

Editorial Comment.

Now that there is a marked movement of capital toward our mines, a word of advice to the owners of "prospects" will not be out of place. The time has gone by when claims can be sold upon the strength of assays from surface croppings. A mine can be sold, but mere prospects are not in demand. Sensible business men—and they are the ones who are now making these investments,—want to see what they are buying. They will pay fifty or a hundred thousand dollars for a mine so developed as to actually show the quantity and quality of the ore it contains, when they would not invest a thousand in a prospect, no matter how rich the surface rock may be. Capital is going into our mining districts in abundance, but the careful observer will see that it is being invested in mines, and not in prospect holes. In every quartz district in the West, are to be found scores of men who have made locations, and are only doing enough work on their claims to fulfill legal requirements. Their assays show figures far greater than those of neighboring mines, which are being worked on a large scale and are paying dividends; and they are waiting for the "coming man" to buy them out. All they have to exhibit is a location, a set of assayer's certificates, and the fact that their neighbors are doing well upon poorer prospects. Practical men are too wise to place their money upon such an uncertainty, when there are other good claims for sale, in which the ore has been exposed to such an extent as to demonstrate its value and permanence. Occasionally, to be sure, a prospect of this kind is sold, yet it brings but a trifle, compared with prices paid for developed mines, and the locator receives \$1,000.00 for his claim, when a little development work would have made it worth ten or twenty times as much. There are, of course, many who are not able to do this development work, but that is their misfortune, for which intending purchasers are not responsible. They have no more just cause for complaint than has the owner of a peanut stand because his sales are not as large as the grocery store on the corner. What they ought to do, is to stop complaining, and devote to their claims some of the time and money expended at the saloons. In this way,

they may be able, gradually, to place their property in a condition for sale. One thing is certain, and the sooner it is realized the better it will be for claim owners, that there is a large amount of capital looking for mines, and but little in search of prospect holes.

If the prosperity of a section can be judged by the amount of railroad building in progress—and experience proves that they are closely allied—then must the Northwest be entering upon a season of great prosperity. A brief enumeration of the various railroad enterprises upon which actual work of construction is progressing, will suffice to show the condition of affairs. The greatest activity is exhibited in Montana, where the Northern Pacific and the Manitoba systems are building rival lines. The latter, in its westward march, has just reached the Montana line, and is pushing construction night and day, at a rate previously unequalled in railroad building. It will reach Fort Benton by September, and Great Falls by December. By that time, work on the Montana Central will be completed from Helena to Great Falls, giving the Manitoba an entrance to the chief city of the territory. Work is also progressing on the line of the same road from Helena to Butte. Two branches of the Northern Pacific, one from Drummond to Phillipsburg, and one up the Bitter Root valley from Missoula, are under construction. The gauge of the Utah & Northern is being changed from narrow to standard width. Engineering parties are in the field for half a dozen other lines, but actual construction has not yet begun. In Idaho, the branch line from Nampa to Boise City is now in progress. In Washington, the southern extension of the Spokane & Palouse, the final work in the Cascades on the line of the Northern Pacific, the work on eighty miles of the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern, thirty miles of the Seattle & West Coast, and on the Puget Sound & Gray's Harbor road are progressing rapidly. Railroad construction in Oregon is represented by the line being built from Pendleton to Wallula, by the eastward extension of the Oregon Pacific from Albany, by the completion of the narrow gauge line from Elk Rock to Portland, and by