

In the course of the inquest evidence was adduced that proved criminal carelessness on the part of one of the miners, carelessness that implied a shocking lack of moral sense, and that, in itself, might easily have been the cause of the catastrophe. Such instances are not rare. It is hard to educate certain types of miners. While the great majority are intelligent and good citizens, the lives of hundreds may be jeopardized by the selfish recklessness of one. Hence it is imperative that steps be taken to inculcate into all a sense of personal responsibility. The individual who is willing to endanger the lives of his fellows should be treated as a criminal.

No sharp line can be drawn between management and men in the matter of responsibility. Usually both are culpable. Upon both devolves the duty of seeing to it that every possible precaution be taken to prevent the loss of life. In no less degree does the burden fall upon the Federal and Albertan Governments.

PORCUPINE PROSPECTUSES.

It appears impossible to rob the mining prospectus of its superfluous trimmings. Nor does it seem practicable to convince the promoter that a sound venture never requires bolstering with general quotations from other reports.

That recent incident, when the Hon. Frank Cochrane felt it his duty to correct a misquotation attributed to an English engineer, should go far towards clearing the atmosphere. The engineer in question had been credited in a newspaper advertisement with a sweeping eulogy of Porcupine. Of course, he had been guilty of no such silliness. But certain innocuous remarks of his had been garbled and mangled by the newspapers, and, falling under the eye of the prospectus-artist, had been promptly used. The Hon. Mr. Cochrane's correction was prompt and to the point. It is possible, even probable, that the inclusion of this quotation was done in all good faith. But it was totally unnecessary in any case, and, as the event proved, the quotation was not itself authentic.

Glancing over the prospectus that gave rise to the above-mentioned episode, we are surprised to find much evidence of carelessness and of absence of business acumen. For instance, on one page it is stated that more than fifty quartz veins have been uncovered. Later the number of veins is placed at ten. On one page, also, we are informed that stripping and trenching can be easily performed; whilst a few pages further on the opposite is affirmed. Moreover, the rash general statement is made that a certain vein will yield continuously handsome returns. This kind of vaticination has become unfashionable.

Promoters who are asking the public to take part in what may be a costly venture, can surely afford to put together a careful and accurate statement of facts. It is infra dig to permit sloppy errors and contradictions to creep into a prospectus. It is regrettably foolish to

allow one's fancy to gild the future with imaginary gold. All this is not so much a question of honesty as it is a question of horse sense.

The function of a prospectus is to present observed facts, and not to lend fictitious value to unproved mining claims.

THE MINERAL PRODUCTION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Promptly with the close of the old year, the preliminary estimate of British Columbia's mineral production during 1910 has been published by the Provincial Bureau of Mines. Mr. W. Fleet Robertson, Provincial Mineralogist, is the compiler of this timely pamphlet. Once again we must felicitate the occidental Province upon its enterprise.

Taking Mr. Robertson's estimates for 1910, we note that the net increase in non-metallic products is \$2,809,116. Against this must be written off a net decrease in metalliferous products amounting to \$1,068,636. This leaves a balance of \$1,740,480 in favour of 1910 as compared with the gross output for 1909.

The appreciable falling off in copper, lead, and zinc was more than counterbalanced by an unusually substantial increase in the output of coal. The 1909 output of coal was 2,006,476 long tons. For 1910 the output was 2,800,000 long tons, an increase of 794,000 tons. This, as Mr. Robertson points out, is much larger than the two largest previous annual increases taken together.

Whilst slight enlargements of gold outputs, both placer and lode, are recorded, silver has fallen slightly. Apart from the disappointing results from the St. Eugene mine, the chief cause of the drop in lead production was the damage resulting from forest fires in the Slocan district. A larger output is predicted for the current year. The lessening of the copper output by about 6,000,000 pounds (the 1910 output being only 39,000,000 pounds), is not serious; new producing mines will bring up the 1911 totals. Zinc has been distinctly disappointing. The output for 1910 is but half of that for the previous year. Whilst there is no lack of ore, the forest fires delayed production considerably. The destruction of the Whitewater mill and the storage of a considerable quantity of concentrate by other operators contributed to cut down the returns. The outlook is not rosy, neither is it hopeless.

For 1911, prospects are in general most satisfactory. The Boundary country will, we doubt not, exceed itself. Coal production will certainly be largely expanded. The demand for coke will be distinctly better than during 1910. Gold should more than hold its own. Zinc may, or may not, gain a stronger position. One favourable symptom of 1910 was the payment of several considerable dividends by several of the larger companies.