

CUBAN ORES IN VIRGINIA.

The Engineering and Mining Journal's Article.

It Attempts to Disparage Virginia's Position as an Iron State by Assuming that Cuban Ores are Indispensable-The Able Reply of Mr. E. C. Pechin-He States the Exact Status of the Cuban Ore Question.

Under the heading, "Carrying Cuban Iron Ores into Virginia," the Engineering and Mining Journal of recent date contains the following article:

The statement is made by the Virginia Manufacturer of the 4th instant that the Norfolk and Western railroad proposes to import Cuban ore via Norfolk for smelting in furnaces along the line of that road. Cuban ore is claimed to be excellent for mixing with Virginia ore to manufacture Bessemer pig iron, and this importation would furnish freight for the thousands of cars that now carry coal from Pocahontas eastward and return empty.

We hope our Southern friends will give us some fuller explanation of this matter. We have been told for the last ten years that Virginia and other Southern States possessed all the ore and coal necessary to supply the "markets of the world" with iron for ages to come; that the ore and coal were nearer together than anywhere else, and that iron could be produced as cheaply as in England; but now we learn that Cuban ore is excellent to mix with Virginia ore—in other words, that Virginia ore needs some other ore to be mixed with it to improve it. If Cuban ore can be carried into Virginia to meet the Pocahontas coke, it can quite as easily be carried into Pennsylvania to meet the Connelville coke, and, if so, with the exception of the temporary difference in cost of labor, wages in Pennsylvania being higher, the much-lauded advantages of Virginia do not seem so very apparent. It has not yet been demonstrated that Virginia has any beds of ore which are equal in quality and extent either to the Cornwall bed in Pennsylvania, to those of the Lake Champlain region in New York, or to those of Cuba, still less to those of the four great Lake Superior regions.

However, we would by no means deprecate the resources of Virginia. While we do not believe that she is going to supplant either Pennsylvania or Illinois as an iron center, we would not be at all surprised to see her surpass Alabama or even Ohio. The accessibility of the Cuban ore is the one thing which gives her a great advantage over the two last named States.

The fact is, the United States is too large a country to have only one great iron center. No one state has such a monopoly of advantages that it can expect to retain control of the industry. According to the census returns, Pennsylvania increased her production of pig-iron in ten years from 1,930,311 to 4,712,511, or 2,782,200 net tons. Ohio increased from 548,712 to 1,302,299, or 753,587 tons; Illinois from 95,467 to 674,509, or 579,042 tons; Alabama from 62,336 to 890,432, or 828,096 tons, and Virginia from 17,906 to 302,447, or 284,541 tons. Pennsylvania's percentage of the total product of the country decreased from 51.05 to 49.19 per cent., Ohio from 14.51 to 13.59, while Alabama increased 1.65 to 9.29 per cent., Illinois from 2.50 to 9.04 per cent., and Virginia from 0.5 to 3.16 per cent. Although the percentage of Pennsylvania decreased, its actual increase or production was more than three times the increase of Alabama, and nearly ten times the increase of Virginia. So, while the increase of Virginia and Alabama has been phenomenal when reckoned in percentages, the actual figures merely show a tendency to distribution of the iron production among many centers rather than to concentrate it in one.

The importation of Cuban ore is a matter of considerable importance to the iron industry of the whole country as well as of Virginia. If the new mines now being developed should prove as profitable as the Jurugua mines, which shipped over 200,000 tons to this country in 1889, they will make up for the deficiency which is threatened in the Spanish and other foreign ores, and make the Atlantic seacoast one of the best locations in the country for the production of pig iron. The Pennsylvania Steel Company, in building its new works at Steelton, Md., has shown great foresight in this matter.

Assuming that the Cuban mines are going to be a permanent source of a large part of our iron ore supply, the question of the best location for iron manufacture becomes a very complex one. Some locations have one advantage and some have another, but there is no place without its disadvantages. Eastern Pennsylvania is accessible to foreign ores and to the ores of New York and New Jersey, and it has its own Cornwall ores, which will supply a portion of its demand only. Its anthracite is not as good a fuel as its Connelville coke, and that has to be carried a great distance. Its market is close at hand, being the whole of New England, New York and Eastern Pennsylvania. Western Pennsylvania has abundant fuel and access to all markets, but has no iron ore. It always pays the highest price for ore, and is the meeting point for ores brought from points as distant as Minnesota and Algiers. Its location at the head of the Ohio river is unequalled for giving it command of the markets of a vast extent of territory, and there can be no doubt that as long as its fuel lasts, Pittsburg will be a great manufacturing city.

