

"During the past two years a large number of persons, including many from the city, interested in B.C. mining matters, have visited the Institute, but, unfortunately, except for a small collection of Rossland ores which were temporarily borrowed from Mr. McMullan, and two or three samples lent by London houses, not a single specimen from any of the mines which have brought such renown to B.C., have been on view. But, despite this, I may say that the Curator, Mr. Harrison Watson, has done much to interest visitors in the mineral resources of the Province; and brokers in the city, knowing that he had personally visited the B.C. mines, have been in the habit of sending up clients to see him, and these have been succeeded by others. That much more could have been done with an adequate collection, there can be no doubt, but it is to be hoped that the long expected collection will now arrive, as Mr. Carmichael is giving the matter attention.

"That the Institute, hampered as it is for funds, has not been able to do all it wishes to, is to a certain extent true. That it is the "stamping ground of the aristocracy," is as ridiculous as it is untrue, and the fabrication of "Truth" and other imitators looking for "copy." If you will read the annual report just published, you will obtain a true index of the situation.

"When circumstances have permitted British Columbia to strengthen her display, I am sure that the Institute can do a good deal. In fact the County Institute's Journal and lectures have dealt so largely with B.C. that more than one publication has accused us of "booming B.C.'s gold!"

"The B.C. Government has, throughout, shown an interest in the Institute, and with the immense activity which the progress of the Province in the last few years has caused, the delay in obtaining collections of products in the face of so many pressing local matters, can be understood.

It is, however, unless the absence of these essential exhibits is explained, unfair to condemn the Institute and its management."

In the foregoing our correspondent certainly succeeds fairly well in shifting the blame for the unsatisfactory and unrepresentative nature of the exhibits at the Imperial Institute from the shoulders of the management to those of the Colonial authorities. In his letter he has referred more particularly to the miserable inadequacy of the exhibition in the Canadian department, but as a matter of fact the other Colonies are not much better represented. This, of course, does not excuse British Columbia's half-heartedness, and we can only express the hope that now the matter has been brought to the notice of the authorities, immediate steps will be taken to remedy matters. It will be noted that our correspondent does not attempt to deny the truth of our contention that had a site been selected for the Institute in the city instead of at South Kensington, the establishment would have filled a more useful purpose, and been decidedly more popular. Notwithstanding, if the Colonies will show, as they should, their interest in a practical manner, by forwarding representative and up-to-date specimen collections of exhibits to the Curator, there can be no doubt that the Institute will do much in return to make known in the mother country the resources and wealth of the Colonial possessions.

At a recent conference of Australian Premiers, the question of the coinage of silver by the Colonial mints arose. Seemingly, however, the importance attaching

to the subject was but little appreciated, for instead of a comprehensive discussion following, the matter was almost summarily disposed of in a few words of perfunctory comment. Unlike Canada, who by a provision of the North America Act has the right to coin her own silver, the Australasian Colonies must first obtain permission from the Imperial authorities before action in this direction could be taken, but that consent would be withheld, is to the last degree unlikely. With this exception, therefore, Australia is in much the same position as Canada. Both countries are great self-governing dependencies; in both a national, in contradistinction to but not apart from an imperialistic spirit is strongly evidenced, both—and this is the most important consideration of all—are silver producing countries. From the patriotic standpoint it is almost derogatory to the dignity of these countries that their coin should be minted away from home; from the practical standpoint it is absurd. Australia, it is true, mints her own gold, but in this operation there is a loss, or if not a loss, at least no profit, for the intrinsic value of the pound or sovereign is twenty shillings in gold, and English and Australian sovereigns are even sold at their face value in San Francisco, and reminted there into American gold pieces. In Canada both the English sovereign and the United States five dollar piece are legal tender, and hence, nothing from the practical point of view merely, of course, is to be gained by the mintage of our own gold coin, but in the case of silver the conditions are entirely different. As an Australian contemporary, the *Mining Standard*, shows, even when the white metal stood at 5s. per ounce the seniorage on it was twenty per cent. At its present rate of 22d. per ounce, the seniorage is therefore over sixty per cent. In other words, an ounce of silver, which costs 22d. per ounce, is minted at a cost of 2d. into coin passing current for 5s. 6d. This is the price which Australia, a silver-producing country, has been paying, and is still paying the Royal Mint for its silver coin. Canada's arrangement with the Royal Mint is more satisfactory, yet the profits made from the profits of Canadian silver and copper by the English Mint and a Birmingham firm, are enormous. When the Province's present Lieutenant-Governor was a member of the Senate, the important question of the establishment of a Canadian mint found in him a persistent and able advocate, but unfortunately since, little attention has been given to the matter. It is, however, to be hoped that the development and growth of the silver mining industry in West Kootenay, will have the effect of bringing more forcibly before the Government the advantages to be derived from the mintage of our own silver coin at home.

PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

On and after 1st July, 1898, the subscription price to the B.C. MINING RECORD will be advanced from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per annum. Foreign postage additional. This applies to renewed subscriptions from the above mentioned date.