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Editor
REGINALD E. HORE

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THE OBSERVATION OF MINING REGULATIONS

The tendency to ignore regulations which interfere with the easy carrying on of operations is common to all industries. Regulations affecting mining have been drawn up after careful consideration by specialists and yet everyone knows that many of the regulations designed to protect the workmen are not properly observed. The fault is sometimes with the employer and sometimes with the employee.

In a recent report Mr. T. F. Sutherland, Chief Inspector of Mines of Ontario, calls attention to the present condition of affairs. He says:

"The investigations by this Department into many of the accidents during the past year show a non-observance of the Mining Act by some operators and many employees, and emphasize forcibly the need of further Government supervision. The Mining Act is wide in its requirements, and penalties are provided for non-observance. Infringements have to be proven in court on information laid by the Inspector. The policy so far followed has been to take action only in flagrant cases where life has been endangered. Thus, it is only after an accident has happened that a prosecution follows. The result has been that, in several instances, mine operators have taken chances with dangerous conditions, trusting that they could get through without an accident and have the work completed before an Inspector visited them. The men under ground handle powder carelessly, drill into old bottoms, and follow other dangerous practices, knowing that, if caught by the foreman, the worst that will happen is to be discharged, and they know that they can go to the next mine and obtain employment. Foremen rarely report an infringement of the Mining Act to the Inspector. The result is that careless and reckless workmen drift from mine to mine, endangering their own safety and that of their fellow workmen.

"If only licensed men were allowed to be in charge of actual mining operations, and if the holding of such a license depended upon the safety of the mining methods followed, it would tend to decrease the high accident rate of the mines of Ontario."

Proper appreciation of the danger involved is the first necessity. Workmen grow careless and take undue risks. It is the duty of those in charge to prevent such carelessness if they can. The reports of the mining inspectors of various parts of the country show that most accidents are avoidable.