The great source of supply of good ores being the Lake Superior region, and the great coke region being that of Western Pennsylvania and Southwestern Virginia, any number of locations may be selected between the ore and the fuel which may be called good ones. Thus Connelville in the coke region, Duluth, Minn., near the iron mines, and Chicago, Cleveland, Youngstown, etc., between them, are all good locations, each one supplying a certain market, but none able to command them all. Each location has its disadvantages, great distance from either the ore or coal, or both. In the South we are told that these disadvantages disappear, and that the coal and the ore lie close together. But the importation of Cuban ore into Virginia throws doubt upon this claim. It also has the disadvantage of being further from a large market than any of the more Northern locations named. The

great advantage of Virginia is its Pocahontas coke and its accessibility to Cuban ores. In this it is far ahead of Tennessee and Alabama. These latter States have at present the advantages of the cheapest labor and the closest proximity of ore and coal, but neither will the ore compare with Cuban ore nor the coal with Virginia or Connelville. They can make an ordinary quality of foundry iron, and sell it in competition with Northern irons in Northern markets, but there is not much profit in sending the iron so far for a market, and the great feature of the Alabama furnaces should be in supplying a demand yet to be created in the South itself. The claims that Alabama can make iron as cheaply as England must be received with great caution, and even if it could, it has not England's location on the seacoast by which it can secure a foreign trade. When England's supply of coke and the Spanish and African ore mines are nearly exhausted, then the junction of Cuban ores and Virginia coke may make Virginia, but not Alabama, the best iron location in the world, but that day is probably far distant.

MR. PECHIN'S REPLY. An enormous amount of twaddle has been going the round of the press in regard to the importation of Cuban ores into Virginia, and you yourself have an elaborate editorial on the subject, under date of September 13th. I am in a position to make an authoritative statement with regard to these ores. The Norfolk and Western Railroad Company has not bought any ore properties in Cuba, and does not propose to import Cuban ores via Norfolk for smelting in furnaces along the line of its road. The railroad company is not interested, either directly or indirectly, in the smallest degree in the purchase of the Sigma mines in Cuba, and in the developments now taking place at that point. Some parties interested in the securities of the Norfolk and Western railroad are subscribers to the stock of the Sigma Iron Company, but they are in a very small majority. The company is purely a Northern company, controlled by Northern and English capital, and its intent is to open up large mining operations at Sigma, and to import the high grade ores found there for any market that may be open, either on the whole Atlantic seaboard, or at approximate points to the seaboard in the interior.

There is an independent scheme on foot to establish steel works at or near Norfolk, because that is a very desirable point for the landing of the Cuban ores in the United States, especially in view of the fact that Norfolk has direct and easy communication with the splendid coles of the Flat Top region. I trust that this short statement is sufficiently specific to give the public a correct idea as to who control the Sigma mines.

A single word as to the subject-matter of your editorial, touching upon the point of the use of the Cuban ores in Virginia. You are perfectly right in saying that Virginia has not opened up, on a commercial scale, any Bessemer ores. What she may do in this line is yet to be determined; but Virginia possesses enormous stores, beyond any peradventure, of brown ores, admirably adapted for the making of forge and foundry iron. You understand as well as anybody the value of a high grade ore as a mixture with lower grade ores for specific purposes, and it is quite within the range of possibility that Cuban ores, delivered at Norfolk, will be used to a certain extent at interior points in Virginia for the purpose of admixture with the Virginia ores for certain purposes.

It will be extremely valuable for one use, and that is for a "fix." Virginia has no good "fix" ore. The rolling mills already in operation get their supplies of "fix" either from Northern New York or from the Lakes, and necessarily it is very expensive. If they can avail themselves at Norfolk of a high grade Cuban ore, to serve as "fix," and at a price much below what it is now costing them, it is going to exercise a very important influence in developing the rolling mill business all along the lines of the Virginia railroads.

FUNERAL OF MR. A. McD. SMITH. The funeral of Mr. A. McD. Smith will take place Friday morning, the 19th inst., at St. John's Episcopal Church at ten o'clock a. m. Services by the Rev. Dr. Meade. oct 8-2t

NOTICE.—In accordance with the resolution unanimously adopted by the stockholders of the Rivermont Company in general meeting assembled, in the city of Lynchburg, on September 25, notice is hereby given that the second installment of 20 per cent. or \$2.00 per share is called to be paid on or before the 15th day of October, 1890. Remittances will be made by check payable to the Rivermont Company, or by post-office order or by prepaid express. Those who have already paid their second installment will understand that this notice does not apply to them. A. M. DOYLE, Secretary of Rivermont Company. oct 2-1awk&oct 14

WM. F. BAKER. WM. H. MARKLEY.

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Virginia Green Building Stone.

This rare and valuable building stone is located immediately on the Norfolk and Western railroad, within one mile of Prospect depot, in the county of Prince Edward and State of Virginia.

