

At a time when it is so difficult to obtain sufficient revenue to meet the provincial expenditure, it is possible our suggestion may not meet with the favor we wish for it, but this does not affect our plea against unduly pressing upon the wage-earning miner.

The deplorable accident at Rossland the other day, when several miners lost their lives, would indicate that some better provisions should be insisted upon by the Government for the preservation of men's lives while working in the quartz mines. In the case to which we allude it would seem to have arisen from carelessness, but it appears to us that mine owners should be obliged to follow certain rules and to rigidly enforce them for the prevention of accidents.

Mining is often necessarily dangerous, and men then take their lives in their hands when following it, but the adoption of certain set rules might, if insisted upon, prevent carelessness, which too frequently causes loss of life. This matter is worthy of attention.

The holding of leases by the mere payment of money to the Government is a system which is leading to the locking up of much good mining land by speculators. The lessee should in each case, be made to do the improvement work, as required by law, or forfeit his lease. Miles of country are staked off by men who can afford to pay the Government fee, but who will not improve the property, their object being merely to hold it on speculation until a buyer comes along who will pay the price they want.

This is retarding development in the country. Miles of river leases for dredging purposes, have also been taken up and are not being worked. In collecting revenue from leases, the Government should see that the mere payment of the money is not allowed to stand as an excuse for shirking development work, or one of those days there will be a general outcry against the whole system, which will bring discredit upon the administration of affairs.

Where a man places improvements upon his lease, he should be entitled to either a crown grant or be recompensed for his outlay. Often a man after spending considerable money, is obliged to abandon his lease, and all that he has expended is lost. His successor derives the benefit. This does not seem just, and some provision should be made to protect men from such losses.

In the Kootenay and other mining districts of British Columbia, there is a class of men who endure toil and often hardships in their efforts to discover the hidden treasure. They are the pioneer prospectors, and without them our mineral wealth would remain hidden. They should have their reward, but it too often happens that they place such an extravagant value on their findings,

that it frightens capital away. This not only prevents the prospector from realizing a return for his labour, but it tends to retard active development.

The wise thing for the prospector to do is to place a fair valuation on his claim in the first instance; a valuation which will bear inspection, and the result in the end will be to his advantage. On the other hand, capitalists should not haggle over a fair price when a really good proposition is laid before them.

The chief difficulty in the way of smooth dealing between owners of mining property and capitalists often lies in the fact that a middle man is interested. Either he has secured a bond or he is acting as agent, and his percentage of commission which, sometimes is extravagant, blocks the way. Capitalists are wise who employ their own trusted men in treating for the purchase of mines, and prospectors or the owners of mining property will do well to consider carefully before placing themselves in the hands of agents or middle men. There are good men to be found and there are others who are unscrupulous. It is not difficult by proper enquiry to know whom to trust.

Victoria and Vancouver each has a stock exchange. An institution of this kind can do much good. If conducted merely for gambling in stocks it will do harm. In listing shares, the greatest care should be taken by the committee appointed for the purpose, to examine carefully into the condition of the companies applying, in order to see that no bogus concerns are foisted upon the public. If this is thoroughly attended to, the Stock Exchange will become of real benefit to the investor. We have at present a super-abundance of mining companies, a number of which are not entitled to public confidence. A weeding out is necessary and the Stock Exchange, if properly managed, will be a good medium in that direction.

The Columbia & Western Railway is a project which deserves encouragement. It will give an impetus to development in the southern part of Kootenay and afford an outlet for the mines which they need. It will place a rich agricultural part of the Province in direct connection with the mining country of Kootenay and will also cause much of the mineral wealth of the Province to remain in British Columbia instead of flowing into the United States. But it seems to us that the time asked for in which to complete the line is longer than necessary.

The promoters are asking as much time to build a road of less than 200 miles as it took the Canadian Pacific Railway to complete their transcontinental line. Long before the end of the next six years the mining country in Southern Kootenay will be in an advanced state of development and the traffic probably enough for