

ALBERTA COAL LANDS.

There is a great area of coal lands within the Province of Alberta that is exempt from Government taxation. At least one-half the coal lands were disposed of at a time when coal rights went with surface rights.

Of last year's output only one-third rendered royalties to the Federal Government. That is, out of one million tons mined, nearly seven hundred thousand tons yielded no revenue to the Government. The royalties collected upon the remaining one-third amounted to \$30,000.

However desirable the policy of granting free mineral rights to settlers may have appeared in the past, it is evident that now in Alberta it has worked as a deterrent upon development.

Coal lands and mineral lands generally are more easily negotiable from the Government than from private individuals. Mineral lands held by settlers either lie untouched or, if discovery is made, the owner holds out for a price that is out of all proportion to the value of the deposit. In Nova Scotia the owners of "soldier grants" have proved an obstacle, often insurmountable, to the consolidation of mining areas.

Indeed, there is very little to be gained by the surrendering of mineral rights to settlers who must depend for their livelihood upon pastoral pursuits and whose knowledge of minerals is a negative quantity. On the other hand, there is much risk of loss to the Government and to the community. As in Alberta's case, certain mineral-producing lands are forever freed from yielding revenue to the Crown. Further, prospecting is, to a great extent, discouraged and the consolidation of coal-producing areas, a necessary preliminary to investment, is prevented or postponed.

Whatever may be said in justification of granting mineral rights to the agricultural settler, it cannot be denied that it does not conserve the future welfare of the country generally and of the prospector and miner particularly.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN MINING INSTITUTE.

On March 4th the first session of the annual meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute will be held. For the first time in the history of the Institute, Ottawa has been chosen as the place of meeting. Whilst the official programme has not yet been announced, we have no doubt that it will be one of greater interest than usual. Apart from an election of much more than ordinary importance, the fact that the meetings will occur whilst the Federal House is in session makes it the duty of every member, who can possibly arrange it, making an effort to attend.

The Ottawa members themselves are working heartily for the success of the event. The remodelled Russell House will provide ample space for the meetings.

The March gathering should assuredly be made impressive if for no other reason than that of giving the Federal Government a sufficient idea of the Institute's importance and strength. We hope and believe that the attendance will be larger than ever before.

TWO ESTIMATES.

In the *Mining World* of Chicago for January 18th is an article by F. C. Nicholas, entitled "Development of the Bonanza Creek Gold Mines."

Mr. Nicholas puts a valuation of \$90,000,000 on the gold contents of the property of the Bonanza Creek Gold Mining Company, Limited, whose properties are situated on the "White Channel" in the valley of Bonanza.

As this valuation is greatly in excess of that of Mr. McConnell, of the Geological Survey of Canada, who gives as the total value of all the gold in the valleys of Bonanza, Hunker, and Bear Creeks, and the Klondike River together, the comparatively moderate sum of \$56,000,000, we would like to ask Mr. Nicholas if his valuation is based on personal observation, or upon information derived from others. If the latter is the case, this fact should have been distinctly stated. In addition to his valuation of the property, Mr. Nicholas places a very high value on the stock of this company. Is this value, too, derived from personal knowledge of the properties?

CAPE BRETON COAL.

It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest. There is not much patriotism about the man who will depreciate in public the productions of his own country, while at the same time praising the productions of the land of an alien. We are impelled to these remarks by the recent utterances of an honorable member of one of the Houses of Parliament at Ottawa during a debate on supply. The name of the gentleman does not matter, as THE CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL has no politics, except the politics of Canadian mining. This gentleman remarked that in his opinion the icebreaker "Montcalm" should have been supplied with Pocohontas coal, and not with coal from Sydney, Cape Breton, which we are informed "is impregnated with sulphur." The word Pocohontas is a nice rolling mouthful and is often quoted by people whose knowledge of mining is little and therefore dangerous—to themselves—not because they know the grade of coal that is mined in the Pocohontas valley, but because they have heard somebody say it is good and the name sticks. The gentleman in question also said that none of the steamship companies would use Cape Breton coal because of its wonderfully rich contents of sulphur. It is hardly to be wondered that steamships calling at