

of profit by which it lives. Upon its delicate organization taxation acts literally as the hand of death. It shrinks, withers or dies at its touch. Taxation which is excessive or badly placed is worse in effect than war and pestilence. As industry declines the burden becomes heavier on the survivors, and thus the disease accelerates its own progress. Such taxation kills the goose which lays the golden eggs, and the bankruptcy of the State inevitably follows.

The simple principles of modern scientific taxation are well understood. In theory, if not in practice, the world has progressed since Colbert, the famous Minister of France, summarized government finance as "the art of plucking the goose with the least amount of squealing." In the light of modern knowledge taxes may be so laid that industry is not only uninjured, but is, on the contrary, actually benefited by them. In this twentieth century there is no excuse for excessive taxation or for mediæval methods.

The State may, if it will, not only relieve the "Mother of Industries" from all its burdens, but it may in a less important way encourage and aid it by attending to those matters which are beyond private enterprise. Maps, geological surveys, studies of districts and the collection and distribution of all kinds of information valuable to the industry, are peculiarly the province of the State. It should, however, be confined to this field, the only exception being the few cases where it is necessary for the State to interfere by regulations for the distribution of mining property and for public safety. It is easy for a department of mines to maintain such close touch with the whole industry, and such cordial relations, as to secure its effective co-operation in all its work. It should in fact as well as in theory be its representative its advocate and its watchful guardian.

As to the outlook for relief in British Columbia, we do not delude ourselves with any illusions. The disease has gone too far. History shows clearly that in all such cases the evil forces which control the machinery of government hold out to the last against reform. No government ever reforms until it is forced to do so by the overwhelming power of popular will. The exertion of this power is always long delayed because of the apathy and blindness of the public towards economic questions, and the long time required for it to recognize the causes of its distress. It is probable that a prolonged period of depression and suffering will be necessary to educate voters and compel reform. Meanwhile only the richest and most fortunate mining enterprises will survive.

But notwithstanding the gloom of to-day, we mining men, looking far beyond the present, have a clear view of the future grandeur of the commonwealth of British Columbia. We know its wonderful natural resources, the character and energy of its people. We know that civilization cannot be held back. Some day there will be good government, and with this one requisite supplied will appear an era of prosperity beyond the wildest hopes. Whether its arrival will find us here or labouring in other parts of the world we neither know nor care. We only know our present duty, which is to maintain a united front to the evils before us, and steadily to press the fight for reform.

## THE MINERAL RESOURCES

### OF VANCOUVER ISLAND.

(By W. M. Brewer.)

**T**HE mineral resources of Vancouver Island comprise gold-bearing quartz, copper-gold sulphide ores, bornite ore, iron ore, coal and auriferous black sand.

The industry of lode mining is at present only in its infancy. In fact systematic prospecting was only really commenced about 1897. Since then the coast lines have been fairly well exploited, but the interior of the Island, except around Mount Sicker and Alberni, has not been explored. The reasons for this are that while prospectors can travel along the shore lines of the numerous inlets, bays and lakes by boat or canoe, it is only with the greatest difficulty that they can travel in the interior, where the growth of timber and underbrush is so dense, mountains precipitous and the streams too rapid to permit of navigation even with canoes.

With these difficulties to overcome, and the further fact that until the present time all ore mined on the Island had to be exported to the United States for treatment, it is hardly to be wondered at that metalliferous mining has made no greater progress in the past, but in the future this rule should not apply, because smelting plants have been installed on the east coast of the Island, the Government has been extending the trails and improving the roads, and the population of the Island is more thoroughly educated in the work of the prospector and the business of developing mines.

The actual productive districts of the Island to-day, so far as metalliferous ores are concerned, are the Mount Sicker, Kennedy Lake, Alberni, Sidney Inlet and Quatsino. Of these, Mount Sicker takes the lead, the Lenora mine alone having shipped about forty thousand tons of copper-gold ore, while in the Tyee mine there are about sixty thousand tons of the same character of ore blocked out. This grade of ore yields per ton an average value of about five dollars in gold (five per cent. (dry) in copper and variable silver values sufficient to appreciably increase the commercial value of the ore. Besides this grade of ore there are some forty thousand tons of second grade on the dumps at the Lenora which carries sufficient value to pay a profit to the mine owners as well as for treatment at the smelter plant of the North-western Smelting and Refining Company at Crofton.

It was in consequence of the large amount of ore in sight and the promising prospects in the Mount Sicker District that the smelting plants at Crofton and at Ladysmith were erected during the past summer. The former of these, with a capacity of about seven hundred tons per day, erected by the North-western Smelting and Refining Company, has contracted for the entire output of the Lenora mine, production from which constitutes for the works a base of supply. This smelter will, in addition, to secure this tonnage, purchase copper-gold ores from all points on the Pacific Coast, with the expectation of treating mine products from as far north as Alaska, and those