

might equally well be the outline of the early history of mining activity in either country, with the difference merely that Colorado has the advantage of a lead of perhaps ten years. But will it take British Columbia as long a period to occupy as good a position? Those capable of forming an opinion of the vast mineral resources of the country do not hesitate to reply that it will not; that in less than ten years British Columbia will become a dangerous rival to Colorado as a mineral producing area, even allowing that the annual rate of increase in the latter country is steadily maintained. But after all, this is not a question in which we are immediately concerned, and it is more important to consider the present position of the industry than to look so far into the future as even ten years. Judging from the activity displayed in all the mining districts of the Province; during the last three months, with the exception, perhaps, of the silver-lead camps of Sloean and Ainsworth, the mineral production of 1901 should show a proportionately larger increase than was the case in 1900. While last year the yield of placer gold was less than in 1899, this year it is to be expected that the position will be reversed. One mine in the Cariboo district alone will produce not far short of half the total value of the entire placer gold production of 1900, while in the Omineca and Cassiar districts, hydraulic properties which up to the present time have not been operated, pending the completion of their equipment, will also this year contribute to the gold yield, which will be further swelled by returns from the recently discovered and rich placers of Porcupine Creek in the North; better results are also looked for from Atlin, consequent upon the operation of the bench claims by hydraulic methods. Both the lode gold and copper production should also materially increase, the output of ore from Rossland having now reached the satisfactory aggregate of over nine thousand tons weekly, while the Boundary district's output is not far short of eight thousand tons a week. On the Coast the Mount Sicker and Van Anda mines are making a most creditable showing, while, if, as now seems practically certain, the Britannia mine, at Howe Sound, is acquired and operated this summer by British capitalists, the copper production for 1901 should be at least a hundred per cent. greater than it was in 1900. In silver and lead, however, we do not hope to see any immediate further gain—the advance last year having been exceptional—in view of the many drawbacks and difficulties against which this industry is forced to contend. Any great developments in the future must depend on the establishment of local smelting and refining works of sufficient capacity to treat the entire produce of the mines, and in the opening up of markets independent of the United States, in which to dispose of the surplus in metallic form.

To British Columbia's present productive mineral area will shortly be added, by the completion of the railway into the Lardeau, another territory of unquestionable richness. In East Kootenay the mineral resources of the Windermere and adjacent districts, though at present not far enough developed to affect

the annual production to any great extent, are undoubtedly potentially great; while probably the Upper and Lower Similkameen and the West Fork of Kettle River, when provided with adequate means of communication and transport facilities, will, in the near future, prove, judging from present indications, at least equally as productive of gold and copper and silver as any of the more advanced centres of mining activity in the Province. Nor does this begin to exhaust the list of available territory of which even now from preliminary exploration we have knowledge. There is hardly a section of the country between the international boundary line on the south and British Columbia's extreme northern limits, that is not more or less richly mineralized, and in due course these will be embraced in the gradually widening circle bounding the area of industrial and productive activity. The history of mining industry in the West, wherever resources have justified progress, may be likened to the rolling of a stone down a steep declivity. At first it moves slowly; its career is checked and its direction altered by every petty obstacle in its course; but it gains in momentum and force as it journeys, and the obstacles are swept aside by the irresistible energy of its onward course. The mining industry in British Columbia has but started on its career. The first difficulties have been overcome; there are others to be faced, but these will but momentarily hinder its advance.

The most important matters are not always those which are carried on with most contention. It was in a comparatively empty Legislature that the provisions of the Metalliferous Mines Inspection Act Amendment Act were discussed and adopted. Yet this act if carried out in the spirit in which it is framed, will have a most notable effect in keeping the progress of the mining industry in this Province before the eyes of the world. In the matter of mining statistics we shall no longer be groping the dark, but be able to supply the world with prompt and accurate information of what is being done. So far as the English investor is concerned, the conditions under which money is raised and interest maintained in a foreign mining field, make this imperative, and to all other investors it cannot but be advantageous. Through the Mining Record we have always consistently and persistently advocated this system of monthly bulletins of output now put in force. We have always taken the position that while continuous interference by authority with the affairs of mining companies was most vexatious, there was, nevertheless, certain information which had a public interest, namely, the gross output and value of the different metals produced from our mines. For instance, one of the most remarkable features of last year's progress was the extraordinary increase in the output of the silver-lead mines of the Province. Yet at the very time when this increase was taking place we had in a speech from the Throne a pessimistic reference to the condition of this very industry. And at the end of the year the estimate of lead production