

taining these optimistic writings allude to the presence of Dr. Heroult, in Ottawa, or Toronto, and that the bulk of them have also emanated from the Ottawa correspondents of the various big dailies, suggests that perhaps somewhere in among the cinders, or back of the woodpile, there is lurking an Ethiopian gentleman. The *Toronto Globe* and the western papers which cull largely from its columns, have contained interviews with Dr. Heroult and from him have extracted a voluminous mass of words, out of which appear one or two facts. The principal fact is that the first corporation on this side of the Atlantic to obtain a license from Dr. Heroult to use his process for the refining of steel has been the Holcomb Steel Company, of Syracuse, N.Y., which is credited with the laudable intention of investing one million of dollars in a plant whose output will range from 80 to 100 tons of metal a day, this metal consisting of tool steel and wire rod billets.

The papers go on to say an awful lot of balderdash and rubbish respecting the conversion of pig iron costing \$20.00 a ton into a steel worth \$200.00 a ton, for the insignificant sum of \$1.00. It will be remembered that just about twelve months ago there appeared and was distributed to favored individuals an excellent monograph on the electric smelting of iron ores and the making of steel, which was the report of the Commission sent to Europe by the Canadian Government in December, 1903, to report upon and investigate the different electro-thermic processes employed in the smelting of iron ores and the making of different classes of steel. This monograph on its appearance was unquestionably the most authoritative, complete and reliable compilation of all known data on the subject of the smelting of iron ores into iron and steel products by means of electricity. Various and competent iron and steel authorities, then, as previously, while expressing their admiration of the work which had been done on the Continent, still declined to consider electric smelting as any important factor in the immediate future of the iron or steel trade, and chiefly because of the difficulty of obtaining electric current at a sufficiently low cost to permit the commercial production of iron and steel thus made. In your own columns, early in the year of 1903, an editorial showed quite clearly that the road was not by any means smooth, and that the question of cost would undoubtedly operate to continue coke products as the principal commercial products in the field.

These various newspaper squibs and items have seemed to the subscriber to be quite in line with the ill-judged and optimistic statements about the wealth of British Columbia which were in vogue in Toronto newspapers during the five years from 1895 to 1900, and the *Globe's* correspondent strengthens this view when he talks such absolute rot and rubbish as is contained in one of his recent articles where he says that "the interior of Canada possesses no fuel, and the cost of transportation of the same to the iron fields of Central Canada is practically prohibitive." He goes on further to speak of the "immense deposits" of magnetite existing in Onta-

rio and Quebec. These "immense deposits of magnetite," so-called, are unknown to the press, that is to say, the authentic press, as diligent search of the volumes of the Canadian Geological Survey, and of the different provincial government reports has failed to discover even ordinary deposits of workable magnetite, but the item is mentioned simply as testimony to my hypothesis that all these articles appear to have for their ultimate aim the arousing of public sentiment in favor of electric smelting.

It is interesting to note that the *Globe* correspondent says that Dr. Heroult is *reasonably* certain that pig iron and high grade steel can be produced in Canada, but although he is "reasonably certain," in order to make himself *absolutely* certain he is going to conduct a series of metallurgical experiments for six months at Sault Ste. Marie in a plant which the Canadian Government is kind enough to erect for that purpose at an ultimate cost of something over \$15,000. But the correspondent shows his woeful ignorance of his subject when he proceeds to quote Dr. Heroult still further. The learned doctor is reported as saying that Canada now spends between \$50,000,000 and \$60,000,000 abroad in buying steel, and that the idea should be to make all that steel at home out of Canadian material by the means of Canadian water-power from Canadian labour. Manifestly, the bulk of these fifty to sixty millions of dollars, in fact over 90 per cent. is spent for the purchase of steel rails and structural steel. But if it is to cost one million dollars for a plant with a maximum output of 100 tons daily, I, for one, am of the opinion that capital for the manufacture of iron and steel by electricity will be slow in offering itself to any promoters of such a business. Can you not suggest through your columns to your readers that these puffs of new processes should undergo the test of time in this country before irresponsible newspaper writers attempt to make capital out of them. There are many things which Canada needs, and needs badly, far worse than she needs high grade tool steel and wire rod billets.

With apologies for the length of my letter, I am,
Yours truly,

HARD SENSE.

PROPOSED REVISION OF ONTARIO MINING LAW.

To the Editor:—

Sir,—As I understand that the mining laws of Ontario are shortly to be submitted to the Legislature for revision, and that the views of mining men are invited, I should like to refer you to my paper read at the Toronto meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute, in March, 1904, dealing with the subject of mining laws in Canada. My main contentions are:

(1) That a strict working condition should be required of all locators of mineral areas, while unworked land should be taxed to the utmost limit. This, to my mind, is the simplest way to prevent