

reason adduced for instituting close comparisons between the improvised tube mill and the large mills that are used in actual practice. Hence there are gaps in Mr. Ball's demonstration.

Yet the paper is most creditable as the effort of a student working under all the disadvantages of the usual laboratory equipment.

COMPANY PROMOTION.

As chairman of the Western Branch of the Canadian Mining Institute, Mr. Robert Hedley delivered a noteworthy address at the last gathering at New Denver, Slovan Lake, B.C. The leading topic touched on by Mr. Hedley was the subject of company promotion for mining enterprises.

The substance of Mr. Hedley's speech was to the effect that discreditable mining enterprises can be nipped in the bud if proper precautions be taken. In the first place, there must be reasonable grounds for believing that ore exists in commercial quantities in any given prospect. This is one of the considerations glossed over by the promoter and rarely investigated by the casual investor. Secondly, the proposed distribution of capital contributes to kill whatever chance of success there may be. Thirdly, competent management can never be expected in connection with unsound flotations. Fourthly, even if the physical aspects of the proposition be favourable, disproportionately small sums are provided for working capital, and the market for shares is overwhelmed with promotion scrip before that working capital can be raised.

To meet these conditions, Mr. Hedley proposed that it be made a misdemeanour to "promote a company to operate a mine that has little, if any, reason to hope for commercial ore; so to distribute the capitalization that the treasury is inadequately supplied; to place the management in grossly incompetent hands; to sell promoters' shares before the property has been developed beyond the prospect stage."

Mr. Hedley, of course, merely reiterated the opinions of all respectable mining men. His suggestions have been made and discussed many a time and oft. All of them deserve close attention.

Taking these suggestions in order, it may be pointed out that there is so much room for difference of expert opinion as to the merits of a prospect that the first suggested misdemeanour hardly comes within the scope of legislation. All that is really necessary is that the opinion of a competent and disinterested mining engineer be obtained. On the other hand, the matters of organization and distribution of capital shares are readily controllable. This is immediately the duty of each Provincial Government. As to the character of the management, the only way in which efficiency can

be guaranteed is by securing legislation that precludes the incompetent man from mine management.

British Columbia laws already guard against the unqualified assayer, and require strict certification of coal mine managers. Why this measure cannot be enlarged so as to embrace the management of metalliferous mines, we cannot see.

We are in hearty accord with the opinion that it should be made a misdemeanour to place promoters' shares upon the market before a mine has been developed. But this restriction will require official definition in each instance. If a time limit be set, evasion of the law will be easy; but the public will have been given a chance of finding out what it is buying. If official sanction be made a condition, abuses will almost certainly be created.

The time limit, one year possibly, appeals to us as the most rational provision. The other essential is the establishment of a constant relation between promotion stock and treasury stock.

Canada's credit in the eyes of the world rests to a larger extent than ever before upon mining flotations. It is high time to do a little housecleaning.

JUSTICE.

On Monday, September 25th, a "high-grader" named Mountell, who had been found with about 150 pounds of silver in his possession, and who was alleged to have operated as a "fence" in the Cobalt region, was tried before Judge Winchester in the Court of Criminal Sessions, Toronto.

No evidence was heard, or, at best, only a tithe of the evidence was taken. The man was allowed to escape with a fine of \$200.

It is unimaginable that Judge Winchester did not know that under Section 224 of the Criminal Code it is made a criminal offence for a person who is not the owner of a mine, or the authorized agent of an owner, to buy or sell silver or silver ore. We have reason to believe that the evidence against Mountell was unusually complete. In any event a fine has nothing to do with the case. The accused should have been acquitted or condemned according to law and not according to Judge Winchester's vagaries. Such conduct on the part of our judiciary is both mischievous and pitiful.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The fourteenth annual session of the American Mining Congress has been postponed from September 26th to 29th, until October 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th. The reason of the postponement was the fact that President Taft could not attend on the former dates.