

above. This is deliberately inviting speedy decay, and it is wholly unnecessary, for in such situations the evil can be remedied by setting the post on foot plates with a ballast of broken rock beneath. Though it may add something to the first cost of setting the timber, it will so greatly enhance its lasting powers as to prove highly economical. It is good practice in any case to adopt this plan in all permanent gangways that require timbering, since it insures a bearing over the full area of the foot of the post, and protects the ends of the fibres from crushing, which weakens them and hastens collapse of the set.

In placing stulls which are to carry a load of broken ore or waste rock it is always desirable to determine the direction of the thrust which the wall rocks may exert, and to set the timber so that this line will make a small angle with its axis on its upper side. This will cause the timber to have a tendency to bend upward against its load of superincumbent rock. A tendency to buckling is thus counteracted, and greater stability is secured. It would of course be better to make the line of thrust coincide with the axis of the timber, but as this line cannot be determined with absolute accuracy, the plan suggested is more feasible.

Attention to such details as we have indicated will lead to far more economical mining, and render the mines safer and subject to less interruption of routine work by renewals of timbers. There are few points in mine management that require reform more than this one of timbering.

COAL MINING AND TRADE.

It may not be possible in the development of the mining industries of Canada, to profit to the full, from the experience of older countries, and especially to avoid those labor difficulties which have been so detrimental to the interests of all concerned; at the same time, it ought to be possible by carefully noting the character of the difficulties which arise, and their method of treatment, to learn some lessons which may enable us to minimize the results, as far as practicable. Chief among these must undoubtedly be classed the invariable indisposition on the part of employers to recognize Trades Unions. There was a time when most of these organizations were officered by men, not unjustly designated as "blatant demagogues," men with no special fitness for discharging the duties of what is in reality a most responsible and delicate position, requiring not only the strictest integrity of purpose, but natural gifts of a personal character, as well as intellectual capacity and business acumen. No wonder that the total absence of all these requisites in the early days of Trades Unionism engendered a widespread opposition on the part of capitalists, who made the mistake of opposing the principle of organization, instead of attacking the methods adopted. Since that day, however, great strides have been made, public opinion has conceded that labor has the same right to organize as capital. With growing intelligence, the workmen themselves have come to see that it is not to their advantage to be represented by incompetent officers, and as a result we may find at the head of the great labor organizations of England and America, men of equal capacity with those who direct the affairs of the employers.

In spite of this, however, the deep rooted antagonism of Capital to Labor dies hard, and during the last two or three years not a few large corporations have "ridden for a fall" by refusing to recognize the principle of Trades Unionism. In fact, whatever may have been the other questions raised, this one has been common to all the great strikes of recent date; and it is a noteworthy fact that in every instance, whatever else may have been refused to the workmen, this point has been conceded

It is not necessary here, whilst admitting that there are disadvantages in Trades Unionism, to point out the incalculable advantage of being able to treat with recognized and accredited representatives of Labor, and in any case, experience and the undoubted weight of public opinion on the question renders it impossible for any corporation to attack, successfully, the right of the men to organize and to be represented by such persons as they may appoint.

It will save trouble in Canada during the next few years, whilst large industrial and mineral concerns are under way if this point is fully recognized, and the Dominion will have learnt one excellent lesson, if no strike occurs through disputing this principle.

The other aspect of the labor question which clamors for careful consideration is that of importation of foreign labor. It is obvious that there is a great lack of mining labor in Canada, and that during the next two or three years there will be a difficulty in finding sufficient men to meet the requirements of our mines.

In the West, Mongolian labor has been excluded by law. We find, however, from the press, that labor of an even more objectionable character is largely employed. The *Fernie Free Press* of October 19th and 26th and of November 2nd devotes several columns to a discussion of this question, claiming that the town is over-run with Slavs and Dagos, who are highly objectionable as citizens, as well as a source of danger to their fellow-workmen. A case is cited in which a Dago recently fired the gas in his working place, seriously burning two men, and running into another part of the mine and repeating the performance.

The *Free Press* claims that these men are ignorant, insubordinate, and filthy in their habits; that they live on a maximum of 50 cents per day, and send the balance of their money out of the country. They have no stake in Canada, and are only here for exactly the same purpose as the Chinamen, to save sufficient money on which to retire to their native land.

The *Free Press* further states that they give a great deal of trouble in the town and constitute more than 75 per cent. of the police court cases although they are only about 20 per cent. of the population. It is well known that this record tallies with the experience of mining companies in the Western States, and indicates a condition of affairs which should receive attention. The *Free Press* maintains that the wholesale importation of these men is a breach of the Alien Labor Law; if so, it should be stopped.

As to the economic conditions, it is obvious that the development of the mines would be retarded if such labor as is available cannot be employed, and in this connection it is interesting to note the opinion of the *Free Press* that these men are "worse than Chinamen," who by almost unanimous consent have been excluded from British Columbia. Apart, however, from the economic question, there can be no doubt that when that of safety is involved the matter is placed upon a different footing, and it cannot be too strongly insisted upon in the interests of the other miners, that such incompetent and dangerous workmen should be rigidly excluded from the mine.

It is not a little singular that a company, which enjoys such unique advantages and which owes so much to the legislative enactments of the Dominion should, if the contention of the *Free Press* is correct, employ such a dangerous and objectionable class of labor, to the detriment of their workmen and the welfare of the community, and in violation of the Alien Labor Law.

Since our last report there has been a marked decline in English and American markets, both in the prices of iron and coal, and in the production of the former. This is worth noting in connection with the arrangements now under way for the exportation of Canadian coal