

prices, then it is to the interest of the country that the Crow's Nest Company should no longer be allowed to retain a monopoly. From the point of view of the Canadian Pacific Railway, if the statements which have been made in support of this company's contention are correct, namely, that coal can be mined at Fernie, at \$1.25 per ton, and coke manufactured at \$3.25 on a liberal margin of profit, the railway corporation itself cannot feel aggrieved at being tied down to supplying coal at \$1.75 and coke at \$3.50, or the maximum prices specifically mentioned in the resolution.

The last resolution of those having reference to mining, and passed at the convention, deals with the incidence of the tax on metalliferous mines, and suggests a remedy which would have the effect of largely relieving corporations and individual mine operators of taxation at the expense of the prospector and less well-to-do claim owner. This proposal has since been repudiated by the Nelson Board of Trade. Nevertheless the incidence of the existing tax is admittedly unfair and inequitable. The relation between ore values and tonnage accommodates itself by a series of gradations to a general principle, that as the value of ore decreases, profitable operation depends on a constant increase of tonnage produced. In a previous issue of the MINING RECORD the action of this principle was illustrated, and it is hardly necessary to again elaborate upon the subject, except to say that the inequality of the impost lies in the circumstance that part of the fixed cost per ton of ore is not exempted from taxation, and therefore low-grade mines where the tonnage produced is large, are taxed at a proportionately higher rate than high grade mines whose yield is of equal value but of far less bulk. The recommendations of the Associated Boards of Trade, it is true, suggests the removal of the inconsistencies as indicated, and it is earnestly to be desired that the government will recognise the justice of the contention here put forward. While it is worse than undesirable to place any restrictions on prospecting, the present system of taxing claims might perhaps be so changed as to so give increased benefit to the Province without deterring legitimate prospectors from following their calling. Before a Crown Granted title can be obtained to a mineral location, the locator is required to pay in fees to the government a sum aggregating fifteen dollars, distributed over a period of generally five years; that is to say, a recording fee of two dollars and fifty cents is first charged and in addition, five other payments of equal amount are required for the rendering of annual assessments. It would doubtless be a wise innovation to require a preliminary fee of (say) ten dollars, charging subsequently one dollar for each assessment recorded. By this plan revenue from this source would probably be greater, while the system would tend to discourage and prevent the indiscriminate location of property and the tying up of large areas by men, who might be more fittingly described as speculative "land grabbers" rather than legitimate prospectors. The regulations governing the holding of mineral ground

after Crown Grant has been obtained might also be advantageously amended. The present tax on unworked Crown Granted property is absurdly inadequate, and the impost of twenty-five cents per acre should be increased to at least a dollar per acre; but instead of requiring the owner of such a claim to do the equivalent of two hundred dollars in work upon it to earn exemption from taxation, the ordinary assessment requirements might be substituted, and a merely nominal fee of twenty-five cents imposed for registration. The owners of Crown Granted claims are divisible into two classes; (1) speculators or investors, including syndicates and corporations, who have acquired property by purchase, and (2) the original locators and discoverers of the ground. It is in the interests of the country that those coming under the first-named classification should not be allowed to retard the development of our natural resources by holding unimproved property indefinitely for speculative purposes, without being heavily taxed for the privilege; while on the other hand prospectors would in the great majority of cases prefer to devote a month's time, which is practically the equivalent of a hundred dollars in cash, to the further development of their property, rather than pay fifty dollars in cash into the Provincial treasury. The tax as it now stands is futile as a source of revenue, and the amount is so insignificant that the alternative proposal is nullified in its most valuable feature.

#### THE NEW MINISTER OF MINES.

EVERY cloud has a silver lining and in that resembles most of the hills of Slokan, and we cannot help thinking that dark as the political cloud has been which has hung so long over British Columbia, that, too, has a bright side for the mining industry. We, as a journal, know nothing of politics except that they seem sometimes to be the curse of Canada, and the especial curse of her most western province. Trade has no sentiment, the mining industry has no politics. What the mining industry wants, however, is peace and a settled government; an assured quiet and a man to administer its affairs who knows something about mining, for the rest it can take care of itself. We cannot believe that the recent utterance of a distinguished member of the local opposition to the effect that a government not composed of lawyers is a government of fools, can possibly be defended. In our simplicity we should prefer to see the different departments administered by men specially trained in those matters with which they are supposed to deal, a banker or successful business man, if you like, for Finance Minister; a lawyer for Attorney-General; a farmer or land owner for Lands and Works; but above all a mining man for Minister of Mines. And this last it appears we have, at last, secured. Too often we elect a man because he is a jolly good fellow. We have heard it whispered that the new minister is that. If so, it will do him no harm. Did we elect him because he is conservative or liberal. We cannot find an