

advice might be really of service. The reports thus exacted will be simply a mine of information for informers, blackmailers, and opposing litigants, and the business of mining under such regulations ceases to be a private enterprise at all.

No doubt some enthusiastic reformers will say that the State ought to work the mines anyhow. We have such people on this side of the line, and perhaps they exist in Quebec; but I need not discuss that proposition here. I will only observe that under the new Quebec law, the State might as well prepare to work such mines as are not now in private hands, for I do not believe that private capital will undertake enterprises in which the public is to be a confidential, irresponsible and meddling partner.

I see that the Premier of Quebec has declared the motive of the law to be the obtaining of increased revenue. It is quite possible that certain concerns now profitable may yield something for a while under this process of squeezing; but unprofitable enterprises will not go on; capital will not be forthcoming for new ones; the goose will lay but one golden egg and then die.

The folly of this scheme as a whole is carried into its minor details. A little acquaintance with mining should convince anybody that three per cent. on gross value would be a very unequal tax on the different substances enumerated. Levied as directed on the gross weight of gold, it would be, on low grade ores, ten or twenty or fifty per cent. of the net profit of the miner; and it would strike a fatal blow at the mining and treatment on a large scale, at small net profit per ton, of the auriferous ores of that class. In fact, the law is so contrived as to rest least heavily upon the miners of rich concentrated materials, who employ proportionally the least labor, and benefit the country least, while it bears most heavily upon those who spend most money in wages, freights and machinery, carry on the most expensive business, and are content with the smallest profits per ton of raw material.

A more ingenious contrivance for injuring a fundamental industry, and with it all the business of the province, it would be difficult to invent.

Of the army of inspectors and informers, and the catalogue of petty offences and fines created by this law, I can hardly speak with patience; and perhaps it does not become me to say much on that subject. We are cursed in the United States with two many officials, and with the evils of too much "patronage" in the hands of our government. Until we get our own civil service, federal, state, and municipal, into a more satisfactory condition, we should not indulge in too free a criticism of our neighbors. I am sorry, in a sympathetic way, to see the people of Quebec exposed to the same evils, and in a form apparently worse than we are called to suffer; but after all, that is their business, not mine. Such citizens of the United States as are not so unfortunate as to be always involved in mining enterprises in the Province of Quebec, will have no cause to complain if this new law goes into effect. They have only to keep their money at home, or invest it in regions more justly and wisely ruled."

(Signed), R. W. RAYMOND.