

"Great economy in the use of fuel has resulted in the past from the application of scientific invention and the use of improvements in machinery, and further progress can be made in the same direction. We, therefore, recommend that all possible encouragement and assistance be given in the development and perfecting of means whereby waste in the consumption of fuel can be reduced.

"The loss of human life through preventable mining accidents in North America is excessive. Much needless suffering and bereavement result therefrom. Accompanying this loss there is great destruction of valuable mineral property and enhancement of the cost of production. The best method of eliminating these known and admitted evils lies in the enactment and strict enforcement of regulations which will provide the greatest possible security for mine workers and mines. We, therefore, favour the scientific investigation of the whole subject of mine accidents by the governments participating in this conference, the interchange of information and experience, and the enactment and enforcement of the best regulations that can be devised.

"Mineral fertilizers should not be monopolized by private interests, but should be so controlled by public authority as to prevent waste and to promote their production in such quantity and at such price as to make them readily available for use."

These declarations deserve careful attention. The Conference was called by the President of the United States. Delegates were present from Mexico, Canada, Newfoundland, and the United States. Their deliberations were conducted with one object in view. That object was to give strong impetus to the movement for the better conservation of our natural resources, and to excite international interest in that movement. In this, we believe, the effort will be successful.

To Canadian mining men the second paragraph quoted above will be instructive. Coming from a dignified continental committee, it carries large weight. Significant also is the reference to loss of human life through preventable mining accidents.

All thinking men will concur in hoping that the good work begun by the Conservation Conference will be continued.

#### QUEBEC MINING LAW AMENDMENTS.

Quebec has moved slowly in the direction of better mining laws. For long there have been complaints from prospectors. Not alone is the present law unsuited to furthering the opening up of new mining districts, but in some cases it has actually deterred capital from entering the Province. Indeed the present law has a bad name, whether justly or unjustly is not for us to say.

The Quebec Department of Mines has not been

oblivious to this fact. Mr. Obalski, the technical head of the Department, has followed keenly for many years the trend of mining legislation in other countries. He has taken a prominent part in the discussions of the Canadian Mining Institute. The Hon. Mr. Devlin, the titular head of the Department, has made himself familiar with the needs of his Province. No doubt both of these gentlemen have had ample opportunity of learning the opinions of investors and prospectors regarding the present mining act.

Recognizing, however, that hasty and ill-considered changes are worse than any number of defects, the Quebec authorities have deliberated long. The bill now introduced by the Hon. Mr. Devlin will bring sweeping changes. It alters radically the conditions governing prospecting and acquisition of mining claims. The old prospecting license is to be done away with. It is to be replaced by miners' certificates, which will be issued by the Government on payment of a fee of ten dollars. Holders of certificates will be permitted to prospect all over the Province where the mining rights belong to the Crown, and where no previous rights exist.

Further, following the Ontario Act, the prospector will be required to stake his claim in accordance with specific regulations, including a marked discovery post.

The changes outlined will become effective at the moment the bill is sanctioned. Holders of licenses under the present Act will not, however, be interfered with until January 1, 1910. After that date the amendments will apply to all alike.

So far as we are able to judge from the scanty information received, the Devlin bill is sound. The changes will make less thorny the path of the prospector, and we venture to predict that this summer will see more than usual activity in Quebec.

One crucial question, a question that the Quebec Department of Mines should approach with all possible care, is that of "discovery." We do not wish to refer harshly to that feature of the Ontario Act. But it is not improbable that Quebec may learn what to avoid in this particular respect by studying the operation of "discovery" requirements in her sister Province. Undoubtedly, on the other hand, Quebec can and will draw many good lessons from her western neighbor. We would also draw attention to the fact that British Columbia has an Act that works smoothly and well. Perhaps the highest praise that can be accorded that Act is the statement that there is little or no evidence of dissatisfaction. And, after all, what is needed is a minimum of legislation and a maximum of mining. An Act that covers scores of closely printed pages, an Act whose every clause is qualified and modified by endless riders, defeats its own end. Mining legislation is, or should be, designed to facilitate, not to impede, the progress of an industry that is becoming more and more essential to the nation.