

THE MINING SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

By F. H. Sexton.

It is a pleasure to greet the members of The Mining Society of Nova Scotia at its twenty-second annual meeting, and the distinguished visitors from outside the province. We have the honor of being the oldest mining society in the Dominion, started as the Gold Miners' Association in 1884, and re-organized into The Mining Society of Nova Scotia in 1892. For four years we were united with the Federal Canadian Mining Institute, but it was not a happy or profitable alliance for Nova Scotia on the terms under which the federation was operated, so that we have pursued a separate existence since 1898.

The development of our little association on independent lines is in keeping with our position and tradition. Nova Scotia is more or less isolated geographically, and in other ways from the rest of Canada. No other province has as large a proportion of its population engaged in the fisheries. With the exception of a little coal and iron mining in New Brunswick, there is no mining industry of any great importance in the great stretch of area between Nova Scotia and Western Quebec. Our province has made great sacrifices in revenue and in hardy intelligent men to develop the great Northwest without yet receiving an adequate return in subsidies or land. The dominant labor organization of coal miners is a provincial organization. After a protracted and spirited struggle with the General Mining Association of London, the Government of Nova Scotia secured the titles to their mineral deposits and have reserved them for the benefit of all its people ever since. Aside from tariffs and bounties, the mining population of this province is not deeply interested in federal mining legislation. Without enumerating other instances, I believe I am within the facts in saying that most of our interests, our quality of life, manners, customs and institutions, are strongly provincial. Insular and narrow we may be, but we possess strength and vitality from our very limitations. It is idle to suppose that the present condition of our sentiments, actions, or ideals will materially alter within any short period of time.

The Mining Society of Nova Scotia has enjoyed a long and honorable career, and has rendered valuable service time and again to the mining fraternity which it represented, and to the province.

In its early days when gold mining was booming, its activities were most closely associated with that branch of the industry. Concurrent with the rapid development of the coal mining industry, a large number of eminent engineers in this field became identified with the society, and all worked together with a will for the good of the mining industry of this province. Many of the good features of our mining legislation, stand to the credit of this society. Under the energetic leadership of our former President, Mr. A. A. Hayward, and the efforts of Mr. Alexander McNeil, we were chiefly instrumental in bringing home the importance of technical education to the members of our Government prior to the establishment of a comprehensive system of industrial training in 1907. We have been active in securing funds for the perpetuation of the memory of the late Hugh Fletcher, among those who will not have known him well enough to cherish

the remembrance of his rare personality, high ideals, and professional ability. These things and more can be adduced, but I hesitate lest we stifle our customary modesty in self-adulation.

With the recent temporary decline in the gold-mining industry, and the rapid expansion in coal production, it became evident to those who had the well-being of our society closest to heart, that we should have our headquarters in Sydney, while our quarters in Halifax should still be maintained. In order that this end should be accomplished, the council appealed to the large steel and coal companies to assist the project financially. A favorable response came immediately from the interested corporations, and to-day we are proud to state that we possess comfortable and attractive rooms in a central location in the Iron City, where we have placed a technical library replete with modern books on geology, metallurgy, and mining, the transactions of all the important mining associations all over the world, and the leading mining and metallurgical magazines. We have secured the services of Mr. E. C. Hanrahan as Secretary. His competency to fill this position has been demonstrated by his activities in a similar capacity in many other associations. Besides these provisions, we still retain our quarters in Halifax, and the indefatigable services of our Associate-Secretary, Mr. E. A. Saunders. In recognition of our expansion in effort, the Provincial Government has assured us of an increase in its annual subsidy.

By these changes in organization and policy, we have added a large number of members to our society, most of whom could not have participated personally in the activities and good-fellowship of our association. We extend to these members of the metallurgical and coal mining fraternity our hearty welcome.

Recently there has been proposed some merger, affiliation, federation, or some other form of union between our society and the Canadian Mining Institute. There may be some members of the latter association who think that we should give up our organization and become a branch of their institution. I believe, however, it is the sentiment of a majority of our members who believe that we should not cast away our identity, and who think we can serve the best interests of the mining industry in this province, by retaining our name and individuality. There are many ways, however, in which our society could be benefited by becoming affiliated with the Canadian Mining Institute. There must be some plan by which the two societies could unite their efforts with greater effectiveness, and make the Institute a truly national organization. It would be a benefit in many ways if the members of the Nova Scotia Mining Society could be admitted to the privileges of membership in the Canadian Mining Institute, to receive their transactions, and to enlarge their scope of interest and action in co-operative goodwill with the mining fraternity of the other provinces. We declare ourselves narrow and prejudiced if we do not earnestly strive to consummate such a desirable end, and we show a small degree of intelligence if we cannot evolve some working plan of united effort which we may adopt without loss of individuality and provincial prestige.