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#### THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

The Ontario Government has instructed Mr. Samuel Price, Mining Commissioner, to enquire into the feasibility of establishing by special legislation an eight-hour day in the mines of this Province. To obtain information, Mr. Price is to hold meetings in practically all the mining camps of Ontario. At these meetings all citizens interested will be invited to express their views.

We have before us a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Price by the mine managers of Cobalt. The arguments adduced in this letter are worthy of note. They are all directed against the proposed innovation.

The first point made is to the effect that, at the present rates of wages for a ten-hour day, a reduction of 20 per cent. in the day's pay of all mine workers would result. At present, Cobalt miners are well paid, better, indeed, than in any other mining region of Canada. Unless, then, the rates per hour, which now range from 25 cents to 32½ cents, be correspondingly increased, the miners will lose from 50 cents to 65 cents per day. It would be manifestly unfair, however, for the men to demand the same remuneration for eight hours as they now receive for ten hours.

The second point borne upon by the operators touches the final cost of silver produced. The statement is made that, owing to the cost of prospecting and working unproductive claims, "the final cost of silver is generally above the market value." This is mentioned with a view to offset the fact that many of the mines pay handsome dividends. However, this particular argument is neither exact nor pertinent.

In the third place, the climatic conditions obtaining in Northern Ontario, the heavy marketing expenses incurred in selling silver, the high freight rates charged, and the effect of Mexican competition, are dwelt upon. The marketing cost, per ton of material shipped, is set at \$45. This, of course, is a very serious item. Yet the appositeness of these facts may be fairly questioned. It does not appear to us that they bear upon the problem.

The fourth point, however, is thoroughly germane to the matter in hand. The operators now pay the Supplementary Tax and royalties. They have willingly agreed to bear the cost of workmen's compensation. Cobalt has paid directly into the treasury of the Province, and to the local municipality, a total of \$4,328,000. In other words, the interests of the operators must not be overlooked. If the eight-hour day entails loss upon the mine owners, if the change brings a diminution of output, then the mine owners are amply justified in demanding full consideration of their rights.

The fifth clause of the mine managers' letter refers to the "disastrous effect of the Eight-hour Act in Brit-