

ish Columbia." Here we are at a loss to know just what is meant. If the Cobalt managers attribute all the historic ills incident to mining in British Columbia to the Eight-hour Act, they are quite obviously mistaken.

With the sixth point, namely, that a ten-hour shift underground is not injurious to the miners' health, we are in perfect accord. Under normal conditions the miner's lot is not a hard one. He is well paid, well housed, and extremely well fed. His occupation is not as dangerous as is that of the railway employee, nor are his hours as long. The average loss of time through disability last year was 2.2 days per man. This includes accidents and maladies of all kinds, and, in many instances, the causes arose at the homes. "The disability directly chargeable to the mines themselves is . . . probably 1.65 days." We wonder if any other trade or occupation can make as good a showing as this. It proves, beyond a peradventure, that the general working conditions in Cobalt are excellent. The same may be postulated of Copper Cliff, of Porcupine, and of the numerous lesser camps of Ontario.

In the seventh place, the operators urge that where the eight-hour day has been established by law in the Western States, mining is conducted on a large scale, and, underground labour can be so organized as to suffer a minimum loss of time after shot-firing. The Cobalt mines, on the other hand, are too small to permit of the men remaining underground after shot-firing. The average time of actual drilling per shift of ten hours, is 6.45 hours. The remainder of the shift is taken up in getting to and from work, in setting up and taking down the machines, etc. The operators claim that an eight-hour day would reduce the actual drilling time to 4.45 hours, or by 31 per cent., and that, as an inevitable result, outputs and dividends would be similarly reduced.

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Cobalt is Ontario's most important mining camp. The mine managers are men of reputation. It is not probable that a threatened loss of dividends would induce the managers to retain the ten-hour day if they knew that a shift of this length to be prejudiced to the health of their employees. And, if one fact stands out clearly, it is that Cobalt miners enjoy excellent health. It is also clear that, were serious loss suffered by the mining companies, the miners themselves would be the first and the greatest sufferers.

In principle, the eight-hour day is sound. It has been applied successfully in several countries. It has also been applied unsuccessfully. Special conditions limit its applicability. If it is demonstrated that the special conditions outlined by the mine managers are sufficient cause for the retention of the ten-hour day, the eight-hour day will be a mistake.

In Great Britain, the eight-hour day has been by no means an unmitigated success. Many colliery owners have lost heavily in the past year.

The lesson is that the most excellent piece of legislation may have the most poisonous sting in its tail.

THE DISTRICT OF PATRICIA.

By an Act of the Canadian Parliament, there was added to the Province of Ontario in 1912 a district larger than the British Isles. The district of Patricia is the name chosen for this region, which covers the enormous extent of 157,400 square miles. It is bounded northwest and west by Manitoba, south and southeast by the English and Albany Rivers, and east and north by James Bay and Hudson Bay. This provides Ontario with a stretch of 600 miles of seashore, extending northwest from Hannah Bay to the mouth of Black Duck River. In addition to this, a strip of land, five miles in width, is being selected now by Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, who acts on behalf of the Ontario Government. This strip will connect the district with the mouth of the Nelson River, and is to be within 50 miles of the coast. In all, 10 miles of water frontage have been secured along the south bank of the Nelson, thus providing amply for harbour facilities and railway terminals.

The Ontario Bureau of Mines has just issued as Part II. of its 1912 Report, a volume of over two hundred pages dealing with the District of Patricia. Dr. W. G. Miller, under whose direction the volume was compiled, contributes an instructive introduction in which are sketched the general character of the country, the geology, soil and climate, forests, fish and game, water powers, and harbours.

The new addition to Ontario's limits is, in Dr. Miller's words, "in general much like that of the older northern districts of the Provinces. . . . In elevation, the presence of numerous watercourses and lakes, character of rocks, and, over a part of the district, the nature of the vegetation, it differs but little from the older districts."

As to geological character, although little work has been done, Patricia is known to present features similar to the region known as Northern Ontario. "The greater part of the district," says Dr. Miller, "is underlain by rocks of pre-Cambrian age. . . . In so far as can be judged, . . . the district should contain important mineral deposits."

Although the agricultural possibilities of the new district may not be of immediate importance, yet it is worthy of note that much cultivatable land is known. At Trout Lake, the Severn River, for instance, "good crops of peas, potatoes, and other roots" are raised yearly. The Hudson Bay officer in charge of this post reports that there is rarely any danger of frost. To the west of the Severn, the country is thought to be even more fertile. On the southern boundary of the district, in the region surrounding Lake St. Joseph, heavy crops of hay are grown, and it is reported that pumpkins and muskmelons have frequently been ripened. Hence it is apparent that the climate is at least as temperate as that of old Northern Ontario.

The timber, both south and north, appears to be of small average growth. Much of the district, however,