

LAWS IN OTHER PLACES.

Eight hour laws are now in force in the following places:

British Columbia (as to both coal and metalliferous mines).

Alberta (as to coal mines).

Great Britain (as to coal mines, stratified iron mines, slate mines, and fireclay mines. The practice in metalliferous mines also is to operate practically on the 8 hour basis).

France (as to coal mines).

California.

Colorado.

Idaho.

Missouri.

Montana.

Nevada.

Oregon.

Utah.

Washington.

Wyoming.

These laws vary considerably in detail. The eight hours under some of them is reckoned from bank to bank and under others face to face, while under several of them the time taken in descending and ascending is partly included and partly excluded. In some of them the time allowed for dinner, or lunch, and rest is excluded; in some special provision is made in respect of Saturday shifts, on account of Sunday, and to change of shifts, etc., and in nearly all of them exemption is provided for in cases of emergency where life or property is in danger. Some of them except men of certain occupations, and one or two exempt workings up to a limited state of development. In the English Act and one or two others the operator may extend the hours for a limited number of days during the year, and provision is made for suspension of the Act by Order-in-Council in case of imminent national danger or great emergency or economic disturbance. Most of the more recent Acts, including the English, the French, and the Alberta Acts, were not brought into force until a considerable time after they were passed, and in France the reduction of time was brought into force in three successive stages.

OPERATION AND EFFECT OF EIGHT HOUR LAWS.

In addition to what information I could glean from articles and reports and from interviews with persons having more or less knowledge of conditions in places where eight hours laws are in force, a number of the mine inspectors of British Columbia and of the Western States have been good enough to answer a list of questions which I submitted to them regarding the operation and effect of the law in their country, and to give me their opinion generally as to the expediency of such a law.

Chief Inspector Graham, of British Columbia, where the eight hour law has been for a long time in force, thinks it increased the cost of mining slightly, but very slightly, but that it does not decrease the output, though it may mean a re-organization of the working forces. He says the men unanimously and the operators generally favor its existence, and that instead of being injurious it is beneficial to the mining industry. He is decidedly in favor of having such a law. Inspector Strachan, of the Nicola valley district, gives answers generally much to the same