

by the most competent authority, showed an error of 28 per cent. When the acute nature of the problem raised by our increasing output of silver and lead is considered, the necessity of providing local smelters and refineries, and of opening up a market independently of the United States, such a condition of public ignorance could not but have a most prejudicial influence upon the industrial situation. As originally drafted, the bill was modeled upon the system of returns in vogue in Western Australia. The returns demanded contained many unessential matters, and the act was properly trimmed down to require only what is essential and nothing more. As it stands, it will be of the greatest possible public benefit without working any private injury. The adoption of this system of monthly bulletins is to some extent due to the unremitting efforts of Mr. D. B. Bogle. The advantages of it were first brought to his mind by the benefit to the Rosland camp of the publication weekly of the tonnage of the Trail Creek mines. In 1896 he was one of a deputation from Rosland to the Dominion government to urge the adoption of a comprehensive system of returns for advertising purposes to embrace the whole of Canada. Later he endeavoured to have the quarterly trade and commerce returns extended and detailed so as in some measure to provide the necessary information. Upon the accession of the Dunsmuir government to power in British Columbia, he was employed by the Minister of Mines to collect information and make a report on the subject and the necessity of legislation was made apparent. The matter has also been taken up from time to time by the Boards of Trade of the mining districts, and by the mining and financial press interested in British Columbia. Practical unanimity on the question has been the result. The only difference of opinion arose as to the extent of the information to be extracted, without unnecessarily interfering with private interests. This has been satisfactorily resolved by the legislature.

Commenting on the position of mining in the Slo-can, and the action of the smelter trust has had on the industry, our special correspondent, who is not disposed generally to look on the gloomy side of things, speaks very despondently. After referring to the recent "closing down" of several of the more important mines at Sandon, Whitewater and Ainsworth, he remarks that the public is being gradually educated to the necessity of agitating vigorously for government assistance in the establishment of additional local smelters and a refinery, if we are not to be left entirely at the mercy of alien monopolists more interested in the development of the United States smelters than the B. C. mining industry, and the first tangible result is observed in the appointment of delegates from the various towns to proceed at once to Ottawa to lay the matter before the federal authorities. The most gratifying feature perhaps in connection with this scheme is the unanimity of feeling displayed by the Mine Owners' Association and the Miners' Union, both organizations having decided to act in concert in what they consider to be a matter of prime importance and

mutual interest. Just what the results may be it is difficult to conjecture, but everyone having the welfare of the mining industry and the Slo-can at heart will trust that they meet with a most favorable reception. Meanwhile, at a meeting of the Nelson Board of Trade this month, the following resolution, drawn up by a committee of such practical and well informed men as Messrs. Holt, Crossdale, S. S. Taylor, J. J. Campbell and Fowler, was unanimously carried:

"Whereas lead mining in British Columbia has grown into a most important industry, giving employment to a large number of men at high wages, supporting the population of an extensive area in the Kootenay districts, and adding much to the general prosperity of the country; and

"Whereas, the increase and development of the industry are certain under favorable conditions, which conditions mainly depend on the miners being able to get their ore smelted at a reasonable charge for freight and treatment; and

"Whereas, the demand for these lead ores by smelters in the United States has almost ceased, and the capacity of the smelters now operating in British Columbia is totally inadequate to treat the output of these mines, some of which have already lessened their output and others have closed down on account of this difficulty; and

"Whereas, no means of refining base bullion exists in Canada to-day, thereby necessitating the shipment to United States refineries of the lead product of the Canadian smelters, and a much higher rate for refining lead than formerly is now being demanded by the American Smelting & Refining trust; and

"Whereas, there is no tendency observable to increase the smelting capacity in the districts now suffering, while the danger of having to pay excessive rates for refining continues; and

"Whereas, the establishment of a lead refinery readily accessible to the smelters in the lead producing districts would undoubtedly lead to the erection of more furnaces, and thus afford the lead mining industry the relief it now urgently stands in need of;

"Therefore, be it resolved, That in the opinion of this board the establishment of a lead refinery in an accessible position in Canada is the surest and best means of fostering and encouraging the lead mining industry of British Columbia, and the board respectfully urge on the Dominion government that to aid this important purpose, and to assist this new industry until fully established, that a bounty be granted for five years of \$5.00 per ton of pig lead, the product from ores mined, smelted and refined in Canada.

"The board would also respectfully point out that in British Columbia fuel is cheap and of excellent quality; that it is an undoubted advantage to have a refinery near the smelters, and that pig lead refined in British Columbia would compete in the markets of the Orient, which would not be the case with lead refined farther East.

"The board would also suggest that if a bounty be granted, the government should retain the power of interfering in case more than fair and profitable rates were charged."

This, we think, is a very fair presentation of the case, and it is to be hoped that it will receive the attention it deserves at the hands of the Dominion government. The industry of lead and silver refining is one which can now be carried on profitably in Canada. The increase in the charges made by the American Smelting & Refining Company for treatment is quite an arbitrary one, and is designed to restrict the production of silver and lead in the interests of a company which not only does the smelting and refining, but aims to control the market price of the metals. All metallurgical processes have tended to decrease in actual cost of late years. It is certain that the smelting and refining of silver and lead have not increased in cost. There is a difference in freight rates, a difference in fuel cost, a difference in tariff, as well as this arbitrary increase in the smelting trust's rates for treatment, now operating in favor of British Columbia as against the United States. As the United States has become a lead exporting country, the price of lead in the United States can only be the world's market price plus the tariff which British Columbia