

and now under the control of the newly created Bureau of Mines, experiments have been carried on for the purpose of investigating the nature of coal dust, with especial reference to its explosibility. The chief mining engineer of the Bureau, Mr. George S. Rice, has recently written a bulletin describing these experiments. Certain conclusions are outlined by Mr. Rice. Whilst the reader is informed that these conclusions are tentative, yet as they are expressed in definitive language they are fairly to be criticized. And on two points, at least, we fear that Mr. Rice has erred.

The conclusion that in ordinary conditions the dust must have originated from coal carrying at least 10 per cent. of volatile combustible matter has not sufficient basis in fact or, rather, in experiment. British experiments have proved that explosions can be obtained with charcoal dust. Mr. Rice mentions this latter fact, but apparently does not accept it.

Again, the preliminary statement that the force of the explosion of firedamp is terrific, is quite wrong. Firedamp explosions develop no terrific force.

It is not wise to overlook the fact that the British experiments have covered a much longer period of time than have those conducted in the United States. Long and unsparing study is a pre-requisite. This has not been absent in Great Britain. But we must express a candid doubt as to the fitness of the United States Bureau of Mines to rush into print concerning a subject so involved and so highly technical. It were better far to defer official reference to controversial phases until such time as the Bureau may have become more firmly established.

It is generally admitted that much is to be learned concerning coal dust. When the United States Bureau of Mines has a serious contribution to make we shall welcome it.

TECHNICAL LITERATURE ONCE AGAIN.

Laterly we gave utterance to the hope that the tilt between Mr. T. A. Rickard and his critics would be lively. It is. In Bulletin No. 71 of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, two new contributions appear. Both contributors, after a brief bow, proceed to carve Mr. Rickard and to place salt on the wounds. In an entertaining ten pages Mr. Rickard replies to each and all who have entered the lists against him.

In our opinion, Mr. Rickard has escaped with surprisingly few marks. He seems fairly to have established his position in objecting to the use of such localisms as "mullock." His objection to the misuse of the word "partially" is also sustained. But in the matter of preposition-verbs, the critics have worsted him. All this by the way. The outstanding fact is that Mr. Rickard has single-handed resisted the onslaught of many tall and fiery knights. His pen arm yet is free. A bloody wound or two can be detected. But he has emerged, if not victorious, yet by no means defeated.

And his agility has been beautiful. We had truly believed him at least temporarily disabled.

The discussion that has now been closed has indisputably aroused more and keener interest than any of recent years. To our resolute brother the profession owes a hearty vote of thanks.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

A change is coming over general mining activities in Canada. It is not uncommon to hear of independent Canadian investors taking up abandoned mines. This is probably more the case in Ontario than elsewhere, but evidence of revival is not lacking in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, or British Columbia.

In Nova Scotia, for instance, old gold mines are being re-opened; gypsum and infusorial earth deposits are being again taken up; and generally there is a great deal of quiet work being done. In New Brunswick, copper is being investigated, despite the record of the past. Copper and alluvial gold are subjects of revived interest in Quebec. Ontario's western gold mines show signs of life. Of British Columbia's lead and zinc the same thing is true.

These facts, considered in conjunction with the many new activities in coal, iron, gold, oil, feldspar and so on, surely mean that the mining industry of Canada is on the eve of expansion to limits not heretofore hoped for. Statistics may not show the measure of this expansion. But, before long, even statistical statements will be affected.

PORCUPINE AND COBALT.

He who denies that experience teaches need only glance over the histories of Cobalt and of Porcupine. Porcupine has learned wisdom from Cobalt. The pioneers of Porcupine were in the main strong, clean men who frowned upon crookedness. So far as is humanly possible Porcupine has been developed on its own merits. Cobalt was sadly afflicted for years with bad men and bad methods. The process of weeding out was long. Porcupine has commenced weeding early. That it may be continued is our earnest prayer!

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Diamond drilling has brought satisfactory results in Porcupine ore bodies.

Rhodesia has established a Geological Survey. As the gold output of the colony is now about \$13,000,000 per annum, this step is not rash.

The rise in the price of tin has been phenomenal. Lately in London the spot price has reached £164 10s., whereas a week before it stood at £159.

An exceedingly rich ore shoot was recently struck at a gold mine at Renfrew, Nova Scotia. Specimens of the ore, filling a small pan, contained more than 50 ounces.