

municipalities and rural districts should be in a position to control the monies voted by the legislature for the construction and maintenance of public highways within their boundaries by the appointment of local administrative boards, has much to recommend it, especially in view of the abuses attaching to the present system. It is not too much to say that the greater proportion of the money appropriated by the government for roads and trails in the mining districts, is now wasted as a consequence of ill-directed effort and for the want of proper supervision. Whether, however, the remedy suggested would meet the difficulty is another matter. If, as in the case of school trustees, road commissioners were expected to give gratuitous service, it is questionable whether properly qualified men could be found willing to assume the heavy responsibilities of the position, or able to devote the time and constant attention necessary to the performance of duties such as would be required to render the service really efficient from commissioners in a large district.

Mining development in many parts of British Columbia is largely dependent upon the opening up of territory by good roads and trails, and the fact that during the past six months over half a million has been expended by the government in public works of this character, indicates that the importance of such requirements is fully recognised. But while expenditure in this direction is, under existing circumstances, sufficiently generous, there can be no doubt but that it could be made to go a great deal further under a better system of distribution and supervision. This the Associated Boards of Trade realise, but their suggested remedy, as we have already shown, would be only doubtfully effectual. The appointment of Boards of Commissioners, however, is undoubtedly a wise proposal, but officials thus appointed, whether receiving their commission direct from the government or by election from the constituencies they serve, should assuredly be liberally paid for their services, and their entire time should be devoted to the execution of their duties. By the appointment of efficient men, under a civil engineering specialist as chief commissioner for the Province, a large initial economy would be effected, for road building would then be conducted on scientific principles, and both the original costs of construction and subsequent costs of maintenance would be very much less than now. If municipal control is considered, the only really feasible scheme on these lines is the adoption of the British plan of apportioning the country into counties, and the introduction of methods of county council administration. This would necessitate legislation to constitute these councils, and to give them the power to levy taxes within limits in the county over which they had control. The suggestion contained in the amendment to the same resolution is also an excellent one. In new districts it is of the utmost importance that every possible assistance and inducement should be afforded to the prospector, and many men of this class would no doubt take advantage of the opportunity of employment in the building of roads or trails,

which would add to the value of their own locations by rendering them easily accessible, as an alternative to the ordinary assessment work; though, of course, some provision is already made by law in this respect. Here, too, however, there is need for regulation and system. A prospector or claim owner should only be permitted to accept the alternative proposed, on the understanding that he is for the time being an employee of the government, under the commissioner for the district, equally liable to dismissal on sufficient grounds as any other workman so employed. In the case of such dismissal the prospector should be paid in cash for the time he has been employed, at the ordinary rate of wage paid for unskilled manual labour; but otherwise he should receive credit for his work to the extent of the two hundred dollars mentioned at the rate of three-and-a-half dollars, or the wages paid to skilled miners by the day.

The subject of the third resolution, to which we direct attention, has, on previous occasions, received consideration in the columns of the MINING RECORD. The question of securing a favourable market for our pig lead is of paramount importance at this juncture. The establishment of a small refinery at Trail is a first effort in the scheme of localising an industry, which reasonably fostered and aided gives every promise of large expansion, and if, without placing an unduly heavy burden on the consumer, sufficient encouragement can be given by increasing the duties, to admit of the manufacture of white lead and other manufactured forms of lead in Canada from the product of Canadian mines, lead miners in British Columbia would be assured of a good market for at least one half of their present output, and the exceptionally high price thus realised would offset in a very large measure the excessive charges necessarily ruling in the exportation of pig lead to so distant a market as London. The request to be made to the Federal government to modify the terms upon which the subsidy on lead locally refined may be earned, is also not unreasonable in some respects, but surely with the ordinary profits on the process and with some added advantage in the matter of freights the refiner in British Columbia should rest satisfied with a subsidy of five dollars a ton, and not demand an additional premium of two dollars if his output falls below the moderate tonnage specially mentioned in the resolution.

In last month's issue we gave our views on the fuel supply question, but the recommendation made by the Associated Boards of Trade is one, the fairness of which it will be difficult for either the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company or the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to combat. If the present prices of coal and coke are as low as they well can be, the Crow's Nest Company need not fear competition by advantage being taken of the government's offer to lease coal lands in the same neighbourhood, with the suggested conditions as to the maximum prices to be charged consumers of coal and coke produced from such leased lands. If, on the other hand, coal and coke can be profitably supplied at the proposed