

departure marks, we trust, the beginning of a new industrial era in connection with the development of the mining industry of the Province, whereby instead of exporting our raw materials they will be utilized by manufacturers in the country itself, in sufficient quantities at least to meet the requirements of Canadian demand. Such a consummation would go far towards solving the most difficult problems of the day in respect, more especially, to the profitable operation of lead and zinc mines in the Kootenays. The Trail works is also at present sending considerable consignments of fine silver to China, fine gold to the United States assay office at Seattle, and copper sulphate in limited quantities to Eastern Canada. It is to be hoped, meanwhile, that the early establishment of a Canadian mint at Ottawa will admit soon of the utilization of the silver and gold produced from our British Columbian mines for the purposes of a Canadian coinage.

Heretofore placer gold has held the leading position among the mineral products of British Columbia in regard to aggregate value of production for all years to date. The close of the current year will, however, probably see that chief position taken by the products of the collieries of the Province—coal and coke. At the close of 1903 the aggregate production of placer gold, according to the official statistics of the Department of Mines, was \$65,688,103 and of coal and coke \$63,321,809. Assuming that the value of this year's production of the two minerals, respectively, will be similar to that of last year—and in doing this placer gold rather than coal and coke will gain some advantage, since the latter is more likely to show an increase in value of production than the former—the positions will be reversed, for coal and coke will lead with a total of \$67,654,166, as compared with \$66,748,523 for placer gold. The relative present value of the two minerals will be more strikingly apparent, though, if the value of their production respectively during the last five years, 1899-1903, be taken. In that period placer gold has contributed \$5,727,824, while coal and coke have added \$23,015,709. The former has given an average money value of \$3,136 for every individual day of the period mentioned, while coal and coke have contributed a daily average of \$12,610. It is not generally realized that the coal-mining industry adds thus freely to the realized natural wealth of the Province, but it does, and, what is a gratifying reflection, its average daily quota has been steadily increasing every five-year period of the last 35 years, and is still on the increase.

The past six months has witnessed a very considerable activity in the transfer of prospects and partially developed claims, which in most cases have been acquired, at prices ranging from five to thirty thousand dollars on "working bond" terms. This indication of reviving interest on the part of the "small investor" in British Columbian mining is significant and gratifying. At this stage of our mining development, numerous "deals" on the part of small investors, are even more to be desired and benefit the

industry perhaps to a greater extent than the heavy investment of capital in some individual undertakings. Both naturally are desirable, but the operation of the "small investor" is frequently only preliminary to the advent of the capitalist or syndicate. Thus the development and establishment of the Kootenay industry is largely attributable to Spokane business men and others of comparatively small means, who were the first to recognize the mineral possibilities of the Slocan and Rossland. Since 1901 the demand for prospects has steadily decreased and in consequence prospecting has languished and declined. There is no advantage looking for mineral unless there is a market for one's discovery. The re-appearance of the "small investor" is, however, beginning to stimulate prospecting effort, and in such districts as the Lardreau, which appears to present exceptional opportunities for the profitable investment of capital in small amounts, evidence of a better state of affairs in this regard is already forthcoming. The saying that British Columbia is a mineral area of extraordinary promise, whereof a very small portion has been even scratched on the surface is trite enough, but it is none the less true. The country affords a wonderful field and scope for the prospector, but the vocation at best is a precarious one, in which men will not embark except all the conditions are tolerably favourable.

The Atlin district has lately been visited by Mr. Chester W. Purington who, it is stated, was en route to Alaska, under engagement with the United States Geological Survey, to report on placer mining methods and costs in the Alaskan territory. Mr. Purington is a mining engineer of large experience and acknowledged ability, so considerable importance may be attached to his opinions on mining matters. He is reported to have expressed himself as satisfied that the area at Atlin covered by pre-glacial auriferous gravels is undoubtedly large, and that these will prove a factor of much greater permanency, from a placer-mining standpoint, than the post-glacial or very recent gravels occupying the beds of the present streams. Fortunately several financially strong companies are already operating in the Atlin district with plants and equipments suited to varied local requirements and conditions, so that we may expect to have, in the recovery of much gold this season, undoubted evidence of the richness of the ancient river channels thus far prospected and now being worked. But while this will be satisfactory enough for the present it does not necessarily ensure permanence, although there need be little doubt that those who are expending further large sums of money in prospecting the gravels and providing costly plants to work them have already fully satisfied themselves that there exist extensive gold-bearing deposits. Yet it is always helpful to have confirmation by a competent authority, and it is especially desirable where the district immediately concerned is a large one. There is such an enormous area in Cassiar and the extensive gold-bearing country north and east of it, still little known or prospected, that it is a distinct advantage to have bases like Atlin