

per cent. tax will cause an increase of mining which will cause an increase of population, and so of revenue (probably in excess of the \$84,000 which the Government is asked to forego) therefore, and because of all these things, I will recommend that the gentlemen who make the laws of British Columbia do abolish this tax. Again in discussing the troubles of the silver-lead miners, this association said "This seems a matter which has been well considered by those most interested and best informed upon the subject. Their demands appear to be reasonable. They don't want our advice, but they deserve our support. Let them have it."

But this creature (the association) added riders to everything and applied the same principle to all questions brought before it.

It decided that the laws relative to the silver-lead industry concerned first the silver-lead miners and therefore backed their petition, but when the mine owners wanted the code of signals upon which the lives of their employees depended altered against the wishes of those employees, the association said "No." The men most interested don't want this code altered, therefore hands off and let it alone.

When the two per cent. tax was protested the association assented to the protest, but it added this rider which the mining men had to affirm: "That with respect to the resolution passed dealing with the abolition of the two per cent. tax, this convention shall not be understood as being opposed to a fair and equitable taxation of the mining industry."

The farmers had good right to fear lest the taxes which were being taken off the miners might light upon their shoulders, but the creature was minded to be fair to the farmer and to deal out impartial justice to all men.

When it came to the Crown granting of placer ground, the creature for the first time showed its teeth. It suffers acutely, it would seem, from indigestion, and not being American, refuses to be hurried over its meals.

It was not opposed to the principle of Crown granting placer claims, but it did not know much about the matter and wanted to hear more, when therefore a few experts delivered their explanation which were not very explanatory and expected their arguments to "go without saying" and their dose to be swallowed without investigation, the creature, which is still young, did indeed swallow what it was asked to, but became so restless and irritable afterwards that it registered its annoyance and protest against "railroading" measures through its body, by an attempt to re-open the whole question, which was only abandoned on account of the greater importance of settling the Fernie strike.

There is a great deal to be said in favour of these Crown grants. On all the showings nothing can shut the country up more than it has already been shut up: every one is agreed that investing capital does seek greater security of tenure and that long column of recommendations which in the report follows the main contention *re* Crown grants, contains, if you read it, answers to almost all the objections which can be urged against the granting of them, but the creature was not allowed time to read those recommendations or to dis-

cuss them seriatim as it wanted to do, and had no appetite for mental food ready digested by some one else, or for the pretty poppy-cock about "untold millions and dear old prospectors," wildernesses which would blossom with cities, or even for that picture of Mr. Hobson, its papa, driving droves of shiny American millionaires in crush hats up the Cariboo road. Therefore it demurred but eventually became resigned again, remembering that after all the resolution in question only "urged that the Legislature should give its serious consideration to these recommendations."

But with regard to certain gross heresies the creature was emphatic.

It had been avowedly created to give advice, founded upon experience and special knowledge to legislators who were alleged to be insufficiently informed upon mining matters. The Minister of Mines had attended the creature's birth in all humility and had asked for its advice, and now certain of the creature's parents calmly affirmed that it was no part of the association's business to advise the Government.

"Then," replied the creature, "you have no business here at all."

But it may be that the parents meant more than this, for one of them brought in a motion which for audacity beats Bannagher. Here it is:

A. C. Galt and J. B. Hobson moved as follows:

"That having regard to the laxity which has heretofore prevailed in the Legislature of British Columbia in the enactment of laws and amendments to laws affecting the mining industry and the serious difficulties occasioned thereby, and having regard to the widely represented character of the association, and the fact that it includes within its membership many of the most competent authorities in this province to advise upon all matters affecting the mining industry, this association do respectfully urge upon the Government and Legislature of British Columbia the advisability of enacting that no legislation whatever affecting the mineral industry or any branch thereof shall be introduced unless the same has been approved by this association, or unless the association has been given a reasonable period, not less than three weeks, within which to consider and advise upon such intended legislation."

This would make of the association an Upper Chamber, or substitute an irresponsible, unelected body representing one interest only for the duly elected representatives of the whole people.

Of course the creature told its parents to mind their own business: to remember that they were an advisory and not a ruling body: that they had not even as many votes as the farmers, and that they had better lay this fool resolution upon the table.

On one other important point, the most important point of all, the creature disagreed with its creator and prevailed.

The reasons for its creation were principally the revision of unjust taxes, the advising of insufficiently instructed legislators upon special subjects within the knowledge of the association, and the settlement of labour troubles.

We have seen what happened with regard to the two first points. When the third came up for discussion