

# British Columbia Mining Critic.

"I am Nothing, if Not Critical."—Shakespeare.

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## NOTICES.

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## British Columbia Mining Critic

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## EDITORIAL.

### A HIGHER DUTY ON LEAD.

There is much to be said in favor, as a temporary expedient, of imposing sufficient duties on the import of lead bullion and lead products into Canada, to secure to British Columbia the upbuilding of silver-lead smelting and the cognate industries that will follow in its train. As matters stand, the United States have, by a largely increased duty on lead bullion, prevented the product of our silver-lead smelting industry from entering the big American market, whilst the too easy entrance into our own home market of lead bullion and other manufactured lead products from the United States, coupled with the necessary cost of rail transport east, deprives our silver-lead smelters very largely of the home market of Canada, which could certainly take most—if not all—of the lead that our smelters are likely to turn out during the next few years. As a result of present lopsided international fiscal arrangements, the East Canadian consumer certainly gets his lead a little cheaper, but it is at the cost of Western Canadian

mining industrialists. These latter find that as regards the rich products of our silver-lead mines, much of the possible and legitimate profit of the industry is now lost to Canada, since exclusion from the great American market and dispossession from our own causes concerns like the lead smelter at Pilot Bay to shut down, whilst the silver-lead branch of the Nelson smelter also becomes profitless.

Seemingly most of our British Columbia mining industrialists and business men of our mine centers favor the imposition of the proposed import duty on lead bullion and lead manufactures, as they well know how prejudicially the present system affects our greatest Provincial industry, by condemning its workers in silver-lead to lose one of the most profitable because most skilled operations of their industry, that of smelting. Without a large expansion of home smelting, British Columbia can never gain the position that she should by virtue of her wonderful wealth in the silver-lead, coal, iron, and limestone, which form the natural bases of a great branch of ore smelting and refining.

We hold that ours is a case in which Canada may well afford to suffer, as regards the consumers of the lead product, a small present pain, ... the form of slightly increased prices due to a temporary protective duty, in return for a big future gain to the nation by the foundation of what would probably in due course grow to be a strong and self-dependent metal industry. The present seems an instance in which tariff may well be met by tariff, and as we westerners pay heavily indeed in increased prices due to the protection of industries that are chiefly Eastern Canadian, we can reasonably ask the men of the east in return to give through their Parliamentary