

a Spanish viceroy. So, at least, Mr. Charles P. Bowker believes. The foundations of Bowker's faith are suggested in the following paragraph—one gem in a scintillating mass:—

"July 2.—Maximino has told me that there are some nine treasures in the Viboras, and I believe I have located them all with the twig, amounting to 45 tons of silver and 29 tons of gold, belonging to the last Spanish Viceroy and his family. . . ."

Would we could quote more! We shall pause but to explain that Maximino is a horrid person who takes it upon himself to be wise after the event. Whenever Bowker becomes discouraged, Maximino multiplies the treasure by two or three and assures Bowker that it is just a wee bit farther ahead. Hence Bowker is ever and again on the point of striking the Spanish bullion. He misses, and Maximino shows him where he has been wrong. Bowker has twigged the silver and gold. Far better would it be for him to use that twig on Maximino.

To those who appreciate the curious in literature we recommend this charming little study. Mr. Neily and Mr. Bowker, with the assistance of Senor Maximino, have Edgar Allen Poe skinned to death, frazzled to a finish, or even more so.

COMMENDATION.

The Mines Branch, it is announced, will presently take up two urgent lines of work. It will investigate and attempt to regulate the use of explosives. It will also interest itself in the introduction of breathing apparatus for rescue work in coal mines.

Many months ago the CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL urged that the Mines Branch be directed to attack the problem of life salvage in coal mines. The matter was brought up in the House of Commons by Mr. Claude Macdonell, one of the members for Toronto. The reply of the Hon. Mr. Templeman, though vague, indicated that steps were to be taken at an early date.

The question of regulating the manufacture, storage, and use of explosives was brought forcibly before the public through the recent disaster at Hull. But the matter was, some time ago, placed before the Mines Branch.

In both directions the Mines Branch should be capable of accomplishing work for which the whole nation will be grateful. We have always had serious misgivings as to the advisability of Government officials undertaking research work of a more or less academic nature. One obvious objection is that such investigations, important as they may be in the opinion of many, take up time, money, and energy that should properly be devoted to just such problems as those mentioned above.

The Mines Branch will win and will deserve our open and hearty support if it gets down to business in regulating the use of explosives and in encouraging the introduction of rescue apparatus.

As illustrating the present position of affairs, we may instance the fact that after the recent explosion at Nanaimo, B.C., an officer of the United States Geological Survey had to be called on to instruct the men in the use of the Draeger apparatus. This should surely be unnecessary.

PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS.

One of the most dangerous practices in mining is the habit of drilling or picking into old bottoms of drill-holes. These old bottoms, or "bootlegs," as they are labelled in the west, are due to the hole not breaking to bottom when it is blasted. Miners frequently take advantage of these old holes to start a new hole. If a residue of dynamite happens to remain in the "bootleg" there is a funeral. This fact, however, does not appear to discourage other searchers after short cuts to the future world.

During the session of 1909, the Ontario Government passed an amendment to the Mining Act forbidding drilling or the insertion of any metal tool into a hole that has been blasted. This, naturally, does not restrain the careless miner. But it furnishes to the mine manager the means of controlling and punishing his men. In fact, the Government can do no more than it has done. Upon mine managers devolves the duty of impressing upon their employees the criminality of taking foolish chances.

Incidentally, it must always be remembered that the "bootlegs" are evidence of bad mining.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The peat producer-gas plant of the Department of Mines is now in daily operation. Visitors are invited to inspect the establishment.

It is satisfactory to learn that Cobalt ore shipments for the first four months of the year, notwithstanding the light shipments during January and part of February, are considerably larger than those reported for the corresponding period of 1909.

In the explosion in the Wellington colliery, White Haven, England, one hundred and thirty-seven miners lost their lives. Apparently the official warning, published all over Great Britain, to the effect that abnormally high barometric conditions rendered such explosions highly probable, was entirely disregarded. It seems that catastrophes are the only effective teachers.

Canada is to have a tungsten mining industry. The discovery of scheelite at Moose River, Nova Scotia, first described in these columns two years ago, is to be worked this summer. The ore is richer than most of the deposits worked at present. Many veins are exposed. The scheelite concentrates ideally, and, except for the presence of a small percentage of mispickel, will make an exceptionally clean shipping product.