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## THE MONTH.

THE events which have been transpiring in the mining industry of the Province are not such as to warrant a hopeful outlook for the immediate future; the condition of the public mind to which these events have given rise is akin to desperation and is certainly confused. Not merely the letters and articles which appear in the public press but the private expressions of individual views, of which the MINING RECORD is the frequent recipient, seem to agree only in one point, namely, that there is something wrong, although as to what remedies should be applied there appear to be as many different opinions as there are individuals affected. It would not be particularly helpful if we were to add another voice to this discordant outcry. To adopt the diagnosis of one man and advocate his remedy would be merely to superadd a grievance to another and render final amendment less hopeful than ever in his opinion. If, however, a common agreement could be arrived at as to the causes which are blameable for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, we

would have traversed half the distance towards the remedy. Therefore an attempt to investigate the conditions which are giving rise to the undoubted discontent which exists should have some good effect, even if the investigation be not complete, and even if the conclusions arrived at be incorrect, because, if light is thrown upon a subject correct conclusions in regard to it are a matter of course in a very short time, even if they are not immediately appreciated by the man who holds the lamp.

The first symptom of disorder has been the increasing difficulty of securing development capital for the mining industry of British Columbia. We have within the last month seen \$7,500,000 of development capital wiped off the slate, and we have also seen a very fine property abandoned on the ground that the eastern investor would no longer follow the capitalist who had a bond upon it. There are other instances beyond number.

Many people are inclined to deal with this difficulty of obtaining development capital as if it were more than a mere symptom, which it is not. Here the first confusion arises. One man says: "Let us alter our laws; let us cut here and carve there; let us restrict here and encourage there;" another, "Let us educate the outside capitalist; let us advertise our resources," and so forth and so on. Then the millennium will arrive, the owners of prospects will all be rich and mining shareholders will wax fat.

It is necessary to do away with this false impression that the difficulty of obtaining development capital is the cause why British Columbia suffers and to ask the question:—What creates this difficulty?

The reason it is now difficult to secure capital to develop mines in British Columbia is that the promises made in the name of the Province to investors who have already supplied capital have not been kept. What induces capital to come into a country which has never, so far, produced anything but the hope or promise of profits. And what maintains the inflow but the realisation of past expectations and the promise of future profit. It is idle to promise profits in the future with nothing to be shown but losses in the past.

It may most unhesitatingly be stated that the average return to capital hitherto invested in mines in British Columbia has been unduly low, and that the expectations upon which that capital has been contributed have not been fulfilled. British Columbia has been judged largely on the record of Rossland, Toad mountain and the Slocan. The results in these districts have been almost