proof that these mines, into which scores of millions had been sunk, would repay the original outlay, let alone yield profits. This omission appears the more remarkable since it has always been known that these rich fields had serious drawbacks. There were no means of communication except camels; there was no adequate supply of labor; there was little timber; there was hardly any surface water; and, in addition, the auriferous deposits—one can hardly call them strata—proved tricky and 'potty'."

Of course it was some time before the general character of the deposits became well known. The experience of the miners proved that the vein or lead was always richest at the surface, or immediately below it, and that the deeper they mined the less valuable the ore became, if it did not "finish" out altogether.

Dr. Schmeisser, in his report, says: "This irregularity in the distribution of pay ore makes it necessary to determine by careful sampling and examination during the progress of the development work, which portions will pay to work. Another fact which I have frequently observed is the richness of the outcrops, either in pockets or for continuous stretches. This circumstance has repeatedly led to erroneous valuations of the deposit. For as soon as operations extended in depth, a considerable decrease in the value of the ore took place, and corresponding disappointment. In the more favorable of such cases, the ore at a depth, even if considerably poorer, will still be payable. In other cases, however, it becomes poor, even to barrenness."

While the boom lasted no attention was paid to these drawbacks. People, both in Australia and England, speculated in Western lands with perfect confidence. Inquiry and forethought with respect to these gold fields were unnecessary. There was no mistake about them. Speaking of the present condition of the mining industry in the Coolgardie and surrounding districts, Mr. Van Oss says:

"The yield of the mines is poor, if allowance is made for the expansion of the industry it is poorer even to-day than it was two years ago. In the year ending Sept. 30, 1894, 185,000 ounces were produced; in the year ending with September last only 254,829 ounces were mined, although the capital engaged in mining is at least six times larger now than it was two years ago. Moreover there has been a constant string of disappointments owing to the foolish faith of the public in the rash and optimistic predictions of the boomer and the promoter. Those interested in these mines have always held out bright prospects, with which actual performance had better not be compared."

Mr. Van Oss devotes much of his space to the methods of promoters. The relation he makes is not pleasant to those who believe that honor and honesty should have a place in mining as well as in all other commercial transactions. It may be said in a word that every device that could be invented or adopted has been resorted to to induce the public to invest in Western mining stock, and with only too much success. This is what Mr. Van Oss says about Western prospectuses: "The third point is that nowadays no reliance whatsoever can be placed upon the statements made in most prospectuses. They abound in mendacious statements, clearly made with the object to deceive. This abuse is so frequent and so general that one frequently wonders what object there is in having companies acts or a public prosecutor."

The italics are the reviewer's, not ours. But gold is sadly corrupting in Western Australia. It has affected even the newspapers and the news agents. "Managers" (of mines), he says, "seem quite anxious to cable good news relating to marvellous strikes and wonderful crushings; and there are several 'news agencies' which undertake for a small consideration to arrange for the insertion of these reports—and, indeed, almost any paragraph, in a large number of newspapers. Local country newspapers are freely used for this purpose, but so-called leading journals also lend themselves to the practice. I have a list containing the names of nineteen provincial dailies and of two London weeklies, all in 'good standing,' in which I have found such paid puffs. But the financial press is especially guilty of inserting such notices. With three or four honorable exceptions most financial journals are ready to insert and to recommend anything so long as they are paid for it."

We must not forget to say that the Western mines do not pay. "The dividends paid so far by mining companies aggregate only £221,825. For the present year the profit on the whole mining stock can at best represent a miserable fraction of 1 per cent." The history of the mining boom in Western Australia is instructive and should be read by everyone who takes an interest in gold mining in that or any other new country.

THE HUDSON'S BAY ROUTE. Lieut.-Col. Scoble, of Winnipeg, lately delivered at the Military Institute, Toronto, an interesting lecture on the "Back Door of Canada," by which he meant the Hudson's Bay route. It is this route proves to be practically will have a good claim to be called the front door of Canada, for it will in a commercial, military and in an Imperial sense, be of immense importance to the Empire. It will be an outlet for the products of what is destined to be the granary and the cattle ranch of the Dominion, and it will enable troops to be conveyed more than half way across the continent rapidly and without any chance of being delayed or attacked.

