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A. 73

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## What Brings the Merry Mining Boom?

By INVESTICUS

It has been observed ere now on this page that the trusting public may look for a mining boom any one of these bright spring days. It is quite as certain to come as are the dandelions on your front lawn. The newspapers will shortly blossom like the rose with full page, half-page and quarter page advertisements. Prepare, therefore, your soul for the great ordeal. To mix the figure up a little more I should say, put your money away down in the stoke-hold of your ship, batten down the hatches, pull down your ear flaps on your hat and hold your breath. If you don't you will stand an excellent chance of catching your death of ear-ache and losing your money. It might be as well also to borrow a pair of smoked glasses or motor goggles to keep the gold dust out of your eyes. The mining sharps are sure going to make a killing.

Now mind you, if you can be a mining sharp and do the killing yourself—why all right; go right ahead. We have no editorial duty toward you, brother, except to help put you in jail if you allow your technique to get clumsy, so that the victims have time to squeal before you have slit their weazand with a paper knife. But if your technique is neat and your prospectus within the law as prescribed by the statutes of the province of Ontario—we shall do nothing but speak of you respectfully and with bated breath. The gentle art of trimming the public is by no means a poor accomplishment. It takes brains and courage and patience. If you can get away with it without having the public trim YOU—well, may your shadow never grow less and may your children treat you with some show of respect. The public these days is a fairly wily beast. And the public that pays most sincere attention to the mining sharp is the public that earns its own skinning, if I may use the figure.

Now if you don't intend to abandon all other work and pleasure in order to learn to be a mining sharp, let me

tell you how to get skinned with a minimum of pain. Of course the first step is always pleasant, just like sin. You read the pretty advertisement and it makes you feel nice all over. You've a slight tickling in the region of your wallet pocket and a few visions of being able to buy your wife a vacuum cleaner without embarrassing your tailor. You read all about the new mine which has been discovered and you go down and see some samples of ore, and you fill out a slip applying for shares—and bingo!—where are you?

And why? Because it is as necessary to have a mining boom once in a while, or an oil boom, or a real estate boom, as it is for children to have crying spells when they are young, or for you to have an occasional period of high pressure. The boom is, for the body politic, a sort of Turkish bath, or general shaking up of all the purses in the body politic's precious pockets. All the old tight-wads are loosened up and all the niggards and ne'er-do-wells get a new lease of interest in life. But a mining boom can only come every so often, like Christmas. There has to be time for the folks to forget the last mining boom. Then there has to be a time for them to re-accumulate a little money—the money which the successful operators in the last boom have been spending on Broadway since that happy epoch closed. Then there must be a certain salutary restlessness on the part of the public, a desire for excitement. All these conditions being present—the boom is ripe. It is ripe to-day. The money that munition workers and munition exploiters have been making hangs heavily in their pockets. They don't want more money—what they want is excitement. But they find excitement in risking the gain of more money by gambling all that they have—even that which some of them have not.

The sad truth of the matter is, that some of them WILL make money. That is always the way with mining (Continued on page 26.)



Prince Henry demonstrates the new virility of England by doing cross-country, trans-river runs with as little on him as the law of the Empire allows. He is here seen coming up out of a river.