

A Speculative Slander.

In the course of a discussion at Ottawa of the Pacific cable scheme, a member of the Dominion Parliament is reported as insisting that the material to be used should be examined by engineers before the company is permitted to lay the cables. Such a request is reasonable and proper. At the same time, we decline to subscribe to the belief that modern commercial morality is so much below par as to warrant the statement made by the same member of the House that "if it was in the interest of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company that the Imperial cable should break, it would break frequently."

Speculative, hypothetical slanders are the meanest form of attack on the credit of any man or company. They admit of no effective answer, they involve no risk of punishment; but, they do suggest that the assailant who uses such a weapon would do well to reflect upon the advice, "Judge not—that ye be not judged."

Mining Bodies at Loggerheads.

A dispute has broken out between two organizations whose objects are somewhat similar, both having been formed to further the mining interests of Canada. One of them is known as the "Central Canada Chamber of Mines," the other the "Canadian Mining Institute." The object of the former body may be described as "commercial," that of the latter, "scientific." The Chamber of Mines was avowedly established to disseminate authentic information in regard to the mining interests of Central Canada, that is, Ontario and part of Manitoba. The list of promoters and patrons of this organization included a large number of the leading men of Canada in official and mercantile life. There was something not very satisfactory about the affair, inasmuch, as it was not quite clear why an organization supported by so important an array of names should have been formed for the benevolent purpose of protecting investors from the consequences of their own folly, and for the purpose of informing the public as to the movements of the mining operators in one part of Canada. These objects are excellent in themselves, but it seemed strange to have a corporate body established to carry them out, supported by an extraordinarily imposing list of patrons. Shortly after the Chamber of Mines was ushered into existence, rumours were afloat questioning its objects being as high-minded as it was claimed they were. The Chamber of Mines certainly failed to secure that implicit and universal confidence that was essential to its utility as a guide and a guard to investors. It has been recently assailed by the Canadian Mining Institute, a corporate body comprising mining engineers and mining experts of high reputation and experience. At a meeting lately held in this city, the members of the Institute passed a resolution in which the pub-

lications of the Central Canada Chamber of Mines were condemned as "containing false and misleading statements prejudicial and hurtful to the mining interests of Canada." This is like charging a Ministerial Association with actively promoting infidelity. It is charged that the communications sent to the Press by the Chamber of Mines have been misleading, erroneous, and mischievous. The officers are alleged not to be in a position to acquire reliable information of any value, hence their statements are said to be too vague to be worthy of attention. As Sheridan's hero said: "The quarrel is a pretty one as it stands." As the names of some of the most distinguished men in official life in Canada are on the list of patrons of the Central Canada Chamber of Mines, it behooves them to have the charges against its honour and reliability promptly answered, or the organization repudiated and dissolved. If the mining engineers are proved to have passed a slanderous resolution, which is extremely unlikely, they will make the proper amends.

British Columbia Precious Metals.

An estimate has been given out to the press by Mr. Robertson, the British Columbia Mineralogist, relating to the production of precious metals in that Province last year, as compared with 1899. The value of placer and lode gold is given as \$5,000,000, compared with \$4,202,473 in 1899, an increase of \$797,527. Of silver, the net output was 3,800,000 ounces, against 2,939,413 last year, an increase of 860,587 ounces. The value of the silver production at average prices in 1900, was \$2,333,600. Of lead, the production rose from 21,862,438 pounds to 45,000,000, an increase of 23,137,562 pounds, that is, there was more than double the weight of lead produced compared with previous year. In copper, the yield rose from 7,722,591 to 10,000,000 pounds, a gain of 2,277,409 pounds in 1900. The total value of the above mineral products is given by the British Columbia "Review" as over eleven millions of dollars. It is to be remembered that the figures are only official estimates.

Interior Fire Protection.

For fire protection, and to set a good example, an English assurance company has just equipped its new offices in London, England, with fire hydrants and other protective appliances by which, says "The Insurance Record," "a tremendous volume of water is available, and can be discharged at a sufficiently high fire-extinguishing pressure." Interior arrangements for fire protection generally will bear improvement where any exist, and establishing where they do not. There is an opening for engineering skill in this direction, as, beyond a few buckets, and bottles filled with very stale fire-extinguishing liquid, there is very little evidence in buildings generally of provision for suppressing a fire.