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THE MONTH.

PROBABLY no legislative enactment introduced by any British Columbia Government of recent years has created more wide-spread attention than the measure, which has now become law, amending the Placer Mining Act in such a manner as to prohibit the acquisition of placer gold mining claims by aliens. Already in the United States many indignant protests have been raised, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and the two Houses of the Washington State Legislature even going to the lengths of passing resolutions calling the attention of the President of the United States to this "unfriendly legislation," with the request that the matter be submitted by him to the Ottawa Government with a view to its suspension; furthermore, "that the other States of the Union be and they are hereby requested to co-operate with the State of Washington in preventing or obviating this proposed unfriendly legislation." While we do not, for reasons we shall presently state, altogether endorse the passage of the Act excluding aliens from working or acquiring rights in our placer fields, it is interesting to note that the action of the Provincial Legislature has already resulted in the emanation of suggestions from our Southern neighbours having special reference to the desirability of an interchange of favours with us, and for the arrangement of these upon a reciprocal basis. Whether, however, these doubtless conciliatory hints will lead to anything more definite remains to be seen, and it will then be time enough to consider if in consideration of the removal of, for instance, the heavy duty imposed by the United States Government upon the product of our West Kootenay silver-lead mines when exported to smelters in that country, the present law excluding Americans from our presumably

rich placer diggings of the Atlin and other northern districts, should be repealed. At the least this should be the price demanded for the concession, for the mere extension of privileges to British subjects—such as Americans have long enjoyed in this Province,—of mining in the United States could not now be regarded as an equitable *quid pro quo*. The present Placer Mining Act, as amended is, though radical, an eminently fair measure. By its provisions no aliens already holding placer mining rights in the Province will be disturbed or dispossessed, and thus the large interests held by Americans in Cariboo cannot be affected, applying as the Act does exclusively to ground sluicing operations. The Act, moreover does not in any way interfere with the introduction of capital for the larger schemes of dredging and hydraulic, for which expensive machinery is required, and while, as we have before pointed out, no information of a thoroughly reliable or scientific nature has yet been received concerning the formation extent and disposition of the Atlin diggings, all reports seem to agree that even richer gold values are found in the bench up-lands than in the gravel beds of the streams, and that the opportunities for engaging in profitable hydraulic working in this district are therefore exceptionally good.

On the other hand, the passage of the Act will necessarily largely limit and restrict prospecting and other work in northern British Columbia, so long as it remains operative, which we do not anticipate, by the way,—will be for any great space of time. It will also result in a considerable loss of business to the Canadian coast cities' outfitting trades, for experience taught Americans last year, during the Klondike excitement, the economy and other advantages of purchasing supplies in the Dominion; and to enforce the Act the Province will, for the maintenance of police and administrators, be put to no small expense, deriving at the same time a less considerable revenue from the payment of fees and tax dues, than would have been the case had the influx of Americans to Atlin this spring and summer at all equalled the rush to Yukon of last year. Nevertheless, the Provincial Government is certainly to be congratulated upon having pursued a bold and a doubtless far-seeing course. We are too small a population at present to directly benefit from the exclusion of aliens from our placer diggings, but it can do no harm to allow our neighbours of the Great Republic to understand for once that we can sometimes administer as well as swallow the medicine whereof they have drawn up the prescription, and there is no saying but that this self-assertion on the part of the Province may lead to the establishment of a relationship upon still more cordial terms and a fairer exchange of mutual favours between the people of Canada and their cousins of the United States. Such a consummation is indeed to be devoutly wished.