

ONTARIO MINING INSTITUTE.

Federation Endorsed—The Nationalization of Mines—Ontario's Cement, Brick and Building Material Production—Successful Meeting of the new Ontario Institute.

The Ontario Mining Institute, organized in April last, held its first meeting for the reading and discussion of papers in Toronto, on Wednesday and Thursday, 12th and 13th September, and notwithstanding many drawbacks, notably the attractions of "Fair" week and bad weather, was eminently successful. The sessions were held in the commodious Private Bills Committee Room at the Parliament Buildings, kindly placed at the disposal of the Institute by the Government. The proceedings opened on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. James Connee, of Port Arthur, President, in the chair. There were present: Messrs. J. J. Kingsmill, Q.C., Toronto; J. McAree, D.L.S., Toronto; A. Blue, Director of Mines, Toronto; J. Bawden, Kingston; Prof. Nichol, Kingston; T. D. Ledyard, Toronto; J. H. Chewitt, B.A. Sc., Toronto; Edgar J. Jarvis, Toronto; R. W. Prittie, Toronto; Dr. A. P. Coleman, School of Practical Science, Toronto; B. I. Townsend, Toronto; J. M. Clarke, Toronto; J. F. Latimer, Toronto; Dr. Burwash, School of Science, Toronto; L. A. Morrison, Toronto; Fred W. Gray, Guelph, Ont.; T. W. Gibson, Toronto; B. T. A. Bell, Ottawa, and others.

Election of Members.

The following were elected members:

R. W. Leonard, C.E., Kingston,	James Pearson, Toronto,
F. Hille, M.E., Port Arthur,	Dr. Burwash, Toronto,
J. N. Glidden, Sudbury,	J. H. Chewitt, B.A. Sc., Toronto,
Jas. McArthur, Sudbury,	H. L. Hime, Toronto,
I. F. Whitson, Toronto,	Alfred Willson, Toronto,
Henry Totten, Toronto,	G. B. Kirkpatrick, Toronto,
A. Slaght, Waterford,	Prof. C. Gordon Richardson, Toronto,
Fred W. Gray, Guelph,	Aubrey White, Toronto.

Reports of Council.

THE SECRETARY reported that in accordance with resolution passed at last meeting he had issued a circular letter inviting all in any way interested in mining in Ontario to become members, and that the response had been satisfactory. The membership at date was about 70.

THE TREASURER submitted a statement of the affairs of the Association, showing a balance on hand of \$40.00, with a large number of subscriptions outstanding.

MR. A. BLUE reported that the Committee appointed to consider the question of a seal had approved of a design, but as Mr. Merritt, who had it, was out of town, the matter had better stand until next meeting.

The Canadian Mining Institute.

MR. B. T. A. BELL. At a meeting held in Sydney, Cape Breton, on 12th July last, the Mining Society of Nova Scotia and the General Mining Association of the Province of Quebec resolved to federate into an organisation to be known as the Canadian Mining Institute. A resolution was also adopted inviting the Ontario Mining Institute to join in the federation, and asking that the president and a committee of three members be appointed to act in conjunction with a similar committee of each of the other organizations for the purpose of drafting a suitable constitution.

MR. A. BLUE. What is the object of the federation?

MR. B. T. A. BELL. Mainly the publication of a volume of Transactions, which would contain the papers read before all the societies in the organization. Such a federation would also place the mining men in a stronger position in such matters as Dominion legislation. I have therefore much pleasure in moving that the Ontario Mining Institute is in favor of a federation of existing Canadian mining associations, and that Messrs. J. J. Kingsmill, W. Hamilton Merritt, A. Blue and T. W. Gibson be a committee to confer with the representatives of the Mining Society of Nova Scotia and the General Mining Association of the Province of Quebec.

MR. J. J. KINGSMILL.—Is there any association in British Columbia?

MR. B. T. A. BELL.—Not yet, but I understand an endeavor is now being made by parties in Vancouver to organize.

MR. B. J. TOWNSEND. I have just returned from British Columbia. Before I left there was some talk of the formation of an association. I second the motion.

The Chairman then put the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Incorporation Postponed.

MR. J. J. KINGSMILL submitted the following:

"The committee appointed to report upon the advisability of Incorporation beg leave to report that until after the question of federation is settled it would not be expedient to incorporate."

(Sgd) J. J. KINGSMILL.
J. M. CLARKE.

This was agreed to.

Motion to Amend Constitution.

MR. J. J. KINGSMILL gave notice of motion to amend Sections 6 and 7 of the Constitution and By-Laws by providing for the appointment of two auditors and defining their duties.

The meeting then adjourned.

EVENING SESSION.

The members met at eight o'clock, the President in the chair.

The Nationalization of the Mineral Domain of Ontario.

MR. J. BAWDEN. This subject presents itself to the consideration of the people of Ontario divested of much complexity which elsewhere surrounds it, such as the dangers of interference with vested interests, of disturbance to the channels of trade and industry, and of burdens to be undertaken for the expropriation of private property.

The Province is the nominal, though not the beneficial, owner of one of the most extensive mineral domains on the face of the globe, has no mining industry or trade that by any possibility can be injuriously affected by the operation of mines by a Provincial Department, and no vested interests belonging to individuals or to classes who may demur from such standpoint to the assumption by the Government of new functions. It is merely requisite to make the nominal an absolute ownership in order to nationalize our mining property.

It is not proposed to discuss the grounds upon which the Provincial Government have the right to operate mines. It is assumed that it is clothed with the legal right. The expediency of making this right active for the benefit of the people of to-day and of the centuries to come, will, it is hoped, not be disregarded by reason of any appearance of socialism it may wear, or be condemned without investigation because of any preconception as to what are the proper functions of government.

