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### THE MINES REPORT, 1901.

THE Annual Report of the Minister of Mines for the year 1901 has at length been issued. The work itself is more interesting and fuller than usual, but it loses greatly in value and utility by reason of the tardiness in its appearance. The explanation is given that the Report went to press on March 11th last, but that its publication was delayed until the latter part of June in consequence of stress of sessional work in the Government Printing Department. Such an excuse is hardly satisfactory. Mining is our most important industry, and official information respecting it, to be of more than academic interest or value, requires to be not only definite, specific and accurate, but also prompt. Although it may certainly be conceded that the Mines Department renders excellent service to the country, there are nevertheless many ways in which that service might be vastly and advantageously improved. Under Government the post of Provincial Mineralogist is now occupied by a gentleman of eminent professional attainments, those of a highly trained metallurgical specialist, possessing also an extensive knowledge of all branches of mining. It is questionable, however, whether Mr. Robertson's special qualifications and talents are turned to the best account

in the performance during a greater portion of the year of office detail work, which might equally well be left to the care of subordinates. To our mind, and we merely represent views held by a large number of our constituents, the Provincial Mineralogist should spend at least nine instead of perhaps four or five months in the field. He should be ready to visit, or be in a position to engage a suitable substitute to visit in his stead, any new mining territory of promise and prominence. And the result of these investigations should be published with as little delay as possible after the necessary information has been secured. This system was to some extent followed by Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Robertson's predecessor, and during one year three or four bulletins of the greatest possible interest and utility were issued by the Department at regular intervals during the year, Mr. Carlyle occupied the office of Provincial Mineralogist, dealing with the Trail Creek district, which was then attracting much attention, and also with the Slocan districts and the mining camps of Vancouver Island. Last year, it is true, the Department recognized public requirements in this respect by issuing a bulletin on the new Horsefly placer fields, but the information was not supplied by the Provincial Mineralogist or other equally qualified authority, which would have rendered such a report so much more valuable. Again, as yet, no efforts appear to have been made to put in force the Act passed over a year ago by the Provincial Legislature, authorising the official publication of mining returns and statistics at more frequent periods. A step in the right direction was, however, taken by the publication in January last of advance estimates of mineral production during 1901, and the corrected returns now published show how close that approximation was to the actual figures. But even this does not go far enough. The public should not be asked to wait twelve months before any official information of the progress of our mining industry, as afforded by statistics of mineral output, is available. That this should have been the case heretofore, is so far as we can ascertain, not altogether a result of neglect on the part of the Department, but to the objection raised by mine-managers to make such returns every month as the Act calls for. This objection is to some extent valid, as much of the information the mine-owner is required by law to furnish is unnecessary in character and could only be supplied at the expenditure of much time and trouble. This defect in the Act might, however, be quite early remedied if mine-owners were but asked