

The resolutions as introduced were not, however, permitted to carry, for it was shown that employees in whose interests these regulations had been placed on the statutes were strongly adverse to their removal on the grounds that that they were perfectly workable and had had, since in force, the desired effect of promoting the safety of respectively, miners working underground and of men employed about boilers. The objection, however, to the signal code was that it is "unwieldly" and moreover, it was stated, no code could be devised that would be equally applicable to the working of both large and small mines. The operation of the Boiler Inspection Act, it was also pointed out, involves unnecessary hardships and expense to the mine operator, and on these presentations the Convention offered the very sensible suggestion that the Government should be required to ascertain the views of those affected by the operation of these Acts with a view to remedying, if possible, any objectionable features. It is absurd, as Mr. Kirby has said, that mining companies, realizing their responsibility as regards the lives and safety of their employees, and liable for very heavy damages in the case of accidents, should desire for the sake of avoiding comparatively trifling inconvenience or expense, any regulations or laws for the prevention of accidents amended if in consequence the risks of accidents occurring would be increased. At the same time we are assured that in such cases as these the Legislature will consider the wishes of the workmen as paramount, and employers can therefore only expect a modification of the existing regulations after thoroughly satisfying their employees that the changes they suggest are really desirable from their, the workmen's, point of view.

Several amendments have been suggested to the law in respect to Crown granted claims, all of which recommendations are on right lines. Thus no one can possibly object to the suggestion that a period of six months should be allowed for the redemption of Crown granted mineral property seized for taxes in arrears, more especially as owners of other classes of property are accorded this privilege. Then it is also a reasonable proposal that a company or syndicate owning a group of Crown granted mineral claims and wishing to concentrate operations on one, should, provided this work is equivalent in the aggregate to what is required to be done by law in the case of individual claims to entitle the owner to exemption from the tax on unworked property, that taxation on the remaining claims of the group should be remitted. The third proposal that the Government should issue Crown grants at a reduced fee to the original locator or discoverer was introduced by the Association with the object of affording additional encouragement to prospectors. It is not, however, a matter of much practical moment. The present fee of twenty-five dollars is not excessive, and we have not heard of a case of a prospector who attached sufficient value to claim to secure a Crown grant of it, raising any objection on the score that the fee charged was exorbitant or beyond his means to pay.

Another well intentioned, but, we fear somewhat

impracticable suggestion, is that the Government should take steps "for the suppression of fraudulent statements regarding mining properties in the Province made with a view to inducing the public to buy shares in such properties at outrageously exaggerated prices"; the steps proposed being "by prosecution or otherwise" of the perpetrators. As we have remarked, it would, for obvious reasons, be very difficult for the Government to act in this matter. We do not pretend to any legal knowledge, but it seems to us that the only grounds upon which the authors of fraudulent statements in connection with mining property could be prosecuted would be on the charge of obtaining money on false pretences. But as a general thing the promoters of wild-cats do not attempt to sell stock to the British Columbia public, and consequently it would not be often that swindlers of this class would come within reach of provincial legal jurisdiction. At the same time our Mines Department might well do a great deal more to warn the public against the more flagrant instances of wild-cattling; though as long as the Department continues to issue a Report but once a year such departmental interference must necessarily be largely ineffectual. It may be said here in passing that the State Mineralogist of California has of recent months accomplished much in the way of discouraging fraudulent mine-company promotion in that State. But the duty of warning the public against swindling schemers should perhaps rest not so much with the Government as with the local press, and we venture to say that if the newspapers of the Province recognize more fully their responsibility in this regard, there would be little occasion for Government intervention. Meanwhile the resolution as it stands serves an excellent purpose as registering the protest of so representative an organization as the Mining Association, and further as affording an assurance to mining investors on the outside that an endeavour is being put forward by this body to safeguard their interests.

The fact that during the present session of the Legislature two important remedial measures have been introduced largely along the lines suggested by the Convention is a further testimony of the useful work the Association has been able to accomplish. It is, as we have stated, the intention of the Government to amend the unfair incidence of the "two per cent." tax on mines in accordance with a promise made to the Convention by the Premier; but a still more important measure is the Conciliation Bill framed for the purpose of preventing strikes and lock-outs with the consequent general disturbances of industrial conditions resulting therefrom. It is more than probable that the Government in bringing down this Bill were influenced both by the recommendations of the Association, and by the practical demonstration by the Association's Conciliation Committee of what conciliation may effect when the matters in dispute requiring adjustment are left in the hands of a board of independent, disinterested and honest men. It is to be hoped, however, that the Bill as introduced will be modified in respect to the penalty, clause 3, before becoming law. There is, at present, at least no occasion for quite so drastic a