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ROSSLAND MINES.

Under this heading the following letter appears in the Victoria Times:

"To the Editor: Your Toronto telegram announcing that the Barnato people after taking stock of the mines of British Columbia and the Algoma region, have decided to invest in the Ontario mines instead of those of Trail Creek, is decidedly disagreeable reading. The Rossland papers have so loudly and persistently claimed that the Trail district has 'the biggest mines on earth' that many people here and elsewhere who know nothing of mining have believed it and put their savings into it. It must be a shock to their credulity to find that English experts, representing many millions of capital for mining investment, after a long and careful examination of the camp cannot be made to believe it.

"Perhaps the opinions expressed by an expert, who spent three months in West Kootenay and who invested in the Slocan but bought nothing in Trail, may show the reason why. Slocan, he stated, is a high grade silver district, which, had it been developed a few years ago when silver was over a dollar an ounce, would have equalled if not eclipsed Colorado in its palmiest days, but even at its present price there is more profit in one ton than in ten tons of the average Trail Creek ore, which, as a whole, is low grade. In some of the Trail Creek mines there are pay chutes of good ore, but they have proven to be short, and much costly work has to be done to find others, as the formation is cut up by dykes and is badly faulted. 'All is not gold that glitters' in Trail Creek, as most of the ore so far taken out carries less than \$5 in gold a ton.

"It is a pity that the Rossland papers do not publish an ungarbled statement of facts, as boom talk and romancing check the progress of the camp, for many experts for mining capitalists have found upon examination things not as represented, and have gone away disgusted and invested in Slocan and elsewhere.

"It is frankly acknowledged by this month's Mining Record and other truthful journals that the Trail district output this year has not been half what the Rossland press predicted, it would be, and that the dividends declared have been few and disappointing, comparing unfavorably with those of the Slocan district, where the energies of the people are concentrated upon development work. There appear to be far too many boomers and windbags at Rossland for the healthy progress of that camp.

"I have been moved to speak plainly from the tone of a letter from Rossland which appeared in your issue of yesterday. Your correspondent condescendingly remarks that the salmon industry is 'not to be despised,' but the Trail Creek mines are the 'star of first magnitude.' As we know that in about four months salmon canning has produced two and a half million dollars, and that the output of the whole of West Kootenay for the past six months has been only about a million and a half of dollars, it is evident your correspondent is a great deal 'too previous' in his bragging.

"I do not wish to decry Kootenay mines, which undoubtedly have great possibilities, but to protest against preposterous claims for superiority over every other industry in British Columbia before facts justify it, and to advise your correspondent to write with less presumption.

"There is another coast industry 'not to be despised.' I refer to the coal mines of Vancouver island. It may surprise your correspondent to learn that they have this year so far paid out more in wages and produced a more valuable output than all the Kootenay mines put together. Another fact which may be news to him, as he refers to the new mining plant installed in the Trail camp is, that one firm has expended more this year in a coking plant near Comox than have all the Trail Creek mining companies in mining machinery.

"One great drawback to the satisfactory progress of the Trail Creek district is the method being adopted in the formation of mining companies. On this important matter Mr. J. P. Kimball, a prominent geologist and mineralogist of New York thus expresses himself in the Mining Record: 'I have but one criticism to make and that is in regard to the overstocking of prospects and mineral claims as they are doing. It simply hinders the development of the country.

The prospector, with a million; he places his prospect in the hand of a broker who stocks it and sells the stock for what he can get. With the small amount of money thus obtained a little development is done. If the various owners of a large group of claims would combine and seek to attract capital in large lots it would be ever so much better for the country."

In the opinion of many practical people this is advice "not to be despised," if followed probably ere long instead of a flickering light Trail camp may shine as brightly and steadily as a "star of first magnitude."

BRITISH COLUMBIAN.

However great a shock to our credulity the appalling news that Mr. Barnato had overlooked Trail Creek and invested in Ontario might be, it is certain that nothing could shock the credulity of the author of this letter when he bases an indictment of Trail Creek upon a telegram which from first to last is pure unadulterated buncombe.

It is just about time this Barnato bogey was killed. There have been at least seventeen thousand three hundred and sixty-four agents of Barney Barnato in Trail Creek this summer, in fact a stranger has only to appear on Columbia avenue wearing riding breeches and a diamond pin and he is an agent of Barney Barnato. South Africa made Barney Barnato; Trail Creek will make her own Barnatos and her own Barnatos will make Trail Creek.

This Victoria scribe goes on to say that the method of promoting companies in Trail Creek has retarded the healthy growth of the camp. It is a remarkable thing that more mining development has been done in Trail Creek by means of this method than in all the other mining camps in Canada put together by means of any other.

Why should friends of the Slocan consider it necessary to run down Trail Creek. The Slocan is what is known as a "poor man's country;" Trail Creek requires big capital to develop it, not big capitalists observe but big capital. Consequently the conditions under which the two districts have been developed are entirely different. Trail Creek is a great mining camp, Slocan is also a great mining camp. Both are producing a large amount of wealth; both will yet produce much more. It may be ill nature but it is only human nature to hope that none of that wealth will find its way into the pockets of those jealous individuals who must decry the one to magnify the other.

PETROGRAPHY.

Chemical analysis and microscopic examination unquestionably furnished the basis of the modern science of petrography; and it is equally unquestionable that the revelations they have made cannot be ignored by the field observer. But the question still remains, whether he must, in all cases, wait until samples have been analyzed, and microscopic slides have been prepared and examined by specialists, before he can venture even a provisional opinion upon the rocks he encounters.

The science of petrography is passing through a period of transition, like that which characterized zoology, prior to Darwin—a period in which observation is more important than generalization; in which recorded species and varieties are multiplied; in which differences, rather than similarities, and specific variations rather than genetic relations, are emphasized. But this period is the indispensable preliminary to the inductive establishment of co-ordinating and illuminating general laws; and, while it lasts, nothing is more important than intelligence and accuracy on the part of the innumerable individual observers who are furnishing the materials for scientific induction. Vague, ignorant or careless descriptions of observed facts are so many obstacles to the desired scientific interpretation of facts. This consideration vitates many of the "practical" reports of experts; but it is equally applicable to the work of many professional investigators.

A peculiar and amusing feature of this subject is presented in the eager adoption, by miners and "mining experts," of new names, picked up from geological reports, and supposed to have significance in economic geology. This ignorant use of precise names is even worse, for scientific purposes, than the old use of general names.