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MINING AND POLITICS

The time has come for painfully plain speech about the attitude of the Dominion Government towards the mining industry. Despite the fact that the claims of that industry have been repeatedly put forward, and despite the further fact that the justice of those claims has been proved, the Government, through dilatoriness, indifference, or weakness, continues its policy of neglect.

Since the present Government was put in power, quasi—the Department (or, rather, the Department) of Mining has been blessed with no less than four changes of Ministers. Messrs. Nanton, Rogers, Roche, and Coderre have successively been appointed to this responsible position. Not one of these gentlemen has anything approaching adequate knowledge of the industry. It follows, therefore, that not one was appointed for the benefit of mining, and that only considerations of expediency influenced the situation.

There has been ample mincing of words and phrases heretofore. The Canadian Mining Institute, through its delegations and at its meetings, has voiced the desire of the mining man for better treatment. Whilst its delegates have walked softly and talked politely, they cannot have failed to impress upon the Rt. Hon. Mr. Borden and his Ministers the fact that the Institute as a whole deplures and resents the futility of the past and present situations. Briefly, therefore, the treatment accorded the mining industry appears to be calmly deliberate.

This being the case, there is only one course to pursue. The Canadian Mining Institute has a membership of over one thousand. Its representations to the Government have been without avail. It behoves the members, therefore, to use other means to obtain their rights. And the only means left is the exercise of whatever definite and legitimate political influence they may possess. In short, the members of the Institute and the mining community at large must realize that as a body they cannot afford to have their just claims repeatedly ignored. While there may be no necessity for using threats, it certainly is clearly necessary to demonstrate to the Government that mining men are a strong factor in determining political fortunes.

The forthcoming annual meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute should be made memorable by the formulation of a Bill of Rights. We have definite grievances. The Institute, which is the only national organization representing the industry, must assume the duty of presenting these grievances forcibly and completely. While, of course, the amenities will be regarded, our claims can no longer be put forward as nebulous suggestions; they must be clothed in positive and categorical language. The industry of mining must assert itself.