

The Mining Record

VOL. X.

APRIL, 1903.

No. 4

BRITISH COLUMBIA MINING RECORD

Devoted to the Mining Interests of the Pacific Northwest.

PUBLISHED BY

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA RECORD, LIMITED

H. MORTIMER LAMB, Managing Editor.

Victoria, B. C., Office, Province Building.
Vancouver, P. W. Charleson, Hastings St.
London Office: 24 Coleman Street, E. C.
Denver, Col.: National Advertising Co.
San Francisco: Duke's Agency.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS:

Canada and the United States, one year - - \$3.00
Great Britain and Foreign, one year - - - \$2.50

Advertising Rates on Application.

Address all communications to

THE MANAGING EDITOR, B. C. RECORD, LTD.,
P. O. Drawer 645, Victoria, B. C.

THE MINING ASSOCIATION AND ITS FUTURE.

THE popular verdict is that the Convention held in Victoria on the 25th of February, which resulted in the organization of the Provincial Mining Association was a great success. It might easily have proved a failure. To assemble from all parts of the Province men representing, if not every industry, at least all classes of industries, and invite them to enter into the consideration of such a many-sided interest as mining, might well be regarded as a somewhat hazardous experiment, and it speaks much for the intelligence of the assembly that so many as two hundred and fifty persons, for the most part unknown to each other even by name, representing a great diversity of interests, many of them with strong preconceived ideas—not to say prejudices—in certain directions should have gathered together without leadership or any defined programme or specific object, and yet have so effectively and harmoniously worked for the common good. The attitude which some of the newspapers took in respect to the promotion of the undertaking, afforded evidence that in certain quarters, at least, the Convention was considered to be foredoomed to failure; but it was evident, as soon as the delegates assembled, that they were animated by a singleness of purpose, and any doubts that may have existed as to the result of their deliberations were dispelled at the first session. At the outset a disposition was manifested on all sides to approach every question in a broad way, and to permit absolute freedom of discussion. No one man or no delegation controlled or sought to control the Convention. The representatives of capital, the working miner, the merchant and the professional man met on absolutely common ground. It was a thoroughly democratic body, and one in which there was easily seen to be no place for the individual with an axe

to grind or a hobby to ride. Practical results for the general welfare became the object of the discussions, and the deliverances of the delegates were unquestionably valuable contributions to the solution of the problems affecting mining in this Province.

There was one subject over which the Convention might very easily have come to grief, namely, the labour question, but it was met and dealt with in the happiest possible way, so as, in fact, to demonstrate to the wage earners that the Association is as much their organization as that of any other class. In respect to "labour" representation the Convention was singularly fortunate, the workmen's delegates being of moderate, though pronounced, views and exceptionally fitted to take their part in the proceedings of a deliberative body. If the Constitution of the Association had been so framed that such men would have felt that there was no place for them in the organization, the Convention would have been a failure, for its great claim to be recognized as a complete success rests upon the fact that it is able to appeal to all classes of the community for sympathy and support. The first practical step of the Association, the despatching of a representative committee to negotiate for the settlement of the coal miners' strike, demonstrated in the most conclusive way the wisdom of the attitude taken towards labour questions, and the success which has crowned the labours of that committee will do more than any other thing to establish the reputation of the Association in public opinion. It is a decided gain to the whole Province to have an organization brought into existence which is able to deal successfully with a peculiarly difficult labour dispute. The settlement of the Fernie strike is full of promise for the future, for it demonstrates that in the Association the Province possesses a body able, by reason of the elasticity of its constitution and the broadly representative character of its membership, to grapple successfully with questions of the gravest practical importance.

The discussions at the Convention took a very wide range, or rather they were carried on along broad lines. To this the presence of a considerable number of delegates, not directly concerned in the practical work of mining, very largely contributed. Before the Convention assembled there was some criticism on the grounds that many of the delegates had little if any knowledge or experience with actual mining work, but the discussions showed that the presence of such persons was an advantage. They formed a sort of jury to which the practical men addressed their arguments. Absolutely free from any suspicion of being animated by self-interest, their verdict on the several issues presented carried a weight with it that would not attach to recommendations made by interested parties. The value of the Mining Association will depend upon its effect upon public opinion, and at the Convention public opinion was admirably represented in miniature, so that the Government and Legislature have in the conclusions reached, not only a declaration of the requirements of those engaged in mining, but a trustworthy indication of what the public think should be granted them. Requests prepared by an Association composed of persons engaged in any one industry would naturally carry far less weight with them than recommendations emanating from a body a very large proportion of whose members can be said to have "stood indifferent" and whose decision was reached only after a full discussion.

That the attitude of the Convention was of this character speaks volumes for the tact and good judgment of those who were chiefly instrumental in promoting it. Had they been less tactful, had they evidenced a disposition to control things, had there been the slightest suspicion of any intention on their part