

pocket through errors of what may be called amateur effort, the general public has perhaps benefited, and prospecting and developing are now conducted on Vancouver Island with a better appreciation of local conditions, and hence with a far more satisfactory outcome than heretofore. Moreover, the results which have followed systematic and intelligent operations of mines on Mount Sicker are a great encouragement to persons having mining properties there and elsewhere. It is impossible to regard what is now in progress at Mount Sicker without feelings of the liveliest satisfaction and without indulging in strong hopes that what is being accomplished there will be repeated in other portions of the Island. Competent observers do not hesitate to say that the Mount Sicker District at the present time is one of the most promising metalliferous fields in British Columbia. The deposits of ore are numerous and extensive, the grade is high and the conditions under which work is carried on are eminently favourable. There is no longer any reason for scepticism on these points, and but for the circumstance that in the past the mines of this district have been in the hands chiefly of private individuals, and the public have not been invited to subscribe to stock, the field would long ere this have passed through the not very desirable experience, now imminent, of a boom period. Any doubt that may have existed of the permanence and value of the Mount Sicker mines was removed with the decision of such shrewd operators and skilled metallurgists as Messrs. Breen, Bellinger & Fotheringham to establish, at an outlay of over a quarter million dollars a smelting plant, for the treatment of the ores of the district, at Crofton, followed later by the commencement of construction work of a second smelter by the Tyee Copper Co. at Ladysmith. The Crofton smelter is now about to be blown in and it may be confidently asserted that although the present capacity of the works of 500 tons daily is relatively small, there are few, if any, smelters on the North American continent better equipped or more economically designed and arranged.

Quatsino Sound has for some years been regarded as a promising field for mining operations, although some persons who invested there met with disappointments. The experience of the owners of the Comstock mine favours the conclusion that the fault was not in the locality but in those who were responsible for the development work attempted. Numerous other discoveries of a promising nature have also of late been made in the Quatsino District. Activity prevails at several points along the West Coast, and the assumption is reasonable that those who continue to invest capital in undertakings here would not do so unless the prospects of profitable returns were reasonably encouraging. The erection of smelters on the Island will greatly stimulate min-

ing by lessening the cost of the transportation of ores.

It may therefore be fairly claimed that the period of mineralogical development on Vancouver Island has set in, and as of the 16,000 square miles contained in Vancouver Island probably two-thirds of that area have not been explored for mineral-bearing rocks, there is ample scope and opportunity for the prospector. It should, however, be remarked that the difficulties to exploitation in this region are not inconsiderable, the interior of the Island being as yet not very readily accessible, and, too, the luxuriant growth of vegetation is a further drawback to successful prospecting. The conditions are, however, certainly not worse than those encountered by prospectors in the Kootenays in the early nineties, while the milder coast climate is an advantageous circumstance of importance. The gold-copper ores so far discovered have been without exception of generally higher grade value than those of other localities of British Columbia, and the excellent facilities for transportation and treatment of ores, the abundance of timber for fuel and mining purposes and the number of streams from which cheap power may be obtained, are all points which should appeal favourably to prospectors.

THE FUTURE OF THE YUKON.

THE falling off in the output of the Klondike placers has very naturally provoked some discussion in the press as to the future of mining in the Yukon Territory. In some quarters rather discouraging views obtain, but on the whole the weight of opinion seems to be that the outlook is far from discouraging. Much stress is laid upon a statement made by a Mr. Hees, agent of the Manufacturers' Association, who lately visited the country, and who has made the statement that "since 1897 hundreds and thousands of prospectors have been exploring every creek and mountain in that country, and no discovery of importance has been made for more than a year." In making that observation Mr. Hees lays himself open to the same charge of exaggeration as he brings against Mr. F. C. Wade, who in a recent lecture remarked that "only fifty miles have been worked, and there are seven thousand miles of creeks in the Yukon, almost all of which are unprospected." Neither statement is of much value, even if true. The fact that gold has not been found in large deposits anywhere in the Yukon during the last year is only proof that prospectors have been unsuccessful, and does not afford a convincing reason for the belief that it will not be found. The Klondike itself was prospected and condemned years before it came into prominence as a produc-