

PROVINCIAL INFORMATION.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

British Columbia has an estimated area of 383,000 square miles, and a population, according to the last official census, of 98,173, made up of 54,061 whites, 35,202 Indians, and 8,910 Chinese. The province is a great quadrangle of territory, 700 miles long by 400 wide, lying north of latitude 49°, and west of the central core of the Rocky Mountains, extending along the Pacific Coast as far as latitude 55°, and including a large number of adjacent islands. Striking inland to latitude 60°, it is shut off from the sea board by a narrow strip of Alaskan territory, and is bounded on the east by longitude 120°. The great mountain ranges of the province—the Rockies and Selkirks on the east, and the Coast and Island ranges on the west—exercise a very important influence upon the country, climatically as well as commercially. There is no mountain scenery in the world to compare with that of British Columbia, nor are better facilities anywhere afforded of enjoying it.

MINERAL RESOURCES.

It is not alone the scenic grandeur of these magnificent ranges that is their chief commendation, but their astonishing mineral wealth, which is indeed phenomenal. To her mineral wealth is due the first prominence which the country attained, her gold placers for a long time being the chief attraction to her shore. The base and precious metals are almost everywhere to be found in the province, and are bound to prove a chief factor in her future de-

velopment. It is a well-established fact that a purely agricultural country rarely attains to any very high degree of wealth or importance, as compared with one in which mineral deposits are rich. It must not, however, be inferred that British Columbia lacks in fertility of soil or salubrity of climate, for in both respects she is liberally endowed. But then the speedy accumulation of wealth, which naturally follows in the wake of successful mining of the precious metals, and the impetus given to manufacture by the presence of coal and iron in abundance, have ever been found an attraction to any country blessed with these indispensable to prosperity. Mining, however, has heretofore been conducted after a very crude fashion; but a better day has dawned, science, mechanism, capital and system being brought to the aid of enterprise and labor. New roads are being constructed in the richer of the mineral regions, railway systems built up, and the most approved machinery introduced for the treatment of the ores. Writing of the resources of British Columbia, Professor Dawson, C. M. G., F. R. S., (*Mineral Wealth*, p. 15) says:—

"Everything which has been ascertained of the geological character of the Province, as a whole, tends to the belief that so soon as means of travel and transport shall be extended to what are still the more inaccessible districts these also will be discovered to be equally rich in minerals, particularly in the precious metals, gold and silver."

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