Lieut.-Col. Scoble is a strong believer in the navigability, for a considerable part of the year, of Hudson's Bay and Strait. He quotes Admiral Markham, who accompanied Lieut. Gordon in one of his expeditions as saying: "My opinion regarding the feasibility of the ocean route between England and Hudson's Bay is decidedly a favorable one and I have so reported. He adds, Admiral Markham was an Arctic navigator and examined the whole subject in the light of history and experience and he returned to England completely satisfied as to the feasibility of Hudson's Bay and Strait for from four to five months of the year." Tuttle, who also accompanied Gordon says: "There is probably no season of the year, however, when there is not at least one and one-half or two or three channels clear of ice. I may say in proof of this statement that in both the voyages of the expedition, while passing through the channel, we estimated that the field-ice extended about twelve miles from the west shore and possibly eighteen from the south. This left an open channel of at least thirty-five miles wide. One of our boats, the 'Arctic,' under the command of the late Captain Sopp, commander of the Neptune, in Gordon's first expedition, being asked: "Supposing you had been bound for Cape Chidley (the eastern entrance of Hudson's Straits), to Churchill or vice versa with cargo, how long would the ice have detained you?" his answer, after careful consideration, was "Not more than twenty-four hours."

This testimony is very important, for on the navigability of Hudson's Bay and Strait the feasibility of the Hudson's Bay railway depends. If, as Col. Scoble believes, the Bay and Strait are navigable for four or five months of the year, there is really no valid objection to the immediate construction of that very important road. The Government are doing wisely in sending another expedition to Hudson's Bay to find out if possible whether or not that inland sea is navigable long enough to permit of its being made a route for lines of commercial steamships.

RUSSOPHOBISTS. There are many people in England who are continually declaring that Russia is the natural enemy of Great Britain. They say that England should be perpetually on her guard against Russia; that she cannot afford to relax her vigilance for a single moment. These people hold that Russia envies Britain her eastern possessions, and is only waiting for a favorable opportunity to seize them. They, too, assert that it would be folly to place any faith in Russia's promises and professions. Russian diplomats are, they assert, profound dissemblers, and they take a pride in concealing sinister designs under a smiling and friendly exterior. It was these Russophobists that Lord Salisbury had in view when he intited the following passage of his Mansion House speech:

With respect to Russia, I should not have ventured to make any definite observations but for the extraordinary statements which have recently appeared in Germany on apparently the voucher of I, may say without fear, the greatest statesman that the latter part of this century has produced. I hesitate to make any observation upon statements coming from such a source, but I do reserve the right to demur absolutely to the assumption on which he appears to go—that there is a permanent necessary antagonism between Russia and Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) Now, of no such antagonism. I know of no cause that would give rise to it, and the interests of the two countries do not seem likely to cross in any important matter as which cross in any important matter so as to cause such a divergence as he appears to assume. (Cheers.) Speaking from the Foreign Office point of view, I regret to say that we have discussions with all Russia, but the discussions we have with Russia are by no means the most voluminous—I should almost say that they are the most concise of all in which we are engaged. (Cheers.) It is, therefore, to think, as a supposition of an anti-quoted diplomacy that there is any necessary antagonism between Russia and Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) I do not wish to select any Power as that with whom we should specially act. All I desire is to protest against a doctrine which points out any Power as specially our opponent. Well, I may say that I have good ground for believing that the Government pursues the same object and the same end in view as to concerning these terrible events in the East. Of course there may be a difference of opinion, and possibly there will be, as to the means to be pursued. I do not see the necessity of concurring in any proposition to exercise force in which the five other Powers may concur, but whether they will do so I do not know. At present I have only to repeat what I ventured to say from this place last year—it is the fallacy of the Sultanate, and through that alone, that we can hope to convey to the Christians and Moslems of the Turkish Empire some slight portion of that good government which has been the privilege of the West for so long.

THE RETAIL MARKETS. Owing to the recent cold and stormy weather, merchants handling farm produce have had difficulty in supplying the demand for hay. The Fraser being frozen over and the high winds keeping idle the small craft usually engaged in handling the produce caused almost a temporary hay famine in the city. There is one other marketable commodity that ranges in company with hay and potatoes, which have lately advanced a cent and promises to be very scarce. In meats the only changes reported are an upward tendency of mutton and a downward tendency of beef. There has been a great deal of the latter kind having the cold weather last week. The retail quotations for the week are as follows:

