

## Mineral Resources of British Columbia.

At a time when the mineral resources of British Columbia are attracting attention, as a sequence of the discoveries that have been made in its latent mineral wealth, and when it is becoming increasingly apparent that upon the development of this subterranean wealth the future prosperity of the province will to a great extent depend, I will lay the following particulars before your readers, respecting the prospects this country affords for profitable mining.

As is well known, British Columbia came into prominence in 1858, as a result of the gold discoveries on the banks of the Fraser river in that year; and from that time to the present date gold mining has formed one of the most important industries in the province. For the past few years placer mining having declined, attention must now be paid to the quartz lodes, whence the gold in the placers have been derived, and the success which has attended operations in this branch of mining in California, Australia, and other renowned gold fields, should give a stimulus to the starting of similar operations in this province.

Placer mining forms the precursor to the development of quartz mining, and the rich auriferous fields which have added so much to the prestige of British Columbia, will evidently soon receive the attention they deserve, presenting, as they do, geological features analogous to the California fields.

Before proceeding further it will be well to recount the disadvantages which have precluded a successful development of the quartz ledges in this province in the past:

1st. A serious drawback to a successful prosecution of quartz mining heretofore was the remoteness of the district from railway communication, and the crippling charges thereby entailed in transporting freight and necessary mining machinery, and in countries with such inadequate facilities of transportation, capitalists, as a rule, evince a disinclination to invest, pending more favorable opportunities for more economical working; and in this way many promising mines—no matter how deserving their intrinsic merits might have been—have been temporarily suspended, awaiting the advent of the railway with its beneficent influence.

2nd. Placer mining has always proved a fascinating pursuit, and free from the apparent risk and lay out in connection with the more permanent branch of mining—quartz operations—and when gold has been found in paying quantities in the alluvial deposits quartz ledges were either ignored or deferred for future working.

3rd. On the placers giving out, the gold miner, with his accustomed restlessness, starts out for some new field, and, in due course, is followed by a general exodus of his zealous fraternity, and the gold field thus becomes deserted, which cause also accounts for the paucity of quartz operations in the localities where rich detrital deposits of the precious metal were found.

4th. It is a well known fact that in the past tactics were resorted to in connection with quartz mining incongruous with bona fide mining, which had the effect of depreciating the reputation of certain mining districts in the

province, and proving prejudicial to the mining interests at large.

Public confidence—although a slow growing plant—is, at last, being restored, and when one of the undertakings now being worked turns out successfully, several other properties, which have languished through lack of capital and the insuperable difficulties which I have enumerated, will be readily acquired, and capital will not be chary in embracing opportunities hitherto neglected. Experience has taught us that the discovery of, at least, one paying mine in a new country—now as regards the development of its mineral wealth—is a *sine quo non* to the opening up of other channels of undeveloped wealth, and this has been plainly demonstrated by the results which have followed, and are still following, the untiring efforts of the shareholders of the Treadwell mine, Alaska—a country aptly described as the “Great Lone Land,” and which, literally speaking, has been born under the “Stars and Stripes,” and where American enterprise is making rapid strides and meeting with deserved remuneration—a country in fact, although a few years ago a terra incognita as regards mineral wealth, to-day bids fair to become one of the most extensive gold producing countries in the world.

What has been done in the shape of quartz mining in this province in the past has been done by persons of limited financial means, and despite various obstacles, and outside assistance which was sorely needed to foster the mining industries, was not forthcoming, for reasons which I have already adduced; but local enterprise, although entirely inadequate to meet the expense incidental to a more extensive development, was instrumental in throwing light on the long concealed treasures, and proving conclusively that this country, like its “rich neighbors” is well worth the attention of the capitalist.

Having thus dilated upon the obstacles which militated against quartz mining, I will now refer to the results of past workings in the gold fields, which have been given to me by an old pioneer; and it will be seen that if past records of wealth are an inducement to start quartz mining operations—and I know such records have formed an important factor in launching companies for quartz undertakings in various parts as evidenced by the exertions put forth in obtaining capital for the Australian and Brazilian gold mines—British Columbia is entitled to every attention. It is well known that the most extensive and lucrative gold-field in this province was Cariboo, and some idea may be formed of the riches of this famed gold mining region when it is stated that the actual yield of gold from 1861 to 1882 amounted to \$10,000,000. My informant says “the Aurora Company produced 600 ozs. daily; the Wake-Up Jack Company 175 ozs. daily; the Cameron Company, 150 to 400 ozs. daily; and the Rabey Company from 300 to 400 ozs. daily.” There were several other claims which gave enormous profits, but the results given above are sufficient evidences of the productiveness of this field. Of course the returns I have given refer to the “palmy” days of Cariboo.

I will now refer to another branch of operations—that is, silver mining. The argentiferous ores which have been discovered of late, and

croppings of which have been assayed with satisfactory results, prove beyond doubt, that when proper depth is attained silver mining will come to the front, in districts where these ledges have been discovered the stratifications are favorable for the presence of silver; it is well known, too, that the “great silver belt” which runs northwest through New Mexico, into Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada and Idaho, runs through this province. Argentiferous ores yielding high assays have been found in the Eureka mine, near Hopo; Nicola Valley, Cherry Creek, Queen Mine, near Yale; and at Illecillewaet, and reports have been received to the effect that rich deposits have been found in the Toad Mountain—which locality is attracting considerable attention and being prospected with vigor.

An important feature in connection with the development of mines in this province and one which cannot be overrated, is the favorable location of the properties. Nature has been liberal in her supplies of wood and water, thereby economising working expenses in opening up the ledges, and with such facilities, combined with the unfettered and liberal mining laws in this country, which, in marked contrast to the mining laws in the Mother country, exempt the shareholder from “fines” and “dues” which have proved so detrimental to the interests of British home investors; there are almost unequalled inducements for the capitalist in this great virgin field of mineral wealth.

And now as to railway communication. It is patent that the great trans-continental railway will play an important part in opening up the resources of British Columbia, rendering the methods of transportation easier, reducing the cost of merchandise, and fostering the mining industries at large.

Capital, then, is what is required to lay open the stores of dormant wealth, and it cannot be reasonably expected that any extensive operations can be carried on until “men and means” are forthcoming. In the recently discovered gold fields of the Mysore district, (India); in the promising mining regions of Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Chili and Australia; in the recently acquired properties in South Africa; and coming nearer home—in the well known fields of Colorado, Nevada and California—capital has found its way to nourish the mining interests, and it is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when British Columbia will receive like attention.

To build up the mineral resources of this province it is not necessary to call to its aid the modest prospectus, partaking of the style of patent medicine advertisements, but it has the living mineral in its midst, which speaks for itself, and which should satisfy the most fastidious speculator.—J. P. Sidgmore, in *Kamloops Sentinel*.

The annual meeting of the shareholders of the Union Bank of Canada was held recently at Quebec. The net profits of the year reached \$120,275.86, or ten per cent. of the capital invested. Out of this the annual dividend of six per cent. was paid, \$50,000 were added to the Reserve Fund, which now stands at \$100,000, and \$20,342.73 carried to the profit and loss accounts.