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THE MONTH.

WE have much pleasure in announcing, that for the second time within a period of six months, we have found it expedient to increase the size of this publication by the addition of eight pages. Eight pages were added in October last, but since, the demands upon our advertising columns have very considerably increased and the income derived both from this source and from a constantly widening circulation enables us to give our readers still better value for their money. It is, meanwhile, very gratifying to learn in so tangible a manner that the MINING RECORD is growing both in usefulness and popularity.

It will probably be admitted by everyone that mining is the most important industry in British Columbia whether we regard its present dimensions or consider what the province hopes from it. The maintenance and growth of the industry are largely influenced by the character of the legislation by which it is affected. It would seem therefore that a legislature which would always do the best possible for the mining industry is at the present time the most important political desideratum in the province. And yet it is notorious that the interests of the industry itself are the last consideration in the choice of members to represent the mining constituencies. Of the present delegation from Kootenay and Yale in the Legislature, while they

may be men highly respected in their communities, it is safe to say that not one of them is capable of either originating legislation or criticising by a just analysis of its effect on the industry of mining such as has already been brought forward. We have had legislation hastily passed through without criticism, without comprehension, which has worked havoc in different districts and departments of the industry. Take, for instance, the law excluding aliens from placer mining. It is a pity for the province that this enactment was not as well understood on its introduction as it was after a year's experience of its effects. Again, the regulations for securing Crown grants were changed without anyone realizing that a clause had been added to the Mineral Act which would work endless damage, vexation and pecuniary loss. Another instance is a stupid amendment to the Companies' Act introduced but not passed preventing the directors of joint stock companies from borrowing money. This was aimed at an abuse no doubt. But one does not as a rule remove an obstructive boulder with a charge of dynamite sufficient to wreck the whole surrounding landscape. Of such a provision it might be safely said that where it was desired to retain the abuse the law could be evaded, while it would come down with crushing effect upon the legitimate business of companies organized in ignorance of the fact that the Legislature had reserved from them a privilege without which no individual merchant or business man could continue to exist. The functions of government in reference to any industry are both negative and positive. There is no more blighting influence upon any industry possible, and that particularly while it is in a condition of growth, than sudden change in the conditions under which it is carried on or the fear of such sudden change. It is probable that the damage done the mining industry by the eight-hours law has not been occasioned by the effects of the change of system, (for things go along very well under a custom of eight hours' labour in Western Australia) so much as by the actual fact of the change itself, and its being made in so hasty and inconsiderate a manner. The negative functions of government in this respect are in most countries conserved by the existence of a second chamber. In British Columbia there is no check save the individual intelligence of the members of the Legislature and the expression of public opinion. Of late years the individual intelligence of the members has been monstrously ineffectual, and possessed of a confidence in the inverse ratio of their ability, they have seldom given public opinion the time and opportunity to declare itself. It is therefore of the first importance that the personnel of the mining members of the House should be carefully considered and that a consensus of opinion should be available before