

The Vancouver Mining Convention

March 17, 18 and 19, 1919.

With representative mining men in attendance from as far south as California, and as far north as the Yukon and with every intervening mineral section represented by leading mining men, the first International Mining Convention ever held in the City of Vancouver opened on Monday, March 17, and closed on Wednesday the 19th. The Convention in every way was a success. Its first feature was a stirring address by the Honorable William Sloan, Minister of Mines, and its closing incident was the ringing appeal of M. J. Carrigan, of Seattle, Washington, to all interested in the promotion of the industrial welfare of the Pacific North-West to unite in a determined effort for the establishment of an iron and steel industry either on the Canadian or American side, or both. Mr. Carrigan dwelt on the fact that Mr. Sloan had been the first man in public office to declare in unqualified terms that British Columbia possesses iron ore in sufficient quantity and of such quality to permit the opening and permanent continuance of a furnace modest in size in this province. He congratulated the Minister of Mines on the courage of his statement, and the vision which it indicated. He stated that he had known this to be a fact for fifteen years, but that Mr. Sloan had been the first man in a responsible position to publicly make the announcement. Reference was made also to the very great importance of such an industry, if the shipbuilding of the Pacific Northwest, the foundations of which have been laid through the exigencies of the war, is to be perpetuated.

Addresses.

There were many notable addresses during the Convention, but before referring to them, the British Columbia Chamber of Mines should be congratulated on the splendid judgment exercised in the preparation of its programme and in the satisfactory manner in which it was carried out. Vancouver is not essentially a mining town, but on this occasion, if the very large crowds which thronged the Vancouver Hotel is any criterion, a large proportion of the leading merchants, business men and citizens generally turned out, both to welcome their visitors and to acquire information as to the mining possibilities and the future of mining in their Province and in the countries adjacent. Certainly they gave the delegates from outside points a warm welcome and treated them with every hospitality and consideration. Reverting to the addresses, it is fitting that brief introductory reference be made to that of Mr. T. A. Rickard, of San Francisco, California, the subject of which was "Mining as an Investment." Couched in simple, but effective, language, and containing the essence of long years of experience as a mining man, it was a liberal education in itself and furnishes a guide to those contemplating such investment which could not well be bettered. Then there was the address of Mr. H. M. Lawrie, Chairman of the Oregon Bureau of Mines on "Gold." In view of the exceptional interest in this subject, to say nothing of the very able manner in which it was handled, in this case, keen interest was manifested by the assembled delegates. Some of the other papers may be briefly enumerated as follows: "Government Control of Smelters," Sydney Norman, Spokane, Washington; "The Better Preparation and Utilization of Coal," G. W. Evans, Coal Mining Engineer, Northwest Experiment Station, U.S. Bureau of Mines, Seattle,

and Francis W. Glover, Princeton Coal and Land Company, Princeton, B.C.; "The Prospector, What He Should Be and How to Encourage Him," J. P. McConnell, Vancouver; "Taxation of Mines," Valentine Quinn, Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, Vancouver, B.C., T. W. Bingay, Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, Trail, B.C., Nicol Thomson, Chairman, Mining Committee, Board of Trade.

The Price of Silver.

There were not many resolutions acted upon by the Convention, but several of them are of first importance. That which may be said to take premier position in this respect relates to the fixed prices placed on silver. The resolution asked that the Canadian Government use its influence with the Government of Great Britain with a view to the abolishment of the present fixation of the selling prices of this metal. The mover of this resolution claimed that the authorities were not treating silver fairly, following out the policy indicated. He said that Canada, as a producer of silver, was losing a lot of money as a result of this action, placing the figure roughly between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000. His opinion was that no argument could be advanced to justify the maintenance of this fixed rate, it was unjust to the producer and unjust to Canada and he expressed the hope that the Convention would not hesitate to go on record in favor of its abolishment. Silver, like any commodity should, now that the war is over, be permitted to find its own level as to price. He was convinced personally that, if this course were pursued, silver would rise considerably above a dollar an ounce, as the demand was great and would, beyond a doubt, grow greater as time went on. There was a market for any quantity in the Orient, Russia, as was true of any country which is misgoverned as those are. Being distrustful of those placed in power, the people hoarded their gold and their silver, and the latter was particularly in demand as a medium of exchange. It was only fair to those who are producing this metal that they should be allowed to reap any reward that might be coming as a result of these conditions. He predicted that silver, if placed on the market without restriction would advance to \$1.20, \$1.30 and perhaps \$1.40 an ounce. Mr. Smith Curtis was responsible for the foregoing observation, and he was endorsed by Mr. T. A. Rickard, as well as by the great majority of the delegates including Mr. G. A. Caldwell, who represents the producers of the boundary district of British Columbia. Mr. Caldwell spoke very vehemently, and warmly endorsing the sentiments expressed by Mr. Smith Curtis and declaring that the fixing of the price of silver was the work of plutocrats. He expressed the belief that Governments these days were particularly keen to keep their fingers on the pulse of public opinion; that Governments would be careful under present conditions to do nothing that could be avoided antagonistic to the general sentiment; and that if the International Convention went on record in this matter it might have the desired effect at Ottawa. There was some opposition to the proposal, several speakers asserted that the policy with respect to silver had been adopted by Great Britain only after very careful consideration in order that the social equilibrium of the Indian Empire might be maintained. They declared that any interference with this would embarrass the Government of Great Britain and that under the cir-