

THE CANADIAN MINING INSTITUTE AND THE NORTHWEST.

A GLANCE through the published list of names of those who attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute, held in Quebec during the first week of last month reveals the seeming position that not a single member from British Columbia was in attendance. This is not surprising, though, for there are few of our prominent mining or metallurgical men who are likely to go to the expense of attending meetings held in Eastern Canada even if they had time to do so. Further, the only western member of the Institute present, as shown in the list published by the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, was Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, of Dawson, Yukon, whose business took him East during the winter. Outside of this single representative, the coal mining regions of the extensive Northwest lying east of the Rocky Mountains, and the important mining districts in British Columbia and Yukon Territory had no personal representation by resident members.

While we may not complain that members living in the West did not spend their time and money in giving this Province prominence at what we are expected to regard as the most important annual gathering of Canadian geologists, mining men and metallurgists held in Canada, we may well ask why is it that what we take pride in designating "The Mineral Province of Canada," a province that in 1905 produced about one-third in value of the total mineral production of the Dominion (between \$22,000,000 and \$23,000,000 out of a total of \$68,500,000)—why is it that so important a province had no one to call attention in a comprehensive way to its leading position in the Dominion as a producer of metalliferous minerals? True there were half a dozen papers, out of forty or more contributed, relating to mining matters in British Columbia but only one of these was read—that by Prof. Brock on "The History of the Rossland District." In the report published in one of the most influential mining journals of the world there was mention of progress in Quebec and Ontario, and of the prospects of the Yukon, but never a word concerning the fact that British Columbia last year made a record in mineral production and that its prospects for the current year are distinctly favourable to still further progress.

The foregoing reflections suggest the enquiry—What practical benefit does this Province derive from having 70 or 80 of its mining and smelting men members of the Canadian Mining Institute, and what use has the Institute for the Province other than as a contributor to its revenues? Apparently so little that, as far as we are aware, it has held only one meeting of members in British Columbia during the eighteen years it has been in existence, while the spontaneous giving of an intimation to the mining journals of the West of its intention to hold its annual meetings or any account of proceedings at such meetings does not appear to have ever occurred to its officials—past as

well as present—as at all necessary or desirable. There need be little surprise that the American Institute of Mining Engineers is growing in favour in the Canadian West to a greater degree than is the Canadian Mining Institute, for the former has demonstrated in a positive manner its interest in mining in the Pacific Northwest, giving our mining men an opportunity of personal intercourse with numbers of its leading members—men of high professional attainments and wide experience—while the latter, by appeals for support from contending factions in Ontario and Quebec, has of late years suggested that its first purpose, viz., "to promote the arts and sciences connected with the economic production of valuable minerals and metals," has to some extent been lost sight of in a struggle for ascendancy and control, thus substituting sectionalism and provincialism for the national spirit that alone can build up to great influence and material success any institution having more than local aims.

In view of the position as above stated, it would appear advisable for western mining engineers, metallurgists, and others eligible for membership in mining institutes, to make it very plain to their eastern professional brethren that it is high time the reasonable claims of the West had recognition, at least to the extent of holding an occasional meeting of its members at a place within reach of those resident in the West. Admittedly there is little likelihood of many eastern members attending a meeting held in the West, but better have a smaller attendance once every few years than permit the feeling to become intensified that the United States Institution is in far more active sympathy with the Canadian Northwest than is the Canadian.

There is a further cause for complaint in connection with the existing method of carrying on the business of the Institute by the council. What voice have the British Columbia members of the council in the conduct of the affairs of the Institute? Practically none, for meetings are held in Montreal or Toronto and only those present are permitted to vote. It is seldom, if ever, that even the opinions of British Columbia members are sought on important matters. Notice of meeting is sent them, but the practice followed by the American Institute of Mining Engineers of giving members of the council opportunity to vote by mail has not been adopted, notwithstanding that its advantages were pointed out some time since by a western member and the necessary amendment of the by-laws recommended. So it is that the election of members of the Institute resident in the far eastern and far western provinces, and especially in the case of the latter, resolves itself largely into a mere formality, since to all intents and purposes these members have no vote in conducting the business of the Institute, nor opportunity to endeavour to prevent the ill effects of unseemly rivalry between Ontario and Quebec cities desiring to derive benefit or distinction from the location of offices and ascendancy in the control of affairs.