Flour—Ogilvie's (Hungarian) per bbl \$6.50
Victoria XXX 5.50
Lion 5.25
Portland roller 5.75
Salem 5.75
Rainier 5.75
Premier 5.50
Three Star 5.50
Two Star 4.50
Hungarian (Armstrong) 4.50
XXXX 5.25
Sirog Bakers 5.00
Wheat, per ton 35.00@40.00
Buckwheat, per 10 lbs. 3.00
Oats, per ton 25.00@30.00
Middling, per ton 28.00@30.00
Corn, whole, per ton 18.00@20.00
Ground feed, per ton 25.00
Corn, cracked, per ton 35.00@40.00
Cornmeal, per 100 lbs. 45.00
Oatmeal, per 100 lbs. 40.00
Rolled oats, per lb. 40.00
Potatoes, per lb. 1 1/2
Cabbages, per lb. 4
Hay, baled, per ton 15 00
Hay, cut, per ton 10 00
Onions, per lb. 15 00
Island, per lb. 15 00
Eggs, fresh, per doz. 50 00
Butter, fresh, per lb. 30
Creamery, per lb. 35
Delta, per lb. 25
Honey (Chilliwack) per lb. 25
Hans, American, per lb. 16 1/2
"Canadian, per lb. 16
"Boneless, per lb. 18
Bacon, American, per lb. 16 1/2
"Long clear 14 1/2
"Canadian 14 1/2
Shoulders, per lb. 12 1/2
Lard, per lb. 12 1/2
Golden Cottolene, per lb. 12 1/2
Meats—Beef, per lb. 5 1/2
Sides, per lb. 7 1/2
Veal 7 1/2
Mutton, 5 1/2
Pork, fresh, per lb. 9 1/2
Turkeys, per lb. 15 00
Chickens, each 50 00
Pigeons, per brace 1 00
Grouse, per brace 75 00
Duck, Mallard, per brace 8 10
Venison, per lb. 8 10
Fruit—California apples, per lb. 5
Lemons, California, per doz. 25 00
Pears, per doz. 20 00
Grapes, per lb. 3 00
Cranberries, per lb. 10 1/2
Oranges, per doz. 40 00
Fish—Salmon, spring, per doz. 10 1/2
Halibut, per lb. 8 10
Rock Cod, per lb. 12 1/2
Herring, per lb. 12 1/2
Haddock 20
Blotters, per lb. 10
Eastern oysters, 05

The Best Way To Cure Disease is to establish health. Pure, rich blood means good health. Hood's Sarsaparilla is the One True Blood Purifier. It tones up weak systems, gives appetite and strength and causes weakness, nervousness and pain to disappear. No other medicine has such a record of wonderful cures as Hood's Sarsaparilla. Hood's Pills are the best after-dinner pill; assist digestion, prevent constipation. 25c. NO AVAIL. Adam Soper of Burk's Falls Found All Avail Until He Used South American and Gives the Credit Where It Truly Belongs. "For a long time I have been a great sufferer from disease of the kidneys. I had tried all kinds of remedies, but all to no avail. I was persuaded to try South American. I had a bottle, and I took it. I was cured. I am a cured man, and can highly recommend this great medicine to all sufferers from kidney trouble." Sold by Dean & Hiscocks and Hall & Co. Christmas papers are in. Call and secure the pick. T. N. Hibben & Co. x Mining Companies' office stationery a specialty at the Colonist office.

WINTER AT ROSSLAND

Wonderfully Rapid Building Development—High Rents—Urgent Demands for Accommodation.

Railway and Tram Service—Traffic Over U. S. Roads—A Hint for Humanitarians.

ROSSLAND, Nov. 26.—(Special)—We are in the midst of an early and unexpected winter. Snow lies thickly on the ground and crackles and crushes with a hard, metallic sound under the feet when one walks over it. Last night was the coldest of the season; the thermometer showed 57 degrees of frost, but at noon to-day the mercury had risen to 12 degrees. At no time has the mercury sunk to zero. The air is cool and bracing, the sky sunny. The distant mountains stand out white and chill against the blue horizon in the background like huge clean-cut towers fresh from the hands of a Florentine carver of the sixteenth century. The whole country is clad in vestal raiments. The bare nakedness of the hills and valleys have disappeared and the fresh snow, sweet and clean, covers every rock and tree and lies deep on the streets and avenues of this marvelous young city. The merry jingle of the sleigh bells falls on the ears as the cutters dash through Columbia avenue, leaving a cloud of snow-spray in their wake. Even the typical small boy is here with his sled and the ready snow-balls to launch at the passer-by. The keen North wind is wafting around the cottage in which I am writing this letter, before a comfortable fire. But in spite of the cold and the snow building operations proceed almost as briskly as in midsummer. To be sure, the carpenters work in their overcoats, the plasterers cannot work at all. But in most cases plaster will be dispensed with and the houses lined with cotton and covered with wall paper, after the early Victoria plan.

