

eral days before he is given an opportunity of interviewing the minister on some question of importance, and one perhaps demanding prompt action. True, the pressure will be, in a very large measure, removed when the new Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan are ceded control of their natural resources; but even then there will be ample to occupy the attention of the minister without adding to his duties. The national importance of our mining industry warrants, more it demands, the establishment of a separate and distinct department of mines, under the direction of a Minister who can devote his entire energies to ensuring its efficiency. The lack of proper organization in this department has been a subject of comment for years past. In spite of the fact that an Act establishing the department has been actually passed, conditions at the present time are very nearly as chaotic as at the worst time in the history of the Geological Survey. This is no reflection on individuals. In general, the officials of both the Geological Survey and Mines Branch are able and keen; it is the organization, the system that is defective. So long, therefore, as the fundamental defect is not remedied will the present conditions obtain. The present administration has a great opportunity to render a notable service to the country by the establishment of a Federal Department of Mines on a sound and certain basis.

Elsewhere we print, in part, the text of a memorandum on this subject prepared by the Secretary of the Canadian Mining Institute at the direction of the Council and submitted to the Prime Minister.

THE MINES' REPORTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND QUEBEC.

The efficiency of the public service in Canada as regards the publication of useful information in respect of the mining industries has long been recognized. The reports of the Geological Survey and, more recently of the Dominion Mines' Branch, compare advantageously with publications of a like nature of any country in the world. In none is more attention given to the consideration of questions of economic significance; and our Government literature on mining and geology is, therefore, alike esteemed by the scientific and the industrialist. No less commendable are the annual reports of the Provincial Bureaus, notably those of British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario. In our last issue attention was directed to the eminent presentableness of the British Columbia report. The encomium of our reviewer we heartily endorse. But the British Columbia report has an established reputation; for many years past it has held the palm for typographical excellence. It has been and is still, though in a minor degree, open to criticism in the one respect only, that it includes statements by mining recorders and other non-technical officials, whose information is largely based on hearsay. The practice is dangerous and this

feature of the report might be advantageously eliminated in future. It is less pronounced this year than formerly. The valuable features of the British Columbia report have always been the contributions of the Provincial Mineralogist, Mr. W. Fleet Robertson, whose inability to call a spade anything but a spade, and not an agricultural implement, did not conduce to his popularity with a certain class in earlier "boom" times. Now his sterling and manly qualities are generally appreciated at their proper worth. But surely in a province in which the mineral industry has assumed the importance and proportions of that of British Columbia, a province, moreover, in which the industry has such immense potentialities, the entire responsibility of the technical field work of the department should not devolve on one official alone. Mr. Robertson has done yeoman's service practically unassisted; but he can not be expected to achieve the impossible, nor is it wise to attempt to overwork the willing horse. With an adequate staff of assistants the Provincial Mineralogist of British Columbia would be in a position to vastly increase the efficiency of his department, and never was the time more opportune than the present. The investing public has begun to forget the after taste of the Rossland "boom"; the industry in general has been rehabilitated, and the outlook to-day is more favourable than for years past; and last, but not least, an enormous area of new territory will ere long be rendered readily accessible to the prospector by the completion of the numerous lines of railway now in course of construction. There should, therefore, be a revival of interest, which the publication of special reports by the Provincial Bureau of Mines, on the newer districts, would certainly stimulate. It is true the Provincial Mineralogist has had the assistance of Mr. Herbert Carmichael, formerly the Provincial Assayer, in the reporting on mining areas; but Mr. Carmichael is an expert chemist rather than a mining engineer or geologist, and in any event is not now prepared to devote the major portion of his time to the Government service. Again, it may be urged that since the Geological Survey devotes more attention to British Columbia than to any other province—a discrimination that may be open to criticism—it relieves the Provincial Department of certain obligations. Neither the Provinces of Ontario or Quebec, however, has taken that view; and since the British Columbia treasury derives a very considerable revenue from the mines of the province, it is but fitting that a reasonable expenditure should be made in the direction indicated.

In striking contrast to the British Columbia policy is that recently adopted by the Quebec Department of Mines. The Quebec report for 1911 has been distributed during the present month (July). The Quebec report a few years ago was not a publication of which the Department or anyone else could be proud. It was poor inside and out; but the officials responsible escape censure because no one can blame a man who fails to