

The law, I think, should apply to contract and piece work, as well as work by the day, and men as well as employers should be obliged to observe it, notwithstanding any consent or agreement between them; otherwise I think the chief benefit of the law would be lost.

I think no overtime or deviation from the Act should be permitted except in emergencies where life or property is in danger and for repair work and an exception for Saturdays; but I think pumpmen and shiftbosses and persons engaged solely in surveying or measuring might properly be excepted from its provisions, and I think, having in view the conditions now prevailing at a number of the mines, the time taken for dinner or lunch, not exceeding half or at most three-quarters of an hour, should be excluded, and I do not think the usefulness of the Act would be materially impaired by exempting workings where not more than six men are employed in a shift. Very strong representations have been made to me in respect of the hardship an inelastic 8-hour law might entail in performance of development work, especially in out of the way districts, and I think this exemption might safely be conceded.

I would suggest that the mine managers, in order to be permitted to exclude the time taken in descending and ascending, should be required to obtain from the Mine Inspector a certificate that the means provided for descent and ascent are satisfactory. I think also the question as to whether a shift is in fact composed of more than six men should, in case of dispute, be determined by the Mine Inspector.

In answer to a question asked, I would say I do not think it would be desirable that, instead of enacting a positive 8-hour law, the fixing of the hours of labor should be left with a Board. That, I think, would be sure to cause trouble, and would destroy one of the chief benefits I see in passing the legislation.

I can see no harm in inserting a provision such as the British and Alberta Acts contain, empowering suspension of the law by Order-in-Council in the event of great emergency or grave economic disturbance.

The provision in the British Act allowing an extra hour during periods not exceeding 60 days in the year is, I think, unnecessary here, and would only tend to cause complication.

Following the course pursued in the enactment of similar laws in a number of other places, I think, in order to permit of preparation for it, the coming into effect of the Act should be postponed for a reasonable time—not less than six months—from its passing, and, perhaps, it would be but fair to postpone it longer in respect of the mines or the district where there have recently been strikes, as it might be considered a hardship upon the mines which, according to the findings of the Arbitration Board, have not been in the wrong, to disturb conditions again after so short an interval.

Faithfully submitted,

S. PRIOR.

St. Thomas, Ontario,
January 27, 1913.