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## THE BRITISH COLUMBIAN

### MINING INDUSTRY IN 1902.

**I**N 1887 for the first time, official record was made of the production in British Columbia, of the metals silver and lead—this, however, to a very inconsiderable aggregate quantity and value. No gold was obtained from quartz mining undertakings until 1893, and copper production was not commenced until a twelvemonth later. 1894 may, therefore, be taken as the year from which the establishment of quartz mining in the Province dates. The industry as such is consequently about to enter its ninth year of existence. These facts should not be forgotten when the present position of mining in the Province is taken under consideration. Compared with any of the great mining states of the Union, quartz mining in British Columbia is a young industry, and yet a comparative history of the first eight years of quartz mining development in California, in Colorado or in Montana does not afford any more than, and in cases not as satisfactory, evidence of substantial industrial

progress and growth as is afforded by the history of our British Columbian industry. That such a comparison can be made at all is in itself creditable. In the United States mining is and has been carried on under the most favourable possible conditions. A protective tariff, an excellent home market, adequate transportation facilities with low haulage costs, an unlimited supply of skilled labour, ample capital to develop the mines. These are but a few of the advantages which have contributed of recent years to the phenomenal developments of metalliferous mining in the United States. Canada, on the other hand, with her relatively small population, has been obliged to export, at a great cost, her mine products in crude state and meet competition in the world's markets. She has imported the bulk of the machinery required in mining and on this the miner has been compelled to pay a heavy duty. Skilled mine labour has been scarce and expensive. In the West where our most important mineral interests lie, means of transport have been lacking until quite recently, or where railways have been built the systems have been generally owned as monopolies, with the consequent imposition of excessive freight rates. In addition to these economic drawbacks, the mine owner and manager in British Columbia has been called upon to face engineering and metalliferous problems of an exceptionally difficult nature. In some sections of the country the geological disturbances render mining an extremely hazardous and costly operation. In other districts the ore bodies though easily followed and of great size, carry such small average values that they can only be mined profitably by the introduction of special methods and by the exercise of the utmost skill and economy in working and management. Again a further disadvantage has been the lack and the difficulty of obtaining capital in sufficient amounts to carry through undertakings, on which large initial outlays were required, while legitimate mining in the country has also suffered much at the hands of unscrupulous wild-cat promoters and market manipulators, the collapse of whose flotations and schemes having naturally enough served to discredit the British Columbian mining industry in the minds of a large section of the investing public. That in spite of these manifold discouragements and drawbacks the industry has in eight years been placed on a footing