

THE ELDORADO OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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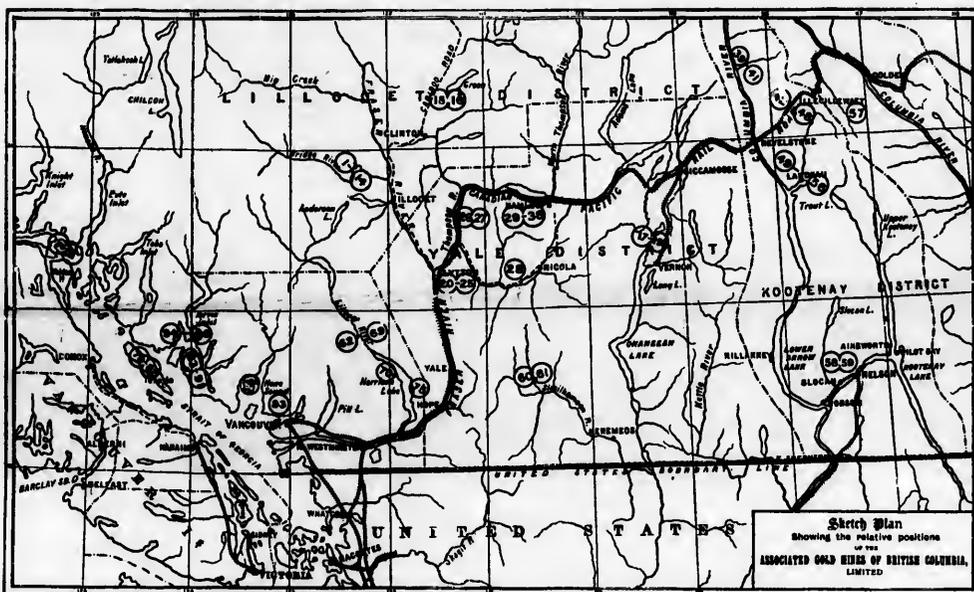
(Author of "The Rise and Growth of the English Nation.")

Public attention has been drawn of late to the vast auriferous wealth which has been brought to light in British Columbia. That province has an area of 385,300 square miles, or more than three times the size of the United Kingdom. It has lofty mountain ranges, immense forests, many fruitful valleys, large rivers, a seaboard of a thousand miles in extent, inexhaustible fisheries, and vast agricultural possibilities, besides mineral wealth, the extent of which it is almost impossible to overestimate. In the southern portion the climate is superior to that of Southern England or Central France. In this section snow seldom falls, and then it lies only a few hours or days. Dr. George M. Dawson, C.M.G., of the Dominion Government Geological Survey, and Mr. William Ogilvie, of the Land Survey Department, certify to the mineral resources of this great British dependency.

The Hon. James Baker, Minister of Mines, gives in his last report full particulars of the various districts. The mineral lands are open to location by any person having a free mining licence, which costs five dollars per annum, but only one claim of 1500 feet square, equal to fifty-two acres, can be staked off by one person, and he must conform to the regulations of the Mineral Acts. Possessory rights are secured by doing 100 dollars' worth of work on the claim in each year, or by

the early stages of development, when the vast area of hidden wealth is considered. Great strides, however, have already been made, and many of the camps are completely equipped for mining operations. In the Lardeau, Big Bend, and other parts of this rich region, mining is profitably carried on, and, as capital is acquired through the working of the mines, or is brought in, the output of ore will be immensely increased. Capitalists and practical miners have shown their unbounded confidence in West Kootenay by investing millions of dollars in developing claims, equipping mines, erecting smelters, building tramways, &c., and an eminent American authority speaks of it as "the coming mining empire of the North-West." In 1896 the population of West Kootenay was trebled, and the year witnessed the creation of a number of new mining-camps, which astonished the world with their phenomenal growth and prosperity. There are valuable timber limits in different parts of the country, and saw-mills are in operation. One of the desirable features of British Columbia for mining is the presence in all places of timber, and in most of water also.

Revelstoke is the gateway to the great West Kootenay mining-camps. It is situated on the Columbia River, which, twenty-eight miles below, expands into the Arrow Lakes, whence there is steamer communication to Nakusp. The opening of the Nakusp and Slocan Railway to Sandon, with the establishment of a steambot service on the Slocan and the Okanagan Lake, has done much to develop the district. Geologists and mining engineers of authority state that within a radius of twelve



PLAN OF THE ASSOCIATED GOLD MINES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.  
(The Numbers refer to the Ninety-two Mines.)

paying that amount into the Treasury of the Province. When 500 dollars' worth of work has been done, the owner of the claim can secure a full title by means of the Crown grant of the land, after which no annual assessment is required.

Cariboo has been thus far the best known, because it has attracted numerous settlers, but there are immense treasure-fields lying to the south of it. Lillooet, for instance, is rapidly assuming importance as a gold-producer. The Golden Cache and many other valuable mines are being operated, and quartz-bearing veins are being developed. In the districts of Yule and Kamloops placer-mining has been successfully carried on for years, and rich mineral discoveries have recently been made, carrying gold and copper.

Lillooet district lies directly south of Cariboo, and is bisected by the Fraser River. The country is as yet only sparsely peopled, the principal settlements being in the vicinity of the river, though there are others which, when the projected Cariboo Railway is built, will rapidly become of more importance. This district is rapidly coming to the front as a gold-producer. West Kootenay district lies east of Yule, and extends north and south from the Big Bend of the Columbia River to the international boundary, embracing, with East Kootenay (from which it is separated by the Purcell range of mountains), an area of 16,500,000 acres. West Kootenay is chiefly remarkable for its great mineral wealth. Marvellously rich deposits have been discovered in different sections, and new finds are almost daily made. There is still a large area not yet prospected, which will doubtless yield even more phenomenal returns of precious ores. It is a country of illimitable possibilities, but is only passing

miles of Rossland Nature has deposited more golden store than in any similar area on the globe. Rossland is the site of such famous mines as the War Eagle, Iron Mask, Nickle Plate, Le Roi, and others, the value of the ore from which ranges from twenty-five to two hundred dollars per ton. Le Roi mine, in particular, may be ranked among the great gold-mines of the world. It was opened up four or five years ago by men of limited means. It is now paying £10,000 per month in dividends. Rossland has risen since the first year of its existence from a camp of three hundred miners to a city of between five and six thousand people, whose numbers are rapidly increasing.

The Canadian Pacific Railway has completed its extension from Revelstoke to Arrow Head, adjacent to which is the Lardeau district, rich in galena ore and gold quartz, and placer claims on which active work is being done. From this point to Trout Lake a good road has been built by the Provincial Government. Where the first spur lines will be built from the Crow's Nest Pass Railway to the North Star and Sullivan group of mines, Nature has provided two passes through the mountains, either of which can be selected, and the grade will be comparatively easy. The Crow's Nest Pass Railway will stimulate activity, for there is no doubt but that the rich mineral lands abutting will be thoroughly explored as the means of egress and ingress improve. One hundred miles of that railway are already built, and one hundred and fifty more are expected to be finished by the end of the present year. Wagon-roads have been made from various central railway points into the different mining districts, and many others are about to be built. Large fields of coal and oil are being discovered.