

MINE WORKMEN AND IMPORTANCE OF MINING IN ONTARIO.

About 7,700 men in all are employed in and about the mines at which there are underground workings (excluding smelters, concentrators and mills not operated in immediate connection with the mine). Of these 7,700 about 4,000 are underground men, who would be directly affected by the proposed legislation. These 4,000 underground men are distributed among the different mining districts of the province approximately as follows:—Cobalt 1,800, Porcupine 440, Sudbury 1,000, Michipicoten 281, Elk Lake and Gowganda 74, Hastings and vicinity 154, Grand River district 57, various places in eastern Ontario 43, and in northwestern Ontario 124, the rest belonging to Swastika, Temagami and eastern Algoma.

There are no statistics as to the men's nationality, but the great majority of them are foreign born, especially in the Sudbury and Michipicoten districts, coming largely from Italy, Finland, Austria and Poland.

In most of the mines the greater number of the men are lodged and boarded by the mining company, being either unmarried or having a family living elsewhere.

The total annual wage list for these mines is over \$6,000,000, and if the smelters, concentrators and mills in the province were all included this would add some three or four million dollars more.

It need hardly be pointed out that by reason of this large wage bill and by reason of the great quantity of provisions, machinery and supplies of various kinds used in and about the mines, the province generally reaps great advantage from its mining industry. The enviable position which Ontario now occupies as easily the premier mining province of the Dominion, and one of the great mining districts of the world, is not only a matter to be proud of, but is something that brings substantial benefit to a large part of our population. The farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer, the railway man and many others of various occupations reap advantage from the prosperity of this industry, and all are interested in its welfare.

PRESENT HOURS AND CONDITIONS.

The present hours of labor underground vary from 8 to 10 hours, mines which are side by side often differing. Of the 86 mines from which complete returns have been received 40 work 10 hours a day, 32 work 9 hours, 10 work 8 hours, 2 between 8½ and 9 hours and one works 9½ hours. The average for the province would be a little over 9 hours. A number of what are called prospects, not included in the above, work more or less irregularly.

Taking the mines by districts: in the Cobalt district 13 mines work 10 hours, 14 work 9 hours and one works 9½ hours. In the Elk Lake and Gowganda district one works 10 hours and 8 work 9 hours. In the Porcupine district 1 works 10 hours, 4 work 9 hours, one about 8 2/3 hours and 4 work 8 hours. In the Sudbury district 3 work 10 hours and 5 work 8 hours, but in the latter the half hour taken for dinner or lunch underground is not included, neither is the time taken in ascending and descending. In Michipicoten the men work 10 hours, as also generally in Hastings and eastern and western Ontario. In the Grand River district one mine works 10 hours and the other 8. In many mines, however, the hours on Saturday are from 1 to 3 less than on other days, though it seems as a rule the men are paid the ordinary day's wages. In most cases the time occupied descending and ascending is included in the above figures.

The depth of the mines varies all the way to 1,300 or 1,400 feet, but the great majority of the workings are less than 400 feet and very many of them less than