

The prevailing idea, however, that the mine owner gets his money easily is far from being always correct. While some of the mines may return investment a hundred fold and be almost able to pay their last year's wagebill from the mere advance in the price of their product, there are many where profits are very much smaller, and some where more money goes in than ever comes out. I have sometimes felt that the mine owners of Ontario have not always had the sympathy that they should have from the rest of the population, but objections on the ground of taxation and royalties, which have no relevancy in the present inquiry and which can only be regarded as complaints against what the people of the province generally regard as just and reasonable, can hardly be hoped to enlist public opinion in their favor. But this is beside the question.

A consideration which I think should have weight is the tendency the proposed legislation would likely have toward allaying unrest and removing friction and difficulty existing in a number of the mining camps. Taking out of the field of controversy and settling permanently what has been and will apparently likely otherwise continue to be a fruitful source of trouble between the employers and the men would of itself be a good deal gained. Sir George Askwith, speaking of the question generally, and Inspector Sutherland, speaking of conditions in Ontario particularly, are both of opinion that the 8-hour day will likely come sooner or later, or will be a source of agitation until it is obtained, and they both see advantages in establishing it now. The history of the matter in Ontario supports this view. There has been a gradual reduction in the length of the day in a number of the mining districts. The newer camp at Porcupine has, on the whole, considerably shorter hours than Cobalt, and lately the shorter day has been introduced in some of the mines in the older districts. As already mentioned, it is not only the miners' organizations that are wanting the shorter day, but also the men who neither belong to the union nor live in districts where unions exist, and those working by piece work or contract, as well as those working for day wages. This desire of the men for the law, I think, is an important consideration in estimating its desirability. It cannot, of course, be hoped that the legislation would settle all difficulties and wholly prevent strikes, but it would remove one of the chief causes of trouble.

I think there is something, too, in the contention that the shorter day would tend to greater skill and efficiency of the men, and that by improving conditions it would encourage a more permanent class of residents in the mining camps and lessen the very large remittances of wages now sent out of the country by those having no established home here.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Everything considered, I think the balance is in favor of enacting a reasonable 8-hour law for underground workmen in the mines of Ontario.

Of the laws in force in other places, I think that in Great Britain is the most carefully devised, and that its principles should, in the main, be followed, with simplification of some of its provisions where that is possible.

Subject to proper safeguards for securing suitable means of descent and ascent, I would recommend that the law respecting metalliferous mines in British Columbia, and that in force in most of the Western United States, approximating closely in this respect to the laws of Great Britain and France, should be followed as to making the 8-hours from face to face rather than bank to bank.