It has been used in the neighborhood in which it is found for the past fifty years for building purposes, tombstones. It stands the test of time, looking as fresh, and lines as sharp and well defined as when first put up.

The color is a beautiful green and in certain lights has the appearance of burnished silver, or of being studded with diamonds, making a very attractive building. This is so rare as to make it highly valuable, and will be much sought after by those who wish to put up a handsome building for trimmings, mantels, inlaid work, &c. The proximity to the railroad makes the cost of transportation very low, costing to this place seven cents per hundred pounds, thereby placing it on the market in fair competition with other and cheaper grades of stone. It being soft when first quarried, makes it easily worked, which cheapens it as compared to other stones. When exposed, it hardens quickly, and will stand the pressure of any required weight without crushing or flaking off.

The tract of land on which this stone is found contains two hundred and ninety (290) acres, and is a beautiful town site. Lots enough can be sold at low prices, and on easy terms, to pay for the property, and leave the quarries and sufficient land in the hands of the purchaser. In this event, and under a good management, we believe the purchaser will (if he desires it) have every dollar he has paid in paid back to him, and be absolute owner of a valuable "quarry" simply for the outlay of the money for a short period. It is further believed that it will be adopted as the building stone of the country in the erection of all handsome buildings, trimmings, &c. It will be almost a monopoly, as it is the only stone of its kind in the South.

We have secured the whole boundary. It is more valuable than marble, yet much cheaper. It quarries and saws much easier than most stones.

Two experts, whom every one can confide in, Mr. C. C. Wentworth and Mr. G. R. Henderson, have made a thorough test of it, and do not hesitate to state "it is of the highest value." The latter of these two gentlemen, who is assistant superintendent of the Roanoke Machine Works, has given his certificate that it will stand a pressure of 12,000 pounds to a square inch. This is fully equal to granite.

The following are the certificates of experts who have examined, worked and tested the stone. To-wit:

CERTIFICATE OF M. V. CORSE, Roanoke City, Va.

[Report of analysis of Ripidolite, sample furnished by Mr. J. W. Neal, Roanoke, Virginia, July 7, 1890.] Mineralogical name, Ripidolite. Composition: Silica. Alumina. Magnesia. Oxide of iron. Water. Chromium (trace only).

M. B. CORSE, Roanoke City, Va.

CERTIFICATE OF WM. D. ANGEL, Roanoke City, Va.

ROANOKE, Va., July 21st, 1890.

Having made a thorough examination of the Green Stone Quarry at Prospect Depot, on the N. & W. R. R., I hereby certify that it is my belief that the quarry is very extensive, and almost inexhaustible in stone, and by proper machinery believe it can be gotten out very economically and easily.

Given under my hand this day and year above written. WM. D. ANGEL.

CERTIFICATE OF CAPT. R. V. DAVIS, Prospect Depot, Va.

PROSPECT DEPOT, Va., July 16, 1890.

Having been requested by the "Virginia Green Stone Building Company" to give my opinion as to the quality of stone on the tract of land belonging to I. B. Fitzgerald and R. S. Paulet, at or near Prospect Depot, in the County of Prince Edward, and State of Virginia, I hereby state that I have worked and gotten out this stone for the past forty years or more, and therefore do not hesitate to state that, in my opinion it is in almost inexhaustible quantities, and is capable of easy working, handling, &c. Given under my hand this 16th day of July, 1890.

R. V. DAVIS.

STATE OF VIRGINIA, } To-wit: COUNTY OF PRINCE EDWARD, }

I, J. B. Glenn, a Justice of the Peace in and for the County of Prince Edward, in the State of Virginia, do certify that R. V. Davis, whose name is signed to the writing above, bearing date the 16th day of July, 1890, has acknowledged the same before me in the County and State aforesaid.

Given under my hand this 16th day of July, 1890. J. B. GLENN, J. P.

CERTIFICATE OF G. R. HENDERSON, Roanoke City, Va.

MR. NEAL: I have had 72,000 pounds on this piece of stone, or about 12,000 pounds per square inch. This is fully as high as tables give for granite and limestone. You see the stone has just commenced to crush. Yours &c., G. R. HENDERSON.

CERTIFICATE OF J. McD. ROBINSON, Roanoke City, Va.

To B. Lacey Hoge, Secretary and Treasurer, DEAR SIR: I have just closed a two weeks' work on the Green Stone Quarry at or near Prospect Depot, Va., N. & W. R. R., and hereby certify that from the development made, that the quantity is abundant, and the quality equal to the testimonials attending this certificate. J. McD. ROBINSON.

For further information, address or call on B. LACEY HOGG, Secretary and Treasurer, room 5, Noonday Building, Jefferson street, Roanoke, Va., or J. W. Neal, J. R. Cunningham, Dr. H. V. Gray, Roanoke, Va., and W. B. Brightwell, Salem, Va.

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