

The British Columbia Mining Critic.

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

The British Columbia Mining Critic.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

Devoted to the Interests of Mining and the Protection of Investors.

THURSDAY MAY 6, 1897.

Letters from practical men on topics connected with mining, mining machinery, mining laws, and matters relating to the mineral development of Canada, are always welcome.

Manufacturers and Dealers in appliances used in and about mines are invited to send illustrations and descriptions of new articles.

Views and descriptions of mines and mining locations solicited.

Subscription, Two Dollars a year, payable in advance. Remittances should be made by Express, Postal Order or Bank Draft payable to the "British Columbia Mining Critic."

Advertising rates quoted on application.

British Columbia Mining Critic Co., Publishers.

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The mining fever is so contagious and spreading to such an extent that a few words of warning at the present stage are not inappropriate. It would indeed be no easy task to meet in British Columbia a man of intelligence who is not interested in mining in some of its multifarious forms: either he owns a genuine mine, or thinks he does; he is a partner in a mine or a stockholder in a mining company, or he is concerned in some development association. Should he not come under any of these heads then he is sure to be a prospector—a searcher for land containing valuable minerals, with a view to acquiring the land and its precious metals either for himself or some others besides himself, or possibly for a syndicate. The number of prospectors is legion, and still a very limited number are qualified for the task they have undertaken. Logging camps are actually being deserted by "miners" for the possibly more remunerative occupation of staking out 52 acres Crown land, swearing that mineral exists, and selling the claim to the unwary and inexperienced "tenderfoot" looking out for something very cheap, anything from \$10 to \$100, with the forlorn hope of incorporating a small company with a capitalization of \$1,000,000 and netting to himself untold wealth. The fallacy of protecting the poor man in his mineral discoveries by allowing him, at the cost of \$2.50, to take up and hold 52 acres is at present the curse of the mining industry. The moment that there is any pretense of a discovery of mineral in a new district then the whole country for miles and miles is staked out without any sensible reason, and yet all these claims are supposed to be carrying mineral-bearing bodies. In many instances men with not \$10 of capital hold no less than 20, and even 30 claims, or in all over 1,000 acres, it being impossible for them to do the assessment work, and they are locking up the country against bona fide mining institutions. This prostitution, however, of a great mining industry is legalized by an intelligent gov-

new claim prospectors carefully produce from a secret recess of their apparel a piece of granite, slate, diorite, or anything but the ledge matter, and seriously inform you that they have the "biggest thing on earth," but are willing to bond the claim for \$50,000 providing 10 per cent. be paid down, the said lode (granite) being 40 feet in width and traceable right through the property. Such conduct is not promotive of any good or beneficial results. Many a hundred claims will be and have been located and never prospected, and under these conditions never will be, while a systematic exploring party under a good head could prospect and probably discover a valuable lead which would bring wealth to the country and reward the energy of the finders, who would only stake off that which might in the future become valuable.

But no encouragement is offered competent explorers or prospectors, for the moment a "find" is made all adjoining lands are staked for speculative purposes, and should the speculation "fall through" the claim remains in the possession of the uninitiated, incompetent and impecunious party. This state of affairs is truly deplorable. If \$50 were necessary to record a claim, then there would be money in the exchequer for making roads and opening up a district with merit, and there would be fewer "wild cats." As the fine weather now approaches thousands upon thousands of claims will be staked and recorded monthly. It is against this kind of business we offer a strong protest, and we advise our readers who have intentions of becoming interested in undeveloped claims to carefully examine into the prospects of such property prior to paying over the purchase money. We advocate that duly qualified licensed professional mining men be employed to examine the property under offer, and upon their report let the price be based. The prevailing idea that to become a prospector is the easiest matter in the world is altogether devoid of corroboration. Clerks, countermen, and others similarly situated, are totally unfit for the hardships and privations endured by the genuine prospector, and only in the course of many months, and by hard-earned experience, can they hope to understand the first rudiments of the profession, and even then their statements as to finds can only be received by intelligent men with the utmost caution.

It is now regarded as a fact that many of the English companies have reliable representatives here. It is equally well known that there are many "fakers."

It is to the interest of all persons concerned to make particular inquiry concerning the companies who advertise themselves as being the genuine "Simon Pure." At an early date we propose to publish the personnel of the companies or-