

At present to become a full-fledged assayer, duly recognized as such by the Provincial Government, it is only necessary to pass an examination, for which any intelligent student of the text books can qualify himself after a very brief period of study. But the theory of assaying and the practice thereof are two very different things, and proficiency in the latter can be only obtained by experience under skilled direction. A long apprenticeship is required of a surveyor, why not of an assayer, who surely needs training to an equal degree?

But if there are some incompetents among the assayers practising in the province, the name of those who without training, without even a theoretical knowledge of any of the "ologies" connected with the science of mining, call themselves mining engineers or mining experts, is legion. The harm that this class of men can do to the mining industry of the province is incalculable, and investors cannot be too cautious in finding out the professional standing of the self-styled expert before engaging his services or accepting his reports.

Again, it should be remembered that a recently graduated student of some school of mines, who, perhaps, has gained a limited knowledge of geology or assaying, is not necessarily qualified to pass judgment on the value of a prospect, or predict the future of a mine.

We hope ere long to see the establishment in the province of a strongly organized association of recognized representatives of the provincial mining industry and its subsidiary branches and interests. Such an association would, without doubt, if intelligently ordered, be of immense assistance to all engaged in legitimate mining enterprise in British Columbia.

Since the above was penned we have been informed on the very best authority that the Provincial Government have arranged that candidates for assayers' diplomas shall go through a laboratory course of some months before being allowed to write for examination. So far so good; nevertheless we still contend that "some months" are not sufficient to teach a student the whole duty of an assayer. In that time he may learn, and certainly should be able to learn, the rudiments of his profession (such as assaying ordinary quartz for gold), but a much longer practical educational course is required to properly fit him to undertake the more complicated class of work an assayer in a new mining district is often called upon to do. There is an objection to the idea of apprenticeship, because it is feared assayers will possibly then emulate the example of the other professional men, and form an association, the result of which will

be a "ring," and a consequent increased scale of charges for assaying work. We, however, anticipate nothing of the kind. A schedule of prices recognized throughout the country is already established, and there is no reason to expect any departure from its conditions. Local assayers are perfectly well aware that if they once attempted to charge exorbitantly prospectors would not hesitate to send their samples to say Spokane, or Butte, to be tested.

The B.C. Board of Trade is deserving of high commendation for the prompt and energetic measures taken under its auspices to point out the superiority of the claims of the British Columbia Coast cities to the Yukon trade. *Apropos*, Victorian merchants will, doubtless, learn in time by experience what is really requisite for a northern bound prospector's outfit. Then we shall not see advertisements of the numerous, incongruous articles enumerated as indispensable to the comfort of the Klondyke adventurer's comfort.

Merely as an example, may we ask what on earth a man wants with such a barbarous instrument of torture as a razor in a country where it is nothing out of the common for the thermometer to register 70 degrees below zero? But prospectors going to the Klondyke should be particularly careful not to overburden themselves with useless *impedimenta*.

An Act "for securing the safety and good health of workmen engaged in or about the metalliferous mines in the province of British Columbia by the appointment of an Inspector of Metalliferous Mines" was passed at the last session of the Legislature nearly four months ago.

But if the appointment has been made, and there is such an officer in the province as an Inspector of Metalliferous Mines, he must be a gentleman of remarkably modest and retiring habits, for we have most signally failed to hear any reports concerning his movements. Query: Has an Inspector been appointed? If not, why not?

There is in reply, so far as we can imagine, but one explanation, and that is the Act was unfortunately published. After that no one could be found courageous enough to undertake the duties. *Vide* section 5.

The Act as it now stands is of very little practical value. What would one Inspector be among so many mines scattered over an immense territory? But the appointment of an Inspector of Mines is very necessary and very important, and it is sincerely to be hoped that measures will be taken next session to give