

long as it is a mere pendant to the United States, it can never be placed on a solid foundation, and must always be subject to avoidable costs and charges. We may, therefore, look during the coming year, for the establishment of the industry of silver-lead refining, and for other steps to give independence and stability to this most important source of wealth. The main silver-lead producing territory of the Province, the district of East Kootenay, possesses every facility for the cheap production and treatment of silver-lead ores, and a beginning has already been made in rendering these available by the construction of a smelter at Marysville. But whether the industry will be so reorganised during 1902 as to stimulate production to the amount of which that district is capable is somewhat doubtful. The chief progress which will be noticeable in East Kootenay will be the continued development of its coal resources. The productive capacity of the field is still far from being sufficiently developed to supply the market open for its coal and coke. And while the production has shown a great increase during 1901 over 1900, a still greater development may be expected during 1902.

With regard to the other silver-lead producing districts, notably the Slocan, there is no reason to expect a decline in production if only for the reason that less favourable conditions than have prevailed during 1901 could not well be imagined. The dry-ore belt on Slocan lake is yearly growing in importance and the outlook for steady progress and development there is very good; while if railway communication into the Lardeau becomes an accomplished fact, this district will immediately occupy an important position as productive of high grade ores.

Just how far the copper districts of the Province will be affected by the probably lower price of that metal prevailing, is extremely hard to say. The production of the Hall Mines, at Nelson, will not be affected because comparatively high grade in copper, that of the Trail district is not likely to be seriously affected for precisely the opposite reason, the copper there being a comparatively small proportion to the gold. The Coast mines where a very large increase in output may be expected are sufficiently high grade to stand a lower range of copper prices, but the effect on the largest copper mines in the Province is hard to predict. If copper falls so low that the mines become temporarily unprofitable, then they are likely to be closed down. If, on the contrary, a smaller margin of profit than that at present enjoyed, is still maintained, then production is likely to be pushed to its utmost limit. It may be said that at present, with every indication of lower prices the latter alternative appears to be preferable to the companies owning mines in the Boundary district. On the whole the outlook before copper mining is very favourable and points to a largely increased production during 1902.

In the absence of any very remarkable developments during the last year gold mining, that is lode mining, is likely to show simply its usual and steady percentage of growth. But there is every reason to expect that placer

and hydraulic mining will show a most gratifying development. On the whole, therefore, a year of steady and material progress in the development of mining districts and resources already opened up may be confidently predicted for the Province of British Columbia.

Such development as we have outlined, the steady progress of industries already inaugurated, and of districts already partially opened up, bears such an infinitesimal relation to the vast territories which await railway construction, and to the numerous enterprises and industries which await capital, that there is some reason for saying that the Province is standing still, or even declining, when no new territory is being conquered. Progress is entirely a relative word, and a state of things which would be satisfactory were the limits of the Province the districts of Kootenay and Yale, and a small portion of Vancouver Island is highly unsatisfactory when its territory is considered as a whole.

Although there is every indication of a revival of interest in the Cariboo district as a placer mining country during the coming season, due to the discoveries made on the head waters of the Horsefly river, and of a considerable inrush of prospectors into that district, still, the development of new territory throughout the Province awaits the construction of new lines of railway.

If one were to cast a forward glance the eventual complete opening up of British Columbia would be sure to depend on the completion of three trunk lines of railway running from east to west with intersecting feeders running from north to south. The development of the wide and certainly rich district of the Similkameen depends on a westerly extension of the Crow's Nest Pass and Columbia and Western railways. The development of the northern area of the Province depends upon the extension of the Canada Northern to tide water on the Pacific ocean. While that of the intervening territory depends upon a system of north and south feeders, one of which will be on the Island of Vancouver, connecting the three main easterly and westerly trunk lines. It is evident, however, that a purview of the effects of such development would carry us far beyond the possibilities of one year. The problem before the Province for the immediate future is entirely whether the wrangling about the best methods of securing these railways will cease within a year, and actual construction begin.

If it does, we may reasonably look for a renewed influx of capital and population into the Province to take possession of its great resources. If it does not, then, although there is no question that the progress of the productive parts of the Province will go on, there can be practically no conquest of new territory.

It would be a great pity if this were so. Because the times are decidedly propitious for the attraction of a large volume of capital towards British Columbia. The wildcat companies are very nearly all weeded out. Those which remain are likely to prove a better advertisement for the Province. West Africa, which has occupied the attention of English promoters, has proved a delusion and a snare, while the resumption of opera-