

Let no man forget that the mining industry when it is active and prosperous, when minerals are at a fair price, is the largest employer of labour of any industry and is also the largest consumer of all kinds of goods. From that point of view the mineral resources of the Peace River country are entitled to attention. What is the extent of the mineralized part of that area? It must be remembered that it is largely an unexplored country and it is difficult to give an accurate idea of just what the mineralized zone may be, but as nearly as I can judge it is 50 miles north and south and 150 miles east and west, or 7,500 square miles. This zone is very highly mineralized, and might produce any kind of mineral, particularly gold. What other commodity in the world to-day commands the attention that gold does? All through the Peace River area—and I am not speaking of the agricultural area but of that portion tributary to the Peace River and through which all these streams run—there is a highly mineralized section, capable of immense mineral development. In that area there are at least 7,500 square miles. So far as mines are concerned that is a tremendous area. Not only are there lode mines, but there are placer mines as well. In the area to which I have referred there are probably 500 miles of gold producing rivers and streams. If they would produce gold a few years ago sufficient to give a man a living, what will they do to-day?

I could give an illustration of the difference that the price of gold has made in the production of that commodity in my own community, because I am surrounded on all sides by exactly the same kind of gold bearing streams. Twenty or twenty-five years ago we had 400 or 500 prospectors working up and down our rivers. Those men made their living entirely by rocking or sluicing the banks and benches of the gold bearing streams in that area. They did not make a great deal of money, probably only a dollar or a dollar and a half a day, but they were able to eke out an existence because living was quite cheap. During the years of high wages those prospectors drifted away from their occupation because they could get better wages doing other work. To-day, however, on account of the depression these prospectors are coming back, and I want to tell you that in my own business, last year, I bought from just these small producers something pretty close to 1,000 ounces of gold. I do not purchase gold in large quantities at all. If a man has forty or fifty ounces he will never come to me

with it, but he will send it right straight through to the assay office. All my purchases are made in quantities valued from \$5 to \$50. Despite the small purchases however I obtained an amount approaching 1,000 ounces. That is all new money. The activity is due partly to the depression, because these men, who are active enough to undertake the work, are doing the very best they can to keep off relief. I have known dozens of them, personally, who have come to me and told me that they were tickled to death to be able to make enough money to buy grub for themselves for another couple of weeks.

That is the condition which might be duplicated in the Peace River country, because there are just as many gold bearing streams in that country as there are in my own community. That is not all the placer prospects there are in the Peace River district by any means, because there is the Omineca section in which placer operations are going on at the present time. Large sums of money are being expended there in opening up placer mining properties. They are providing labour, and they have to haul their stuff with tractors through woods, where there are no roads at all, both in winter and summer for a distance of about two hundred and seventy-five miles. If the railway were put through the Peace River country transportation would be brought almost to their doors at least, that is the way they would feel, because they would have to travel a distance of only fifteen or twenty miles to reach a railway. One can imagine the difference it would make to the work of the placer miners. But that is not all.

In addition to the placer miners there are the lode miners. When one surveys the possibilities for lode mining he is simply staggered. I want to say that the whole 7,500 square miles is just as capable of production as the particular section about which I am now going to speak. It is just as capable of producing large quantities of gold and providing employment for many men. By the way, in passing let me say that in British Columbia we have, as hon. members from British Columbia know, what for the last ten or fifteen years has been described as a white elephant. I am referring to the Pacific Great Eastern railway. The year 1933 was the first year since the construction of the railway that it has paid operating expenses. This year on the operation of the railway we had a profit of \$73,000. That is a very satisfactory result when we remember what has been happening since the road was first built.