

SOME NOTES ON THE HISTORY AND RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADIAN MINING INSTITUTE.

Paper read before the Cobalt Branch of the C.M.I. by Secretary H. Mortimer-Lamb.

Although the Canadian Mining Institute is still relatively a young organization, it may be safely assumed that a very considerable proportion of its present membership is uninformed concerning the early history of the society or the causes that led to and resulted in its organization, nor have a number knowledge of its traditions, and the useful services it has rendered the mining industry since its inception. This ignorance, if it may be so termed, is readily understood when it is considered that mining engineering, unlike most other professions, is a sort of will-o'-the-wisp to those who follow it. It is rare for a man belonging to this profession to remain for any length of time in any one place or country. If he succeeds in establishing a reputation in a particular locality, there immediately arises a demand for his services, with the proffer of greater inducements elsewhere. If, on the other hand, his management of a mine in one camp is inefficient, he necessarily drifts on with the stream. Thus, of the original membership of the Institute few now remain on the list, the ranks having been recruited year by year, and especially during the past two years, by new men—men either of a younger generation fresh from the mining schools, or by engineers or mine managers or superintendents representing outside capital, recently attracted to Canada. Nothing, in fact, indicates more forcibly the cosmopolitanism of mining than the character of the membership of the Canadian Mining Institute, which is in itself an essentially Canadian institution, yet includes amongst its members a very large number of men owning other nationality—the United States, Germany, France, Sweden and Italy.

To begin at the beginning, the Canadian Mining Institute as constituted to-day was not of spontaneous generation. Its inception and development followed along evolutionary lines. In the year 1890 a very pernicious and unjust measure was passed by the Quebec Legislature, imposing a royalty of 3 per cent. of the gross value of the product upon mines already alienated from the Crown by actual sale, without any reservation of the right to levy such royalty. The Act also contained other provisions similarly retroactive in effect and unfair in character. It was realized that if this Act were allowed to become operative, it would not only be a heavy blow to established industries, but would also seriously check new enterprises. At this time the only periodical devoted exclusively to Canadian mining interests was the "Review," published at Ottawa, and edited by Mr. B. T. A. Bell, a young Scotsman possessed of extraordinary energy and a forceful personality. At his initiative a meeting of the mine operators of the Province of Quebec was convened and held in the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, on January 23rd, 1891, primarily to combine to oppose this measure, but during the evening a resolution was formally adopted whereby the Quebec General Mining Association came into existence.

Following this example, a year later, March, 1892, the organization of the Mining Society of Nova Scotia was effected as the result of a circular issued by Messrs. J. E. Hardman, R. G. Leckie, Chas. Fergie and others

to the mining men of the province, in which their co-operation and interest were invited in the formation of a United Miners' Association, the object of which was to promote generally the welfare of the mining industries. The society immediately justified its existence by its success in inducing the Provincial Government to modify, and in some instances to amend entirely, certain ill-advised clauses in the province's enactments relating to mines and mining leases, which were shown to be inimicable to industrial interests.

Ontario was the last of the three Eastern Canadian mining provinces to organize; but here again, thanks to Mr. Bell's exertions, this was accomplished in April, 1894, when a meeting was held for the purpose at the Rossin House, Toronto. Of those among the first to sign the roll of membership it is interesting to note the names of Prof. W. G. Miller, who for the past two years has so worthily filled the office of president of this Institute; Mr. R. W. Leonard, Mr. T. W. Gibson, Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Nichol, Dr. Coleman, Mr. J. M. Clark, Mr. J. T. Laidlaw, and others well known to us here. The existence of the Ontario organization as an independent body was, however, brief. The society, in fact, was never incorporated, since when this was proposed the question of the federation of the three associations had already been mooted, and the men of Ontario fell readily in with the project. But while the desirability of the step was generally agreed upon at a united meeting of the three societies at Cape Breton in July, 1894, federation was not finally consummated until January 10, 1896.

The birthplace of the federated Canadian Mining Institute was Montreal. Its first president was Major R. G. Leckie. The scheme, which had as its main objects economy in publication, consideration of matters affecting or relating to the mining industries of the Dominion within the jurisdiction of the organization, and the holding of a united meeting annually, aiming in no way to interfere with the autonomy of the respective societies, proved only moderately effective; and when in 1898 some accessions in membership were obtained from British Columbia, it was decided to reorganize on somewhat broader lines by the creation of a society under one central administration, which should be essentially national in its aims, character and scope. Thus, at the close of the annual session of 1898, the Federated Canadian Mining Institute was dissolved, and the Canadian Mining Institute incorporated by Act of Parliament, founded in its stead. The Institute's first president was Mr. John E. Hardman, while Mr. Bell continued to act as secretary until the time of his death in 1904. When originally organized, the membership of the Institute was but sixty-three; but its success was assured from the start, and before the close of the year this number had increased to one hundred and ninety. To-day it is between eight and nine hundred.

The popularity of the Institute and its growth during the past eleven years may, perhaps, be attributed to two principal causes: the fortunate selection of public-spirited and able men to direct its affairs as members