

THE COBALT STRIKE

In justice to the more responsible of the miners at work in Cobalt before the strike was declared, it must be said that the strike was evidently forced upon them. The representative of the Western Federation, carrying with him the prestige of that Union, flushed with a sense of his power and eager to enlighten the ignorant, though happy, victims of the tyrannic mine owners, appeared upon the scene of peace and plenty. Before his lusty educative efforts were put forth, not a single complaint had been heard. On the other hand, the camp was overflowing with well-fed, well-paid miners. Considering the tender age of the mines and the fact that even yet the camp as a whole is not self-supporting, the wages paid were very high. In no other metalliferous mines east of British Columbia are wages as high. The food is, in our own humble opinion, not to be excelled anywhere.

It is not therefore evident, or, at best, it remains to be proved, that the miners had any substantial reason for attempting to tie up the camp.

In discussing any of these clashes between employer and employe, it is difficult to preserve that spirit of impartiality which is so essential to the furthering of peace and progress. The heat of debate, the friction of contending factions and the incidental losses of time and money do not induce a calm and judicial spirit. Yet, in fairness to the workmen, it is well to remember that labor organization have accomplished a vast deal of specific good. On the other hand, certain of these organizations have developed an aptness for abusing their powers. And, lastly, it is high time that Canadian workmen managed their own affairs. They gain nothing by the help of the Western Federation. The very name of that organization stands for methods for which Canadian workmen should be the last to subscribe.

The Cobalt strike has failed because it did not deserve success. The leaders of the Western Federation appear to be surcharged with the desire to precipitate collisions between labor and capital. They did not, in this instance, work up even the color of an adequate excuse. For this they merit condemnation. But, though this attempt failed, there is no reason to doubt that similar attempts will be made in the near future.

It is the duty, not only of Canadian operators, but of Canadian workmen, most especially of Canadian miners, to avoid utterly any measures which bring upon the country loss and discredit. Industrial disputes can and must be settled without the costly strike. It is incumbent upon mine operators to see that good feeling and mutual respect are fostered as between themselves and their employes. Repressive measures are offensive and stupidly ineffective.

Employers and employes generally should prove themselves much more amenable to reason and should observe the letter and spirit of arbitrators' awards with decidedly greater strictness.

ALBERTA MINING CONDITIONS

The report of the Alberta Coal Mines Commission is soon to appear. The points with which the Commission's report will largely deal are the eight-hour day and the question of compensation.

The eight-hour "bank to bank" day is strenuously objected to by a majority of the operators. If the eight-hour day were fixed as the actual time occupied by the miner at his work, the operators would offer no objection. But when the eight-hour day is defined as including the time necessary for the miner to reach his work in the mine and that required to reach the bank-head again, the operator becomes subject to very considerable loss.

This "bank to bank" eight-hour day, more especially in older mines whose workings are extensive, implies a diminution in output which should in justice be met by a reduction in the men's pay.

The report of a similar British Commission, commented upon recently in these columns, demonstrated that a nine or eight-hour day is only nominally such. The actual hours worked in any coal mine are uniformly less than the hours paid for.

MINERS' ANEMIA

Mr. F. W. Gray writes, in this number of THE CANADIAN MINING JOURNAL, on a subject which, in all probability, will be new to most of our readers. Ankylostomiasis, or "miners' anemia," is by no means confined to coal miners. "Broadly speaking, the parasite will be found to occur normally on either side of the Equator, between the fortieth parallels. Within these limits the disease may be endemic and the population may be affected as a whole." Beyond these limits the disease may occur in epidemic form, especially when industrial operations create an artificial environment favorable to the propagation of the parasite. Thus, large brick kilns; hot, moist, unsanitary mines; and deep tunnels may become breeding grounds for these noxious organisms.

Applying the results of European research to Canada, Mr. Gray points out that, while in no sense are our coal mines (especially those of Cape Breton) to be regarded as possessing what is termed a "disposition" to infection, still, on account of the large number of European miners now employed in Canadian coal mines, the possibility of a serious epidemic should be guarded against.

The completeness, the elaborateness and the effectiveness of the campaign carried on by the German provident society, Knappschafts-Verein, under Government supervision, against the spread of ankylostomiasis, arouses unreserved admiration and no small degree of amazement. In striking contrast is the situation in Belgium, where the ignorance and prejudice of the affected classes have been allowed to deter the work of eradication. France, England and the United States have