

railway lines to open up mining territory be reasonably looked for. It may be that a few years hence conditions will arise that will lead to the extension of the railway to the west coast of the island and, incidentally, mining camps en route be afforded railway transportation facilities, but here as elsewhere, the existence of sufficient freight tonnage to make the railway pay will have to be shown before the C. P. R. or any other company will construct a railway solely to open up new mining fields.

The Canadian Mining Institute is in troubled waters, owing to dissension between its officers and partizan feeling among other members supporting one side or the other. As a result the harmony that should exist in an institution of this kind has been much disturbed. Unless a general determination to sink all differences and to promote the best interests of the Institute by working together to maintain its usefulness be speedily arrived at, the breach will be widened and the value and good influence of the organization much weakened. It is to be hoped, though, most earnestly, that better counsels will prevail and all strife between individuals and provinces cease, so that the single aim of all may be, as through the years when the late Mr. B. T. A. Bell was its guiding spirit, "to take concerted action upon such matters as affect the mining and metallurgical industries of the Dominion of Canada, and to encourage and promote these industries by all lawful and honourable means." We commend this excerpt from the charter of the Institute to the thoughtful attention of those who for the time appear to have lost sight of it, and trust that when the members shall meet in annual sessions early next month the *esprit de corps* characteristic of the best years of the Institute's career of usefulness will have been fully restored.

The Provincial Mineralogist's approximate valuation of the mineral production of British Columbia in 1904, published elsewhere in this issue, exhibits an increase in value over that of 1903 of all minerals produced except coal. If, however, coal and coke be added together, these also show a larger value than in the year immediately preceding. The total increase for the year is \$2,274,046, of which amount more than one-third must be credited to lead, the production of which was more than double that of 1903. Silver and gold also show substantial increases. It will be seen that the estimated value of the coal produced is \$1,734,000 less than that shown in an estimate published in the January number of the *MINING RECORD*. The explanation of the occurrence of this wide difference is that the tonnage of coal made into coke at the Crow's Nest collieries was added to the "consumed in Canada" total, when it should have been deducted. The compiler of the production statistics we published last month accepted the assurance of an official of the coal company that this course was the correct one, and it was not until after the figures had been published that the mistake of the official was discovered.

Last summer Mr. Justice Martin delivered judgment dismissing the action of the plaintiffs against the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company, Ltd., for damages claimed as having resulted from an explosion that took place at the defendant company's colliery near Fernie in May, 1902. More than 100 suits had been brought against the company, and of these five had been selected as test cases, the result of the consolidated trial of which was, after much expert evidence had been taken, as stated above, in favour of the defendants. Notice of appeal to the Full Court of British Columbia was afterwards given by the plaintiffs' solicitors, but lately notice was served on the company's solicitors to the effect that the appeal will not be proceeded with. The litigation following the calamity, which had such disastrous effects in great loss of life and property, is therefore at an end. As the company voluntarily did more than could reasonably be expected of it to defray expenses and relieve suffering and distress, it is a matter for congratulation that it is not to be further embarrassed by a continuance of legal proceedings, the tendency of which would probably be to hamper it in carrying out the progressive policy necessary to make its big enterprise even more successful and profitable than it has been in the past.

We reproduce in this number of the *MINING RECORD* an interesting article on the electrolytic refining of lead, taken from *Mines and Minerals*, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, one of the most widely-circulated mining journals in America. The plant and process are described by the author, Mr. Robert L. Whitehead, now of the United States Mint, Philadelphia, Pa., who for some time directed operations under this process at the refinery of the Canadian Smelting Works, Trail. Since then the plant has been gradually increased, and now 108 new tanks are being put in, which will so enlarge the capacity of the tank room as to admit of a daily output of 50 tons of pig lead from this refinery. The establishment of this increasingly important industry in British Columbia is due to the enterprise of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company acting upon the recommendations of the chief of its mining and metallurgical department, Mr. W. H. Aldridge.

The close of 1904 and the opening months of 1905 have been marked by a decided improvement in results from several of the silver-lead and zinc mines of the province. First the St. Eugene company paid a dividend totalling \$70,000 and the Slocan Star one of \$25,000, both in December; then in January the sale of 2,000 tons of zinc ore gave the owner of the Lucky Jim mine a return, stated to be, after payment of the purchase price of the property and cost of mining the ore, of \$16,000; now the Reco adds its quota of \$20,000, declared a few days ago. As there is good reason to look for further dividends shortly from these several properties, and from others in addition, it would appear that what has long been a reproach to the metalliferous mines of Slocan and