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The Annual Pow-Wow.

The sixth annual meeting of the General Mining Association of the Province of Quebec and the first meeting for business of the Canadian Mining Institute, which is a federation of the Mining Associations of Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario, call for a few comments.

These meetings emphasized, as all others have done, the value of such organizations. Not only are they important means of securing protective benefits, but as social and educational instruments and promoters of industry and trade their existence is fully justified. The personal acquaintance and conference of men engaged in the same pursuits is valuable in securing an interchange of ideas and helpful suggestions, and also tends to allay the frictions that inevitably occur in the course of competitive business. The bitter feelings that arise against a rival who undersells or gains an advantage are often allayed by the explanation or understanding that may be secured from a friendly encounter. Bargains for products of mines or machine shops are often a practical result of these meetings. Then again, the papers contributed, on technical and mining matters, are brought to notice in a convenient way and an amount of general information is presented that could only be obtained otherwise by a great deal of research. At this meeting a summary was presented of the year's work in the production of asbestos, copper, phosphate, mica, coal, iron, chromic iron and other minerals.

Information was given about gold mining and machinery that was of interest and value. The discussion called forth by the papers was also important and was of educational service to the members, among whom were quite a large number of students. A special feature was the presentation of original papers by mining students in competition for prizes of \$30 and \$20. These papers showed either close observation, accurate perception of facts, or were the embodiment of a great deal of information obtained by study. The stimulation of these faculties of research is certainly a most worthy effort on the part of the Association and will be of service to the country in leading its young engineers into more thorough investigation of its resources.

Among the practical results of the meeting may be mentioned the proposal to secure a common meeting place for mining engineers - a bureau for mining information—in the city of Montreal, where minerals could be seen and information be procured by those desirous of interesting themselves in the productive industry of mining. It is most desirable that such facilities should be provided at the commercial metropolis, where capital is to be sought for active enterprises. It is proverbially difficult to secure money for mining. Capitalists generally, at the first solicitation, refuse to "put money into a hole in the ground," and it needs all the adventitious means of illustration that can be used to assist the persuasive arts of the promoter, whose aim is the development of the mineral resources of the country.

A valuable suggestion was that of inducing the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain, and the Federated Institute of Mining Engineers, to visit Canada, thus securing the spread of information about our min-

eral resources and the probable investment of capital. If such prominent organizations of engineers and capitalists could be brought to Montreal and there was a proper centre of information about our mining industries, it might lead to the undertaking of new enterprises and give an impetus to development.

At the meetings of the Canadian Institute much of the business discussion turned upon the vexed question of the duty on mining machinery. At present machinery of a class or kind not made in Canada is on the free list. But it is difficult to determine just what articles are exempt from duty, and in some cases collectors at different ports of entry have given opposite decisions and occasionally duty seems to have been improperly charged. It is of course desirable that uniform instructions should be given to the collectors of customs, and that a liberal interpretation should be applied to the law, which was originally framed with a view to benefit the mining industry. There is, however, some conflict of interest in the Federated Institute. Such an organization naturally attracts to it both miners and manufacturers of mining supplies. All workers crave protection for their products and free trade for their supplies. They wish the exclusion of competition in what they have to sell, and freedom of the open market for what they have to buy. So the miner cries to the Government for bonuses on his product and duties on similar foreign productions, but strenuously objects to the duty on articles consumed in the prosecution of his work. On the other hand the manufacturer of machinery and mining supplies seeks for the free importation of raw material and the exclusion by taxation of competing foreign manufactures. Here are irreconcilable conflicts of interest, and all that can be done is to let each scramble for his share of benefit. The trouble arises from the incongruity of both interests looking to the same organization for help in securing friendly legislation.

It was generally reported that the present law had operated satisfactorily to eastern miners. A rather pungent criticism was made by a bright member, that the only complaints made were about the payment of duties to a small amount upon some articles that admitted of question, and that these complaints came from the coal and iron industries, the two mining industries that were the only ones that receive any protection from the tariff. They were humorously advised not to go to the Government to complain about a small payment of duty, when such large amounts were levied upon the country in their interest, as it might be deemed to be a protest against the national policy of protection of which they had been such ardent advocates.

Another important matter that was considered was the securing of a Dominion grant of money for the publication of the papers and information collected by the Institute, which certainly are of both provincial and national importance, and it was felt that if \$5,000 can be devoted to the publication of the literature of the Royal Society, at least \$1,000 might be given for the circulation of such vital practical information as the mining associations of the various provinces collect.

The Quebec Mining Association came into existence not to secure legislation, but to repeal it. Alas, that it ever should be necessary to