

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The milling costs at Stratton's Independence mill are about \$1.25 per ton of ore treated. The average recovery on \$3 ore is about 70 per cent., and the capacity of the mill is 4,500 tons monthly.

At Trollhattan, Sweden, an electric smelter has been operating to good effect on zinc-lead ore. The recovery on Broken Hill slime was 64 per cent. of the zinc, 74 per cent. of the lead, and 46 per cent. of the silver.

It is time that the Dominion Government reached some decision as to the status of the Department of Mines. If a capable and responsible minister is not given a separate portfolio we can predict a considerable disturbance.

Deep drilling in Porcupine has aroused much interest. It is announced that at Pearl Lake a depth of 1,200 feet was recently attained, and that ore of commercial value was discovered at that depth. This is good news, although, of course, it requires careful substantiation.

At the suggestion of the Denver Republican, a public Grubstake Fund amounting to \$10,000 was col-

lected under the auspices of a committee of the Denver Chamber of Commerce. Thirty-four parties of carefully selected prospectors were sent out to prospect certain localities remote from old camps. Valuable discoveries of gold, silver, lead, and copper were made. It is proposed now to form a Chamber of Commerce Company to develop the claims.

The last meeting of the Toronto Branch of the Canadian Mining Institute was one of the most profitable yet held. While the attendance of Toronto members was not as large as might be, there were several outside members present, including three from British Columbia. The presentation of the report upon Workmen's Compensation was the signal for a long debate. The report was not modified in any respect. It is soon to be submitted to Sir William Meredith.

The cut in the dividend of the Yukon Gold Company's dividend—from 2 per cent. to 1½ per cent.—is explained away by Mr. S. R. Guggenheim, who attributes the reduction to "the extraordinarily dull season prevailing in different parts of the world," and to the fact that two new steel dredges were not finished in time to be of much use. Glittering generalities don't go far towards soothing disappointed shareholders.

CORRESPONDENCE**THE ORIGIN OF PETROLEUMS.**

Editor, THE CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL:

Sir,—Permit me to thank you for your notice in your issue of November 1st, of the paper I contributed a short time ago to the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy on the origin of petroleum, and for your excellent short resume of some of the important points made by me in this paper.

But I would like to be allowed to take exception to the following remark in your article, viz.: "The chief bar to proper discussion, however, is the fundamental divergence in the postulates of each party." This remark most certainly applies to the defenders of the organic theories, who assume so many unsupported positions in this discussion; but I claim that it cannot justly be said that I postulate or assume when I back my position and arguments with so much evidence.

My opponents, the "organics," assume, for instance:

That hydrocarbon compounds (such as petroleum) must necessarily have an organic source, because they are carbon or organic chemical compounds. This is evidently an assumption, a postulate, founded merely on a play on words.

They also assume that the petroleum found in the "sands," evidently come from bituminous shales—that is to say, that the petroleum found in a certain kind of reservoir, "the sands," come from the bitumen found in another kind of reservoir, the shales. This position is asserted without evidence, and is a reasoning in a circle which can prove absolutely nothing as

to the origin of the petroleum, or bitumen, in either the sands or the shales.

They also assume that the petroleum are the product of distillation of "coals," or other organic remains, in the sedimentary strata; although the oil bearing strata are always found to be in the unaltered and undistilled state.

They also assume that the above distillation of organic remains can proceed at low temperatures—although all known processes of distillation are always the result of high temperatures.

They also assume that time—long time—can take, and has taken, the place of temperature in the distillation of certain of the organic remains entombed in the strata, and has thus slowly distilled them into petroleum. Why are not the coal beds and the unaltered sediments all distilled then? All of them have had ample time.

They also assume that, because some of the sediments are rich in fossils, these beds are bound, or were bound, to be highly bituminous—although, as every paleontologist knows, it is the rarest thing in the world to find bitumen or petroleum of any kind in a fossil. It is not found in one out of a million cases; and the geologist knows that the oil sands (some of which are enormously productive in petroleum), are not fossiliferous. In the above postulate, they take the assumed position that the soft tissues of animals are preserved and entombed with their shells or bones during the formation of strata, when we can observe every day in the actual processes of entombment in nature, that the very reverse is the case.