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PROSPECTING IN NOVA SCOTIA.

That a radical change of methods is necessary to success in prospecting for gold in Nova Scotia is evident. The superficial extent of the province's gold-bearing rocks is estimated at between 3,000 and 6,000 square miles. The unit of land held under lease or prospecting license is an area—a space 250 feet by 150 feet. During the year 1910 work was confined to 95 areas.

Over a considerable period of years not more than 315 areas in all have been prospected or mined. At the close of the past year there were held either under license or lease 31,470 areas. Thus, placing the total gold-bearing territory at 3,000 square miles, we find that only about one-seventieth part, or 42 square miles, of the possible field has been taken up. An inconsiderable fraction of these holdings has been prospected, and a very much smaller portion mined.

These facts furnish food for thought, especially when considered in conjunction with the actual position of mining and prospecting. These conditions were illuminatingly touched upon by Mr. W. H. Prest in a paper read before the Mining Society of Nova Scotia. Mr. Prest points out the vital need of a practical knowledge of geology in prospecting a country like Nova Scotia. Familiarity with local conditions is, of course, a sine qua non. "Local experience is just as necessary," says Mr. Prest, "is just as necessary to the skilled mining engineer as it is to the prospector. The lack of practical knowledge on the part of our scientific men is only equalled by the lack of scientific knowledge on the part of our practical men." With this opinion we heartily agree. Nothing is more needed than an adjustment as between the empirical worker and the academic observer.

The day has passed when the man who "putters round the woods with a pick" can be considered a prospector. The complications of glacial and post-glacial geology must be studied and understood. The old method of uniformly tracking rich pieces of drift north is based upon insufficient knowledge. Nothing is more wasteful than indiscriminate trenching. Heavy work of this kind must be guided by close study of glacial and post-glacial action. This point is well illustrated by Mr. Prest from instances in his own experience.

Moreover, the haphazard manner in which preliminary work is undertaken is so costly that much discouragement has resulted therefrom. Mr. Prest suggests many possible and practical economies.

Two concluding paragraphs demand quotation: "I refuse emphatically to believe that there is any such thing as failure in prospecting in Nova Scotia, providing the money and practical knowledge are forthcoming."