The rapidity with which houses spring up here astonishes everyone. You cross a vacant lot this morning—making a short-cut from your home to your business place—and the afternoon you will see a few men leveling the surface of the lot. Before night the frame of a building has risen skyward. To-morrow the roof will be on, and in four or five days people will be moving in. All the hotels are crowded with guests, and office and house rents continue to rise. I know of a small office which was rented to-day at \$75 a month, and the owner of a small block of small frame shops and offices has just told me that he is enjoying a rent roll of \$700 per month, from an investment of \$3,500—about 225 per cent. per annum. Certainly this is too high, and is too good a thing to last long; but it serves as an indication of the scarcity of accommodation in spite of the fact that 700 buildings of all classes have been erected on the townsite in the past eight weeks.

The Corbin railway is creeping slowly and surely towards its terminal point in Rossland. In the face of the cold, the work is being pushed with vigor, and teams now receive their freight for Rossland at the temporary terminus, about four miles from town. In a few days the whistle of the iron horse will be heard here and freight will be discharged at the town depot.

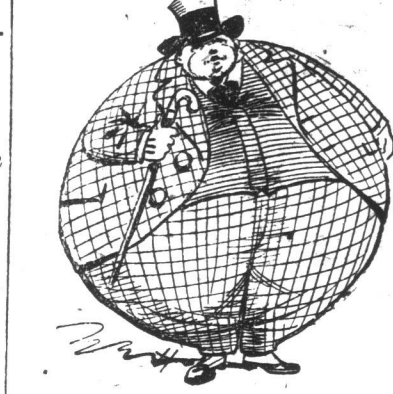
Mr. Heinze's brave little tramway is doing glorious service in spite of many disadvantages, and is rarely, if ever, behind time. Mr. Heinze will build to Robson from Trail before the close of the new year, and if the C.P.R. would but awaken to a sense of its possibilities and build from Robson to Arrowhead there would soon be two all-rail roads running into Rossland. The present half-half-half-way means of communication with Revelstoke is most unsatisfactory besides being expensive and very slow. It is a heavy freight which has to be hauled four times between Revelstoke and Rossland. The bulk of the freight and passengers—Canadians as well as American—is coming and will continue to come via the American roads until the P.R. shall have put on some of its old time energy and become again aggressive and enterprising.

The agitation which is being carried on at the Coast in favor of a people's railway does not find a responsive echo here. Most Eastern Canadians are content that the localities from which they emigrated, and in which they still feel an interest, should continue to enjoy the most of the enormous traffic. It is there no law, human or divine, which compels one to treat dumb animals with a proper regard to their comfort and protection? The way in which poultry is confined at Trail and in which it is carried on railways and steamboats, is disgraceful to the boasted civilization of Turkey, chickens and ducks are kept

SKIN DISEASES! One Remedy Which has Never Failed—Tried and Tested Ointment. Because other alleged remedies for piles, scrofula, eczematous eruptions, scalp, head, chafing, black heads, salt rheum and skin diseases generally have proved useless, don't condemn Dr. Chase's Ointment. It has never been known to fail. For instance, Nelson Simms, Meyerberg, Ont., writes: "I used Dr. Chase's Ointment for itching piles, and can recommend it highly. Since using it I have had perfect freedom from the disease." Peter Vanas, L. Amal, Que., had the eczema for three years. He had three doctors, but received no benefit. One box of Dr. Chase's Ointment and he was completely cured. Large scales covered his legs and body, but the Ointment soon removed them. He will swear to these facts. Dr. Chase's Ointment may be had from any dealer or from the manufacturers, Edmond J. Bates & Co., 45 Lombard street, Toronto. Price 50 cents.

Mothers' greatest remedy for coughs, colds, bronchitis and affections in Dr. Chase's Syrup of Limes and Lemons. The medicinal taste is wholly disguised, making it pleasant to take. Large bottle, 25 cents.

Bright Sunny Days



Will soon pass away: but our reputation for low prices and high value is like the little man in the corner. Remember what we say and be true to yourself.

- Our Cleaned Currants, 3 lbs. 25
Valencia Raisins, 3 lbs. 25
Citron, Lemon and Orange Peel. 20
Jam in 3-lb. Wood Pails. 50
Nice Meat in 1, 5 and 7-lb Packages.
A fine line of Christie Brown's Cakes.
Robertson Extra Fine Cream and Chocolate Candies.