An advertisement of the Ontario Bureau of Mines published in an American periodical calls attention to the fact that the mineral domain of the Province extends 100 miles in width and 1,000 miles in length. It is not stated that ninety-nine per cent. of this area is mineralogically an unknown country; that from the mines already operated little beyond the mineral contents of an approximate one per cent. (1,000 square miles) of the territory can be certified. It is not stated that in proportion to the capital invested, mining has been less remunerative in Ontario than elsewhere—in great part due to lack of scientific knowledge, in part to long winters, magnificent distances, and corresponding cost of supplies and transportation. The history of the Montreal Mining Co. is a record of the folly of selling large tracts to land jobbers, who, by a pull on the Land Department obtained a patent right to induce the public to invest in chances—in other words to run the lottery business under the guise of an investment in mineral property. Happily this state of things has been closed out. But it is to be feared that Government may be induced by sectional clamor to do indirectly what it has declined to do directly. There is no reason why a solvent and honest government should sell any property without knowledge of its value. It is a violation of the great public trust committed to it, to offer valuable mines as premiums for the mere chances of discovery. It is cheap literature from the dust heaps of exploded political economy, to say that it is not the business of Government to discover mines. It is the duty of Government to know the most that can be practically learned of the resources entrusted to its administration, and it should, therefore, know as fully the value of a mineral range as of a timber limit, or of an area of agricultural land. Its knowledge should be intensive as well as extensive. The difference of cost in obtaining this knowledge as against the present system is no argument against the principle, that the Government of a great Province like ours should not encourage gambling in mining locations.

The operation of mines by the Government would seem to be expedient for the following reasons:—

1. That until it is undertaken there will always be pressure upon the Crown Lands Department to sell more mining land than there is an actual demand for, that is "actual" as opposed to merely "speculative" demand. The function of the Crown Lands Department to survey such land and give title will be debauched, as it has been in time gone by for the purpose of enabling speculators to take advantage of the immoral cupidity of those who are ever ready to invest in hazardous chances; or for the purpose of enabling the buyers of such tracts to hold them against the anticipated demand, and thus rob future citizens of the equal rights they should have with citizens of to-day. The amount of money which has been turned from the lines of honest enterprise into this profitless channel is very great, and the consequent loss to the community very large.

2. It is obvious that the price of Ontario mineral land, ranging from \$2 to \$3 an acre, bears no relation whatever to its value. Where no mineral in paying quantity exists on the location, the price is grossly excessive, and the purchase is generally abandoned, with the result that it is triennially sold for taxes, bought by lawyers and real estate speculators to be again sold, and it thus furnishes a fund for taxes which are never expended on its improvement. The kind of land thus alienated from the Crown domain has, by its patent, not any title to nobility conferred upon it, but on the contrary, each parcel serves the rascally purpose of a lottery ticket, for bringing to the Government or municipalities, money to which these bodies have no moral right, and out of the pocket of citizens to whom the Government of the country owes the common duty of protection from fraud. On the other hand, where mineral exists in paying quantities, the low price fixed by the Crown bears no relation to the value of the property. The object of the mine owner is to get the greatest possible output with the least possible expense, and by no method can he add to the original value of the mine, except by that of inducing the public to build railroads and other facilities for improving the value of the minerals. Crown timber land is occasionally sold for ten times the price per acre of mineral land, but even this is a small price in comparison with the value of an iron mine, for example, which within an area of 10 acres may turn out one million tons of iron ore, the royalty on which, at a minimum charge of 10 cents a ton, would be \$100,000.

3. Due regard for the development of the mineral wealth of Ontario requires measures for the education and prosperity of a body of skilled miners, who should have fair wages, comfortable dwellings, means of obtaining provisions and clothing at fair prices, and insurance for their families against loss of life and limb. There is nothing under the present conditions of mining enterprise which calls for any expenditure on the part of the mine owner likely to benefit the locality of the mine. The hovels of miners in the vicinity of some Canadian mines are a disgrace to our so-called mining enterprise. Food supplies are generally brought in from a distance, and nearly gardening or farming meets with no encouragement. The population is migratory, and employment precarious—dependent quite as much, or more, on the financial management of the concern as upon the supply of ore. As a consequence, mining villages as they now exist in this country, and in the United States, furnish a strong argument for the state ownership of mines, if the welfare of the laborer is, as it should be, of more intrinsic value than the dividends of mining companies. If the enterprise of this country shall be so enfranchised by law and endowed from the public domain that it shall be able to maintain that the right to a maximum dividend involves the subjection of the miner to the minimum of comfort, our political life will require to be reconstructed at no little expense, probably of blood as well as of treasure. The most dangerous critics of the legislation of to-day are the social forces growing daily in strength and intelligence.

4. The mineral domain of this Province cannot be safely given over to iron barons and silver kings, or great syndicates. The "writing on the wall" condemns all such proprietorship. In the mineral industry of the United States has ministered to the up-building of great fortunes, to the enrichment of men who buy American senators like hirelings—men whose patriotism so nerves them that they turn not a hair while their mills roll out rotten steel for the nation's steel-clad cruisers—all this comes, not from the incorrigible corruption of human nature, but from a system of administration of state lands essentially corrupt and vicious.

What are a century or two in the life of a nation? If American enterprise has gained a present empirical success by the disregard of every duty owed from the legislators and administrators of to-day to the citizens of the future, there are not wanting those among her sons who condemn the gross breaches of trust, the shameless brazen fraud and corruption of state and federal legislatures in dealing with the public lands. It becomes those who would see planted in this country the foundations of a higher civilization and more durable progress than any existing in the United States, to investigate the all-important subject of the best system of administration of the resources of the Crown domain for the benefit of the people of this Province.

5. One condition has followed the development of the iron mines of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and in some degree the exploration for minerals in Ontario, which will