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THE MONTH.

PROPOSED CHAMBER OF MINES.

Among the happenings of the month not the least important is the movement on foot to organize a provincial Chamber of Mines on lines similar to those which have made like institutions in Witwatersrand and West Australia such powerful and useful factors in the encouragement and promotion of legitimate mining enterprise in these respective countries. We believe, therefore, that our readers will require no apology from us for devoting a good deal of space in this issue to the publication of the proposed Chamber's Articles of Association which set out very clearly in detail the scope, the objects and aims of the organization in question. These articles moreover will in all probability form the draft of the bill which will be submitted for the approval of the Government when application is made for a charter granting the Chamber necessary powers of action. At a meeting held in Vancouver on the 20th of January, a committee among whose numbers one notices the names of several prominent provincial mining men was formed to communicate with and seek the co-operation of representatives of the mining industry in every district and section of the province, and to take other such preliminary steps as will ensure the success of the project. It is hardly needful, we think, to show that it is the duty of every one who has the welfare of the provincial mining interests at heart to accord all support possible to so commendable an effort to establish a body that will be officially recognized as representative of this most important industry; but we may, perhaps, be permitted to strongly emphasize the fact that the conditions upon which the future

usefulness of the proposed Chamber rests, the influence it will command, and the position it will occupy in the estimation of those with whom in the natural order of things it will officially be brought into contact, depend entirely on the professional standing and the personal reputations of the men elected to its offices and composing its council. If from the start due precautions are observed in this respect the organization of a British Columbia Chamber of Mines is to the highest degree desirable, but not otherwise.

To our mind, apart from the service an organization such as this can render in furnishing investors the opportunity of obtaining absolutely reliable information—it must be distinctly understood that the Chamber will not propose to protect the investor except in this way—the principal argument in favour of the establishment of an institution of this kind is that the mining industry of the country will thus be represented by an official body of men of practical knowledge and ability whose views and opinions will always obtain a respectful hearing from the Government on those occasions when questions affecting the interests of the industry arise and legislation thereon is required.

SOME OF ITS FUNCTIONS.

The completion of a line of rail—RAILROADS opened for traffic not long since—AND from Slocan Crossing on the Kootenay River to Slocan City at the head of navigation on Slocan Lake, was a

noteworthy occurrence, for it marked another of the few instances where a railroad has been built in the provinces—we do not here allude to the establishment of competing lines, such as the Rossland Red Mountain road—without a demand having previously been made for Government assistance. No better evidence should be needed to indicate the rapid developments that have taken place in West Kootenay of late years, and more particularly the past twelve months. Only a very short while ago the likelihood of any railroad company proposing to construct lines in the rich mining districts of the Interior, unless assured that the project would be supported by an enormous subsidy either in the form of large areas of public land, or the monetary equivalent, was so remote that had anyone suggested that the potential resources of the country were sufficiently great to guarantee the future lucrativeness of the enterprise he would have been grievously ridiculed for his pains. Events have since proved that the system of bonusing as carried out in British Columbia is wrong and the principle economically unsound; that instead of a community being greatly benefitted by a subsidized railway it commonly happens that the discovery is ultimately made that far too heavy a price has been paid for the compensating advantages, and that the very aim—the development of the district's resources—for the attainment of which so much was sacrificed, has been defeated by the selfish and grasping policy adopted by the owners of these transportation monopolies. In past times a very difficult problem engaged the attention of the country's legislatures, and it is only just