

"At present the extent of information available in respect to the iron deposits of British Columbia, has more of a scientific than of a practically commercial interest. As exploration, however, is usually governed by practical considerations, it is probable that those deposits of which anything is known bear but a meagre relation to those of which nothing is as yet definitely ascertainable. It is not too much to say that British Columbia possesses enormous potential resources in her iron deposits, but that these resources must wait for commercial development upon the development of those industries which stimulate a demand for iron. Sooner or later the political reasons which led to the construction of United States battleships on the Pacific Coast for which, as we have seen, British Columbia iron was partially utilized, will give place to commercial reasons connected with the development of trade on the Pacific necessitating the building of a large mercantile marine. Sooner or later manufacturing industries, with their constant demand for iron, which is their base, will be brought into being to supply the ever increasing market of the Orient. When these things happen, British Columbia, with its abundant coal and lumber, in direct connection with its iron, must become the seat of a great iron industry. Meanwhile these resources are chiefly attractive to those who combine in a very rare degree the gift of foresight and indomitable patience."

With the exception of its happy indifference to the gender of British Columbia this is a dignified and logical summary of the position.

There are numbers of people in British Columbia possessed of a more or less superficial knowledge of Australian mining law who believe the province could with advantage introduce some features of the Australian system, particularly those which demand from the claim holder greater exertions in developing his property. The conditions under which mines are located and developed in Australia are as follows:

Armed with his miner's right, the prospector maps the outcrop till sufficient color warrants a location. He then has the right to mark out a prospecting area 160 yards square to hold the ground while he investigates its merits. This "pegging out" will hold the ground for thirty days, at the end of which time he must register his claim (cost \$2.50) at the nearest registrar's office. This affords a clean title

<p>AUSTRALIAN MINING LAW.</p>	<p>till payable gold is struck, when notice must be given to the Warden and a lease applied for. A lease, of course, may be applied for on any ground without first</p>
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holding it as a prospecting area, which is designed for the poor man only. When a lease is desired, the area wanted is defined by corner pegs, trenches and cleared lines as nearly correct as possible; notices of intention are posted and application made for the lease within ten days of marking. The fees must be paid on application, \$5 per acre per year rental being deposited for the first year in advance, together with the fee for survey, from \$20 to \$50. At the end of thirty days the application is heard in open court, when all objections are considered. If no valid objections are sustained, the lease is recommended by the Warden and issued later by the Minister of Mines. Immediately upon its recommenda-

tion the labor conditions come into force. For the first six months one man for every twelve acres; after that, one man for every six acres, must be constantly employed for eight hours five days in the week, four hours on Saturday. A lapse of three days in the labour conditions renders a lease liable to forfeiture on the application of any person applying for the same and proving the default. The case is tried by the Warden in open court and his decision is handed to the Minister for decision. The fulfillment of the labor conditions is part of the consideration paid to the government for the lease."

Such a system may be suitable to a country where nothing is looked for on the surface except free milling quartz, but would promptly asphyxiate prospecting and development in a country dependent on silver, lead and copper mines. Imagine a claim owner in the Boundary country four years ago face to face with a rental charge on his claim of \$250 cash per annum plus the obligation of keeping eight men continuously at work at an expense of \$800 a month. Would that have aided the development of the country? Not at all. Prospectors, mining men, capitalists and investors would have with one accord turned their backs on the country shouting a unanimous non possumus. It is possible that greater compulsion might be used with advantage towards claim owners in British Columbia to make them work claims; but legislative interference in this direction must be gone about very cautiously and circumspectly. The inducements so far held out to the prospector to acquire property rights in his discoveries have not been more than sufficient to secure the exploration of the province. To reduce them might not have by any means a beneficial effect. Though to the superficial observer it might seem that the immediate outcome would be a larger amount of development work done. It is perhaps necessary to remind those who see an advantage in these Australian rigours that mining in Australia is in a very backward condition compared with mining in the United States, where the theory of government has always been to leave the prospector, speculator and capitalist as free as possible to work out their own salvation, and the government's one idea to get rid of its mineral resources as quickly as possible into the hands of the individuals who discover them. To a new country the question is one of grave importance. It is always as well to remember that to every shield there are two sides.

Anyone in the habit of reading the English mining, or we should say the financial press, for what we understand as a critical mining journal does not seem to exist in England at all, and the work undertaken by such here, is there one of the functions of the financial press, cannot but be struck by a painful remoteness from a knowledge of mining conditions as they actually exist in British Columbia. It is rather a want of apprehension than of comprehension. It gives the onlooker the impression that the mining investors in Great Britain are looking at British Columbia through a fog. What they see is curiously out of proportion somehow and distorted. There is a great difficulty in analysing just in what this want of apprehension consists, but a few concrete examples may serve to illustrate it.

To begin with a very gross example. Some time ago a letter was published in one of the leading Lon-