

The representative of the MINING RECORD who early last month visited Poplar Creek contributes to this month's number some interesting information relative to that district. As was to be expected he characterizes as ridiculous exaggerations many of the sensational statements that have appeared in the Kootenay newspapers, the like of which continue to be published by them. It is gratifying, though, to have his assurance that apart from these picturesque, but unfortunately inaccurate, stories there are in the Lower Lardeau surface showings of unusual excellence and great promise. With so little development work as yet done there was not at the time it was visited, much more that was definite to be said of that section. No single gold property had as yet demonstrated by the shipment to mill or smelter of even a few tons of ore that in quantity the ore contains values that will leave a good margin of profit above the cost of mining and recovery of the precious metals. There was an excellent reason for this lack of proof, viz., that sufficient time had not yet elapsed since the presence of gold in unusually large quantities in surface rock was discovered for this to have been done. At least one organization now has matters in train for giving its property more than a superficial test, and this fact is an evidence of the *bona fides* and the confidence in the value of their property exhibited by those who have promoted the Poplar Creek Mining & Milling Company. That their work will be abundantly successful is much to be desired. But until results that establish the permanence and profitableness of this new mining field—new in the sense that it is only now being opened up, although known for years to prospectors as mineral-bearing—judgment should be suspended. So much attention has now been turned to the district, that the provision of sufficient capital to give it a thorough test appears to be assured. It is not reasonable to look for results establishing the permanence of the field within a few weeks. Development work takes time, so that it may be months before sufficient data will have been obtained on which to come to a well-grounded conclusion. There is much in favour of the more expeditious development of this section than is common to new camps. A railway passes through it; bases of supplies are within easy reach; the country is not more inaccessible to prospectors than usual, in fact there are other parts of the Province receiving the attention of prospectors that are much more difficult to explore and closely examine than is this. One serious drawback is that the open season will not last many weeks longer, for snow may be expected to soon cover the ground and to remain until next spring. Yet surface showings have been discovered on half a score creeks, so that there should be some underground

prospecting carried on the winter through on each of these. It should be practicable to do much to open up most of them, so that if they or any of them, prove of sufficient merit, the whole of the open season of next year will be available in which to install plant and equipment and make other necessary provision for permanent working. It is to be hoped that results will amply justify all reasonable expectations. The Province as a whole cannot but benefit from the profitable development of any of its natural resources, but misplaced confidence and resultant failure are the reverse of a benefit, since they serve to deter enterprise that might otherwise find an outlet in some legitimate channel. The MINING RECORD is not pessimistic as regards Poplar Creek, but the memory of the alleged wonderful richness of the Golden Cache mine and the disastrous failure of that Coast-promoted venture has not yet quite passed away. One such fiasco, with its train of evils, does more harm than half a dozen successful mining ventures can do good. So it is urged that no hasty conclusions be arrived at in regard to the Lower Lardeau, in which there are likely to be discovered half a dozen creeks quite as rich as Poplar Creek is reported to be. But whether this be so or not, Poplar Creek will probably be found to be a permanent mining camp.

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Commenting editorially on mining conditions in British Columbia, the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, of New York, in a recent issue, after noting the gradual improvement that is taking place, and referring to the satisfactory developments in Rossland, the Boundary and the Coast districts, remarks:

"The weak point is in the continued idleness, or semi-idleness of the silver-lead mines in the Kootenay and elsewhere. The proposed bounties on lead refined in Canada may benefit these mines, which have practically no outlet at present for their product; shut out of the United States by the tariff, they have to compete in the comparatively limited market of Canada with British and Spanish lead, which can be sold there at a lower price than the British Columbia mines can afford to make. The eight-hour law in this Province is not working well, and has made a good deal of trouble. The increased cost of labour is injuring many of the smaller mines, and may result in closing down many of them. There has been a good deal of friction over the matter, and the labour situation is far from being satisfactory."

Had comment on these lines been made two or three years ago, it would perhaps have been an accurate enough summing up of the situation, but we confess