

Columbia has only derived a steady income of people, so to speak, since about 1895. The magnificent development shown in the census returns really dates from not earlier than 1894 at any rate. The mineral-bearing territory now supporting this increase of population has by no means been developed to its full capacity, and new territory is always being added so that during the next ten years the rate of growth need not be expected to diminish even if it does not increase. In fact if, within that time, a new railway system opens up the northern part of the Province we may look for a great increase when its effect is coupled with the growing prosperity of the southern portion.

The two newest mining districts to attract a permanent population, East Kootenay and the Boundary, possess a great advantage over the portion of West Kootenay first opened up. They have by no means despicable agricultural resources. These resources are not sufficiently extensive to lay the foundation of an export trade in cereals, fruit or stock. But they are capable of supporting a considerable population engaged in feeding the adjacent mining towns with the fruits of the soil it produces. In West Kootenay the population is limited to those engaged in the business of mining, or manufacturing, or the distribution of goods. The internal prosperity of that section, great as it is, would have been much greater but for the large drafts upon the wealth produced which were sent outside to purchase the necessities of life instead of being used to maintain a subsidiary agricultural population in the vicinity. A combination of agricultural and mineral resources builds up the most sustained and remarkable prosperity in particular sections just as the same combination leads to the development of rich and powerful nations; and where this combination is found the growth of population is rapid and the solid prosperity of all classes of the community considerably enhanced.

As we intimated a month or so ago, the certificated assayers of the Province are taking steps to organise an association on lines similar to those followed by other scientific or professional bodies. With this end in view a meeting is to be held in Nelson on Friday, November the 8th, next, when the matter will be thoroughly discussed. The move is a most commendable one and it is to be hoped will receive the support it deserves.

SOME SUGGESTIONS WITH REGARD TO DEVELOPMENT OF MINERAL CLAIMS.

By W. M. BREWER, M. A. I., M. E., ETC.

I MAY be an enthusiast on the subject of "development," but possibly nearly thirty years experience in mining camps may be considered sufficient excuse

for the strange views I hold. Whenever development is talked about in British Columbia one is met by the argument that the poor prospector has no means, and that outside capitalists would reap enormous rewards if they were to come in and develop the prospects which have been staked by the poor impecunious prospector. I realise, as well as anybody, the lack of financial ability of the average prospector to develop his claims, the number of which usually is legion. As a general thing in order to stake and record his mineral claim the prospector has been grub-staked by some local prospective millionaire. Sometimes the grub-staker is a man of means himself, who sees an opportunity to make money and increase the business of the Province by opening up a portion of its mineral resources; sometimes he is the representative of small syndicates who through this policy hope to have a discovery of a mineral-bearing ledge found for merely nominal cost. But usually the grub-staker in British Columbia appears to have been some man whose strongest desire was to have staked and recorded a large acreage of mineral-bearing ground, which he could offer to outside capital on very liberal terms (to himself) provided that outside capital would come in, sign a bond for a purchase price equal to such as is ordinarily paid for developed mines in the United States, or any other mining country, then uses capital to develop the prospect, take all the chances, and at the expiration of the bond hand over to the grub-staker an amount more than equal to the value of the property, after the capitalist has risked his money in proving conditions which the grub-staker did not have the nerve, or confidence, or knowledge of mining, to do himself. It is certainly remarkable that capitalists do not flock to this Province and race with one another to avail themselves of the opportunity extended to them by these grub-stakers. But it is a fact, nevertheless, that they do not do it, and although I may be accused of being a pessimist, my experience has taught me that the average capitalists who invest money in mining propositions has too much sense to rush in and spend his money in order to enrich the local grub-staker and procure for himself a property which, when he has taken all the chances and expended considerable capital, will not possess intrinsic value representing a greater amount than the purchase price demanded by the grub-staker.

Why men should think that foreign capitalists will follow a rule with regard to mining investments entirely at variance with any rule in vogue among ordinary business men with regard to any other line of business, I am unable to conceive. A man would not expect to put \$100 worth of hardware on the shelves and sell his prospective business and stock to a man in London for \$10,000, neither would a banker expect to charter a company without capital and then sell out to some Wall street banker for half a million dollars on the prospect of what might be accomplished in the far distant future.

Why then should a capitalist who invests in mining propositions be expected to pursue any different course from that pursued in the ordinary lines of business?

I know comparisons are odious, but at the same time are very necessary at times to illustrate any argument, and in order to show the grub-stakers and prospectors of British Columbia that their present policy is not such a one as will eventually succeed, I would call attention to the Black Hills of South Dakota, which in area is probably the smallest of all the mining districts in the world, embracing as it does an area of about 60 miles long by 30 miles wide. This small district has produced in gold alone the following output from the year 1897:

1897, fine ounces, 256,410, value	- - -	\$5,300,000
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