

Mining Institute, nor of the mining industry, nor of the profession of mining engineering, to attempt to establish a class distinction in the Canadian Mining Institute under existing conditions. In other words, the opinion of this gentleman appears to be that, since the Institute represents an industry and not a profession, membership classification or discrimination, such as may be practised by essentially technical societies, is not one of its legitimate or logical functions. On the other hand, it may be well argued that while this may not be in accord with established precedents, these in a new country may be ignored without fear of dangerous consequences; and that, therefore, the Institute need not be deterred from adopting a policy of its own that would differentiate it from any other society of similar aims, for the reason merely that it would appear to be a departure. Admitting this, it but remains to discuss the question of the policy of classification on its merits. The most important point of all is how it has affected and how it is likely to affect the general development and usefulness of the society. So far as the by-law's recent operation is concerned, it is difficult to prove that it has exerted any injurious effect. This by-law has now been in force for nearly three years. In that time the membership has very nearly doubled. In 1907 there were elected 161 members and 34 associate members; in 1908, 87 members and 62 associate members, and in 1909 to date, 49 members and 52 associate members. During these three years only three candidates for membership have objected to their classification as associates, and in but one case has a candidate withdrawn his application in consequence of a ruling. This gentleman was a director of mining companies, his actual knowledge of mining was merely perfunctory, and in no sense professional or even practical. The Council, acting in accordance with the implication of the by-law, could not, therefore, have well come to any other decision than they did in adjudicating on this application.

It will be noted that the distinction between a member and an associate member is little more than nominal, the associate having all the privileges of membership, with the exception only that he is debarred from holding office. The attempt to classify the membership may be said, then, to have a sentimental basis rather than anything else, although its ultimate aim may be eminently practical. Thus, even full membership in the Canadian Mining Institute does not at the present time imply professional proficiency or even professional experience. A graduate fresh from college is as eligible for full membership as is a mining engineer old of international repute. The Institute merely draws a line, and a not particularly distinctive line, between those professionally engaged and those commercially engaged in the mining industry. Nevertheless, even this somewhat meaningless discrimination has, in the writer's belief, served to popularize the Institute with the class of men whose interest and support is of most value to the society. Although, as has been stated, the Institute represents an industry and not a profession, it can scarcely be disputed that the esteem in which the organization is held and the influence it exerts, is mainly attributable to the fact that its membership is preponderantly professional in character. Again, the technically trained engineer or practical mining man is necessarily in a position to render greater service to a society, one of whose chief objects is the publication of technical information, than another whose qualifications to express himself authoritatively on this subject are entirely limited. To complete the argument in favour of membership classifications, it may be further

urged that no person desiring to join the Institute for legitimate reasons, such as to secure its publications, attend its meetings, or participate in its work, could or would offer reasonable objection to being classified as a non-technical man if he had no claim to the title of mining engineer. On the other hand, it is conceivable that one proposing to make improper use of his membership by, as has been done in the past, advertising it as proof of expert qualification, would strongly disapprove of a discrimination which might easily interfere with his schemes in this regard.

Against the system of discrimination the strongest argument, perhaps, is that it is not sufficiently thorough, and is, therefore, non-effective, if not actually injurious. Non-effective in the sense that the qualifications required for admission to membership are so broad as to be in a large degree meaningless; and injurious in that this absence of real significance is not realized by the general public, who would, naturally, be disposed to conclude the direct contrary from the fact that some sort of discrimination is now known to be exercised. Consequently the danger that Institute membership may be made to serve personal and improper ends is greater than before. The Council has, however, recognized and endeavoured to provide against, or at least minimize this possibility, by issuing at periodical intervals a list of the names of applicants, together with a statement of their alleged qualifications, to the membership at large, inviting members to scrutinize this list and to submit any criticisms they are in a position to afford concerning the status of candidates and which would affect their right to election. By this means the members as a whole are made to share with the Council any responsibility attaching to the admission of new members; but although these lists have now been issued for upwards of a year, as yet they have failed to elicit a single reply. Which, of course, presumes that all recent elections have been beyond reproach.

These, then, are in part the arguments for and against the present practice of membership classification. No doubt others could be adduced in support of contentions on either side. The question is worthy of consideration in view of the proposed revision of the by-laws this year, and it is to be hoped that members will take advantage of the present opportunity to present their views on the subject.

In conclusion, a word may be said on the Institute's recent policy of establishing branches throughout the country. The idea is not a novel one, even in the Institute, having been first suggested and partly carried into effect by Mr. Bell in 1902. It was also warmly advocated by Mr. Coste during his term of office in 1903 and 1904. The successful operation of the branch system, however, is of comparatively late date, and takes into account the organization of the Toronto, Cobalt, Montreal and Western branches. Of these, the Cobalt and Western branches are naturally the most important, and have served the most useful purpose; in fact, a large increase in membership during the past two years is chiefly due to the activities of these two branches, and of their executive officers, to whom the Institute is under considerable obligation. Until quite lately there has been much opposition in certain quarters to the establishment of branches, and even now some very able gentlemen hold the view that the expedient is a mistaken and dangerous one. Their ground for this belief is that branches foster and encourage localisms and sectional feeling; that they threaten to become a drain on the finances of the Institute, and, in brief, are likely to be a source of weakness rather than of strength. These ob-