

While the unwillingness of the average engineering student to write compositions has prevented the courses offered from obtaining great popularity, Mr. Black is able to report that good results are obtained.

"That the students at the College of Mines have improved under instruction, there is no doubt in my mind. I have proved by the exactest tests that can be applied that those finishing the second year course can write very appreciably better than those just entering College, if they try. They do not write examination papers much better—can you expect it when they are nearly always pressed for time? The compositions written by the second year men last April as the final examination for the course were, I believe, the best set of compositions ever written by any class at the College. Moreover, I will match them with similar sets written by sophomores in any college or university."

In Canada the teaching of English to mining students is quite a different problem from that presented in Michigan. Here the mining students receive their education in Universities where every facility for the teaching of English is available. Special instructors are not necessary for mining classes. All that need be done is to arrange between the University Departments for the desired instruction.

The question to be considered here is whether the requirements in English are now strict enough. Students acting on their own initiative can usually find opportunity for as extensive courses in English as they desire. But the average engineering student has an idea that good English, while desirable, is not very essential to his success. Is the student capable of judging? It would be better to assume that he is not, and insist on courses in English being taken.

### COBALT SILVER MINING COMPANIES PLAN NEW WORK

Following on the reopening of the few producing mines shut down on account of the war now comes news of further activity. The Cobalt Lake and La Rose companies have adopted programs which call for vigorous exploration and development of their property.

Some time ago the Cobalt Lake Company prepared plans for the draining of the lake so that the known ore-bodies could be extracted and others searched for. Most of the property underlies the lake and the project involves large expenditure both for draining off the water and providing other companies with water and the town of Cobalt with a sewage system. In spite of the inability of the town to finance its share of the work at this time the company intends to go ahead.

The La Rose mine, one of the earliest discovered and one of the best at Cobalt, has for some time not been showing up well on development. The known ore-bodies have been almost completely extracted and little new ore has recently been found. The company has a very large cash surplus and is in a position to carry on extensive development work if desired. For some time

it has been doubtful whether the mine would soon be closed down or a vigorous plan of exploration adopted. Acting on reports by Manager R. B. Watson and P. A. Robbins the directors have decided on the latter policy. This means that operations will be carried on that may easily lead to the discovery of more ore. Much will be learned that will be of use both to the company and to the owners of the surrounding properties. The structure in the vicinity of the La Rose merits close study. The possibility of discovering ore on the property is a fair one.

### LORRAINE IRON DEPOSITS

The activity of the armies in Lorraine near the borders of France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Germany draws attention to the fact that this region is a very large producer of iron ore. In all four countries the working of the iron deposits in this neighborhood is and has been for years an important and profitable industry.

The Lorraine iron ore district, easily the greatest in Europe, has a productive area of about 300,000 acres or approximately 470 square miles. Of the total there is in France 180,000 acres, in Germany 106,000 acres, in Luxemburg 9,000 acres, and in Belgium a few hundred acres now practically worked out. The ores, which are oolitic, occur as a group of sedimentary beds of varying thickness.

In the war of 1870 the Lorraine district was the scene of much fighting, as it is in this war. When the war was over France ceded to Germany practically all of the district in which iron ore outcropped. As remarked by Mr. E. C. Eckel in his recently published work on iron ores, "the war of 1870 was in reality an exchange of blood for iron in a way that the world has not appreciated."

After the war ore was developed at greater depth on French territory and the ore reserves in France are now known to be greater than those in Germany.

In the International Geological Congress report on iron ore resources of the world the Lorraine-Luxemburg region is credited with 5,600,000,000 tons. Of this 2,835,000,000 tons is in Germany, 3,000,000,000 tons in France, and 270,000,000 in Luxemburg.

It seems not improbable that the next report on iron ore resources will show those of Germany to have decreased about 2,835,000,000 tons and those of France to have increased a corresponding amount.

### WAR AND OIL

Oil is a very valuable commodity in war as in peace. Considerable importance is therefore attached to probable changes in control of oil fields during the war. Fortunately it seems that Germany is to be the chief sufferer.

In the British Isles the oil shales of Scotland are the source of a very large annual production. This field is in no danger.