

REPORT OF S. PRICE, Re LIMITATION OF THE HOURS OF LABOR  
OF UNDERGROUND WORKMEN IN THE MINES OF ONTARIO.

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THE HONOURABLE W. H. HEARST,  
*Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines.*

DEAR SIR,—Pursuant to your instructions of 10th August, 1912, I have inquired into and considered the matter of legislation for the limitation of the hours of labor of underground workmen in the mines of Ontario and I now beg to make my report.

MODE AND NATURE OF INVESTIGATION.

My investigation has been for the most part informal. I have endeavored by personal examination and by inquiry from the men and the mine managers to ascertain and understand the nature of the underground employment in the mines, and the conditions under which the men work, and to gather what knowledge and information I could as to the effect which an eight hour law would be likely to have upon the mining industry. The fullest opportunity has been given for expression of the views of those chiefly concerned. Public meetings, advertised in the press and by posting up and distributing notices, were held in the most important mining centres and every one interested was invited to be present to make known his views, or to hand in or send me in writing anything he desired to say. The mine owners throughout the province have been communicated with and data collected from them regarding the number of men employed, the present hours of labor, the means of descent and ascent, the time taken for meals or rest and other matters which might have a bearing upon the question in hand. I personally visited a number of the mines in various parts of the province, spent considerable time underground seeing the men at work, and examining the character of their employment and the conditions surrounding it, and conversed with large numbers of the men and with their foremen and employers.

By these means and from petitions and letters, and other statements and material handed or sent to me by the men and the mine managers, by discussion with a large number of them, by taking a secret ballot from the men at a number of the mines, and by consultation with the mine inspectors and other officers of the province, and interviews with other disinterested persons having knowledge of mining affairs, I satisfied myself as fully as I could as to the views and wishes of both parties, and as to the facts and conditions having to do with the matter under inquiry.

I have obtained copies of and perused the eight hour laws in force in other countries, and collected what information I could get regarding their operation and effect.

The reports of Commissions elsewhere upon the eight hour question, and various articles and comment, opinions of political economists and other literature upon the subject, have also had consideration.