Dixie H. Ross & Co., Government St.

Granby Rubbers. Honestly made of pure Rubber. Thin, Light, Elastic, Stylish, Durable. Modelled each year to fit all the latest shoe shapes. Extra thick ball and heel. Sold everywhere. They Wear like Iron.

Boys' English Overcoats..\$3.00, \$3.75, \$4.50
Men's Fine Top Coats. . . \$5.50 to \$19.00
Driving Ulsters \$5.75, \$7.00, \$8.50
10 CASES GLOVES AND MITTS JUST RECEIVED.

B. WILLIAMS & CO., 97 JOHNSON STREET.

for days in coops so low that the poor birds cannot stand upright, and so small that they are hardly able to move. They are scarcely ever fed or watered. To-day I threw a few handfuls of snow into one of the turkey coops, and the poor starved creatures went nearly mad in their eagerness to wet their parched throats. The provincial police should be instructed by Mr. Hussey to look into such cases of inhumanity.

Itching, Burning Skin Disease Cured for 35 Cents. Dr. Agnew's Ointment relieves in one day, cures tetter, salt rheum, piles, scald head, eczema, barbers' itch, ulcers, blotches and all eruptions of the skin. It is soothing and quieting, and acts like magic in the cure of all baby humors. 35 cents. Sold by Dean & Hiscocks, and Hall & Co.

Have you seen the Christmas Nos.? If not, call at Hibben & Co. CHOICE GROCERIES. SOME OF OUR PRICES:

- DRY SALT BACON. 9c. 1/2 lb.
LARD. 35c. 1/2 lb.
HAMS. 15c. 1/2 lb.
B. BACON. 15c. 1/2 lb.
M. TEA. \$1.35, 5-lb. box
CHOICE BLACK TEA. \$1.00 1/2 lb.
WHITE GRANULATED SUGAR. 55c. 1/2 lb.
COFFEE. 25c. 1/2 lb.
PURE COFFEE. 40c. 1/2 lb.
KIPPERS AND BLOATERS.

R. H. JAMESON, 33 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.

WHAT BETTER CAN YOU DRINK THAN JOHN JAMESON & SONS' (DUBLIN) 'OWN-CASED' Very Old BLACK BOTTLE WHISKY.

PLEASE SEE YOU GET IT WITH Metal Capsules (BLUE) One Star (GOLD) Two Star (RED) Three Star OF ALL DEALERS. Sole Export Bottling Agents to J. J. & S. C. DAY & CO., LONDON.

NOTICE. I hereby give notice that after sixty days I intend to apply to the Honorable Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works for leave to purchase a piece of land about one mile east of China Hat Reserve. Commencing at a post marked A, thence east 40 chains, thence south 40 chains, thence west 40 chains, thence north 40 chains, to place of commencement. Victoria, Oct. 22nd, 1896. S. WILLIAMS.

PAINT YOUR BUGGY FOR \$1.00 J. W. MELLOR Paints, Oils, Wall Paper, Plaster, Glass, etc. 141 Yates Street, Victoria.

"QUEEN" TOP-DRAUGHT HEATING STOVE.

Patented February 1st, 1896.



SOLE MANUFACTURERS: MEYER BROS., 87 Church Street, Good Agents Wanted. TORONTO.

NOTICE.

STOCK CERTIFICATES STOCK LEDGERS, STOCK JOURNALS, MINERS' PAY SHEETS, MINERS' CASH ABSTRACTS, MINING REPORTS, MINING MAPS AND PLANS SEALS.

THE COLONIST, VICTORIA.

NOTICE. Lease of Timber Limits, QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND.

SEALED TENDERS will be received by the Lands and Works up to 4 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, 24th January, 1897. From any person, partnership, or corporation, for permission to lease the timber, or for the purpose of cuttings of the "Land Act," and amendments thereof, viz.: Lots 32, 33, 34 and 35, Queen Charlotte Island; containing in the aggregate 10,814 acres. The competitor offering the highest cash bonus will be entitled to a lease of the premises for a term of twenty-one years. Each tender must be accompanied by a certified bank cheque to cover the cost of survey, \$4,000.00, the first year's rental, \$1,500.00, and will be at once returned to unsuccessful competitors. W. S. GORE, Deputy Commissioner of Lands & Works, Victoria, B.C., 23rd November, 1896. n23-104