

Cheaper coal would be an incalculable boon to Ontario manufacturers. The removal of the present import tax is, however, no guarantee of cheaper coal. Ontario is not a competitive market.

The surrender of our Eastern markets to the United States can, therefore, be compared to certain diplomatic bargains that are matters of Canadian history.

On the other hand, the opening of the Western States to the free importation of coal and coke from Alberta and British Columbia appears to be inevitable. Our Western Provinces have the coal; the Western States have the market, and only negligible coal deposits of their own.

Canada is fast attaining nationhood. Canada will never reach a position of importance in any way commensurate with the richness of her natural resources until Canadians have learned that these resources are not exhaustless—that they must be conserved wisely and well. We have wasted our forests, we have depleted our fisheries, we have sold part of our coal lands in the West for a mess of politics.

When our powerful neighbour to the south yearns for admission to our market, we can, without discourtesy, demand time for full investigation.

Commercial independence is not without its value. A group of gentlemen at Washington need not be reminded of this.

ELIMINATION OF POLITICS.

In governmental departments, especially in those that employ technical workers, whatever makes for appointment of new officers on their merits makes also for the good of the service. Political influence is the fly that causeth the ointment to be unsavory.

We are gratified to note that political influence is not a factor in appointments made to the staff of the Geological Survey of Canada. Whatever may have been the case in the past, at all times it must have been most repugnant to directors to have unqualified assistants foisted upon them.

The Director of the Geological Survey has issued a short, pointed, and unequivocal form of regulations governing the appointment of assistants to field parties, positions much coveted by youths ambitious and otherwise.

All assistants must have passed at least their second year examinations in the special departments of geology, mining engineering, or surveying, in a Canadian mining school or university, or some other approved higher educational institution, before taking the field. They must be men of good physique. Preference will be given to those with some knowledge of bush work.

Amongst other restrictive clauses, the most important is this: "Each applicant must sign a statement with his application that it is his intention to become

a professional geologist, mining engineer or topographer."

"These regulations," announces the circular, "must be adhered to."

This action should meet with strong approval. Canadian universities are turning out scores of mining and geological graduates. Second and third year men are every summer looking for suitable employment. Heretofore it has not been unusual to find Geological Survey parties recruited with medical students, budding theologians, embryonic lawyers, and unlabelled nondescripts. Vigour, tone, and permanence will be lent to the service by keeping its ranks free from rank outsiders.

NOVA SCOTIA'S MINING REPORT.

A gratifying improvement over its predecessors is noticeable in the annual report of the Department of Mines of the Province of Nova Scotia for 1908. Typographically and in all other respects the 1908 report is distinctly superior to those of other years. This is no small matter. It means, first of all, that the Department is bestirring itself. Also this report will arouse far more interest than would have been possible had the old form been adhered to.

Nova Scotia has large and varied sources of mineral wealth. Providence has ordained that the winning of this wealth should not be easy, and that each of the Province's mineral industries should have its own difficulties and hindrances. The people of Nova Scotia are able to work out their own destiny. If they are to succeed in building up a mining industry that shall be commensurate with Nova Scotia's natural resources, they must grapple earnestly with fundamental problems. The men at the head of their Department of Mines are thoroughly familiar with the needs of the industry. The Department itself needs the vigorous support of an awakened public.

MINING ACCIDENTS.

Mr. Ralph Stokes, whose letter appears on another page, has visited nearly all the more important districts of the British Empire. As a representative of a group of South African, English, and United States papers. Mr. Stokes undertook, a few years ago, to visit and describe the mines of the British Empire. His large and entertaining volume, "Mines and Minerals of the British Empire," has already assumed a place in the world of technical literature. Equally is it a useful record of travel in unfrequented ways.

Mr. Stokes refers to "the influence of more capable and scientific supervision," as indicated by "the large decrease of accidents due to explosives, which class of mishap is above all attributable to carelessness or inefficiency."