

line from Edmonton through Calgary to the Boundary country shall have been completed.

It is restful to observe that neither of the above concerns is to be put on the market as a public flotation. In both, foreign capital is heavily interested. Both, also, have been projected only after long investigation by and consultation with qualified coal-mining engineers, and geologists.

We are informed that both properties are to be opened up at once. Competent authorities have been engaged to advise upon means and methods, and early blunders, irreparable in the later life of a mine, are being sedulously avoided.

Whether success or failure attend the future history of this projects—and we have little reason to expect anything but success—they are bound to loom large in the commercial economy of the West. Especially interesting to Canadian coal mine operators will it be to watch the manner in which development proceeds.

PUBLICITY.

Canadian newspapers have much to learn as regards the meaning and value of the mining industry. The great majority of our dailies either ignore the industry completely or publish sensational clap-trap.

Yet there is a growing number of newspaper men to whom mining means more than the stock market. We have noted before the enterprise of the British Columbian dailies. Several of these publish daily columns of mining news. The statistics of ore production appear in a number, and full publicity is given to mining concerns new and old. Naturally there is a fair sprinkling of unreliable news. This, apparently, is inevitable. But the total amount of such stuff appearing in B. C. papers is creditably small. One feature that is distinctly pleasing is the annual review that comes out promptly at the end of the year in several of the more progressive western journals. And it is by no means invidious to mention here the excellent work of Mr. E. Jacobs, of Victoria, secretary of the Western Branch of the Canadian Mining Institute, and a valued contributor to the leading mining journals of the Empire and the United States. Mr. Jacobs possesses a passion for accuracy and a fearlessness that have become almost proverbial. His contributions to the press have given his Province wide advertisement, and have demonstrated not only the value of accuracy and honesty in these matters but have shown the futility of exaggeration.

But, with few exceptions, eastern newspapers give little or no space to mining. Stock-gambling is encouraged. Inspired news-notes touting mining properties are rarely refused. Generally, the reading public learns nothing of what is being done in mining and smelting from the daily papers.

We have stated that there are exceptions. These are to be found, not in the larger cities, but at or near

mining centres. In Eastern Quebec one paper devotes regularly a fair proportion of its space to recording the doings at the mines within its field. In Western Ontario three or four journals do what they can to keep public interest alive. But in the Maritime Provinces only spoadic attempts are made in this direction.

Considering this condition, it is to be regretted that the Geological Survey of Canada no longer issues press-bulletins. These could be made an invaluable medium of publicity. Moreover, the Boards of Trade in our mining towns are neglecting their opportunities. The publicity departments of our railroad organizations pay more attention to the sportsman than to the minor and prospector, although it is patent that a well-conducted campaign to advertise our untouched mineral lands, to direct and instruct the rising generation as regards the possibilities of the mining industry, would bring infinitely larger results in the long run.

We shall not cease to keep before our readers the issues touched upon above. But we must frankly deplore the indifference of the press and of the transportation corporations, and the inertness of other organized bodies. We have yet to develop a national spirit of co-operation.

A CHANGE OF HEART.

Mr. Eugene Coste's recent paper dealing with the origin of petroleum has been the subject of much comment. Mr. Coste himself has received letters from a large number of prominent geologists and others. These letters afford the clearest evidence that modern geologists no longer think it a crime to question the theory of the organic origin of petroleum. Indeed there is ample indication of a change of heart on the part of not a few.

It has been our privilege to read a number of the letters received by Mr. Coste. A few quotations will show how the "inorganic" theory is gaining ground.

One officer of the United States Geological Survey writes thus: "While I am not prepared at this time to accept the universal application of this theory, especially in the Appalachian regions, I recognize that on a number of important points it has placed the burden of proof upon believers in the organic origin." This last assertion shows certainly that Mr. Coste has made progress.

In another letter a sidelight is thrown on the subject by the operator of a quicksilver mine in Oregon. "The deposit," he writes, "has been pronounced by geologists a distinct product of solfatoric action, and the very frequent occurrences and constant association of so much carbon would seem to bear out your very reasonable and logical theory of the volcanic origin of the petroleum series of hydrocarbon compounds."

Again, in a communication from another Survey official, the intimate association of oil with igneous bodies is mentioned. In this case the writer states that