

The transportation companies in this country are, in fact, most liberal in this respect, and not only judges, but members of Parliament, clergymen, not to mention, journalists (who, however, generally render a *quid pro quo*) are as a rule afforded the opportunity of travelling without charge. We do not suppose for a moment that passes are offered to judges or members of Parliament with the object of influencing their opinions or as inducement to them to extend special favours in return at the expense of strict morality. At the same time to accept a gift and fail to experience a friendly and cordial feeling towards the donor and a desire to benefit him would be unnatural, and in view of this, judges and parliamentary representatives being but human, the pass system is not a good system. But we are more concerned with the question: Should judges act as commissioners? Mr. Justice Martin replies in the negative, as "it has directly or indirectly, publicly or domestically, an undesirable effect on the administration of justice and is contrary to the welfare of the State," and his reason for arriving at this emphatic conclusion is that the absence of one judge on extra-judicial work throws an unfair burden on his colleagues of the Bench, and is apt to delay litigation. If in practice this argument is found to work out, it is unanswerable. On the other hand there is much to be said in favour of the principle of the appointment of Supreme Court judges on commissions. We were in communication the other day with a number of mine-operators and others who are desirous of bringing about certain changes, which in their opinion would be highly advantageous to the industry, in the mining law of the Province. The suggestion was made there that what was required to convince the Legislature and the people of the justice of their contentions was a commission to enquire thoroughly into the working of the mining laws and secure evidence bearing specially on the points raised. The reply to this was: "No, commissions are worse than useless. The Government will appoint commissioners to suit themselves, and if they do not desire a change in the law, the commission would so manoeuvre as to bring in a report adverse to us." Ignoring, we think, advisedly, the debatable point here raised, we can nevertheless safely say that the judiciary in Canada is accorded a measure of respect and confidence that is not extended generally to professional politicians, and consequently the inclusion of a judge on a commission, over which he would probably preside, would lend weight to the findings of that body and be an additional assurance that the matters enquired into would be, at any rate, honestly and impartially considered. Apart from the fact that a judge is peculiarly fitted to act as a commissioner from training and experience in the weighing and sifting of evidence, he has often the further advantage of having made a special study of the subject anent which enquiry may be made. To particularize, no one is so well informed on the mining law and its operation in British Columbia as the author of "Martin's Mining Cases and Statutes of British Columbia," and no one would be better qualified to act on a commission to enquire into the working of our mining law than he. That such a commission,

properly constituted, could render most effective service we have no doubt at all, for whether reform is needed or not in the direction indicated by mine-operators or by the Executive of the Provincial Mining Association, it is an acknowledged fact that the numerous ambiguities and conflicting clauses in the Mineral Act at least, are, and until amended or reconciled, will be, a fruitful source of litigation. So long as commissions can be made to serve a useful purpose, and this means for investigating alleged abuses or grievances continues, so it is absolutely essential that the men sitting as commissioners should be like our judges, independent, impartial, disinterested, beyond the reach of political influence or taint. If the services of Supreme Court judges are unobtainable for the performance of extra-judicial duties, then surely it would not be altogether impracticable to make permanent appointments, in the same manner as judges are appointed, of men specially trained and fitted to act on all occasions as presiding officers of commissioners, Boards of Conciliation or Arbitration. The adoption of such a measure would go far towards popularizing and increasing the usefulness of this system of enquiry and redress.

#### THE PROVINCIAL MINING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

##### THE SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION—THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF INVITATION TO DELEGATES.

THE campaign of Remedial Legislation which was commenced by our Association at its General Convention in February last has been prosecuted with zeal by the Executive Committee ever since.

The Legislature was, at the time, in a state of internal dissension, and unable to give its attention to the many pressing needs of the Province. Nevertheless, we did succeed in obtaining two of the reforms recommended by the Association, viz.:

(1) The right of redemption of mineral lands sold for taxes;

(2) A provision enabling the owner of a group of crown-granted mineral claims to perform all requisite work upon any one of his claims.

The Association, as you are aware, is composed of men representing all classes of industry and politics in the Province; but the Association itself is absolutely non-partizan.

Our object is to secure relief from numerous artificial burdens which have, from time to time, been imposed upon the mining industry. The welfare of the Province demands reform, and our Association, guided by the wisest counsels it can enlist, is determined to secure it.

Owing to the shameful mismanagement of our public affairs by successive legislatures during the last few years, the Province has been brought to the verge of bankruptcy. Is it not time for the people to insist that henceforth wisdom rather than folly, and carefulness rather than recklessness, shall guide the destinies of our country?