PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

REPORT

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

LABOUR

APPOINTED ON THE 4TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1912, UNDER THE "PUBLIC INQUIRIES ACT"

THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

To His Honour THOMAS WILSON PATERSON,
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

Your Commissioners appointed by Your Honour's Commission bearing date the fourth day of December, 1912, for the purpose of "inquiring generally into labour conditions of the Province, and into the conditions and relations between employers and employees during their employment, the payment and manner of payment of wages in mines, smelters, canneries, shops, factories, logging and lumber construction camps or on any other work and on tramways, the working and enforcement of the 'Truck Act,' the 'Master and Servant Act,' the 'Deceived Workmen Act,' the 'Woodman's Lien for Wages Act,' and any other regulation affecting labour, the precautions taken for the protection of life, the preservation of health, and the prevention of unsanitary conditions," have the honour to submit their report.

WORK OF COMMISSION.

Public notice of the time and place of the various sittings of the Commission was given by the British Columbia Gazette as well as by newspapers circulating throughout the Province, in addition to notices forwarded by our Secretary to various labour unions and employers of labour. The Commission visited sixty-two places in the Province and held 127 sittings. Evidence was received from 419 witnesses, a transcript of which is herewith presented. Your Commissioners further made personal inspection wherever possible of the conditions surrounding employees during their hours of labour.

APPRECIATION OF ASSISTANCE.

The Commissioners wish to express their appreciation of the readiness with which representatives of the various unions of organized labour as well as those of various social organizations came to discuss and lay before the Commission their views. It was strikingly evident that there is to be found in British Columbia a strong public spirit which is interested in the promotion of social and humanitarian legislation along sane and progressive lines. Even in such centres as Ladysmith and Cumberland, where miners and their employers were engaged in an industrial conflict which was and is entailing hardship and suffering to many poor people, your Commissioners were cordially received and publicly thanked at the conclusion of the sittings. In spite of the fact that your Commissioners had no jurisdiction to deal with the merits of the strike, nevertheless the conditions under which the miner labours were set forth with great thoroughness. Before inspecting the mine-workings at Cumberland, the Commission asked for and obtained permission from the coal company to be accompanied by two of their late employees in order that these miners might fully explain to the Commissioners the matters and conditions regarding which complaints had been made. This was intimated to the miners at a sitting of the Commission. Two of their numbers were selected by themselves to accompany the Commission, and we found their practical knowledge of considerable benefit and advantage.

RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

EFFECT OF GROWTH OF LARGE INDUSTRIES.

Speaking generally, your Commissioners are impressed with the fact that better and more satisfactory relations exist between the employer and the employee in the smaller centres of population than in the cities, where the industries are larger and under the control of managers and officials whose powers are limited and restricted by boards of directors. Such industrial conditions and the disappearance of all personal relations seem to be tending to create an ever-widening gulf between the employer and employee, and to promote the organization of labour

into unions as the best means of ameliorating the conditions of what is known as the working-class. We find that many such unions, more especially in the cities and in such classes of labour as are known as "skilled labour," exert a strong influence in regulating the hours of employment, the payment of wages, the regulation of apprenticeship, and the making of working agreements. According to the last Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada (1912) issued by the Department of Labour of the Dominion of Canada, British Columbia would appear, in regard to the number of locals of international, Canadian, and independent organizations, to rank in proportion to population higher than any other Province in the Dominion. On the other hand, we find combinations of employers existing for the purpose of resisting the claims of labour; and the industrial struggle is generally carried on by two well-organized bodies.

INTERNATIONAL UNIONS.

Many employers throughout British Columbia recognize labour organizations and treat with them willingly, but instances occur when employers refuse to recognize or deal with labour unions as such. Especially is this true when the unions are international in their organization. Whilst some employers oppose the international unions on the grounds that the authority exercised by the union officials resident in the United States may produce conditions injurious to Canadian industrial interests, yet we find no definite evidence of any such effect; and, on the other hand, it must be said that many large corporations employ managers and superintendents and are controlled by directors who are themselves aliens.

STRIKES.

Some of the evidence received by your Commissioners related to the non-recognition of unions by employers and consequent strikes between the employers and employed, but, as your Commissioners have had no jurisdiction to act as an Arbitration Board on such cases, we have not felt ourselves at liberty to refer in detail in this report to the several cases of dispute or strikes between employer and employed which came under our notice, except so far as these involved the working of the different Statutes affecting labour, or which convinced your Commissioners of the necessity of amendments to existing legislation.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST UNION EMPLOYEES.

As before stated, at Cumberland and Extension the employers and employed were found to be engaged in a very severe trial of strength over the question of the recognition of the employees and their grievances, and this trouble, since the date of your Commissioners' sitting in Nanaimo, has been extended to that centre. Whilst the employers were not unwilling for the employees to organize, they were not willing to officially recognize such unions. Many of the workmen seem to consider that they would be discriminated against if they were members of any union. The attempts of labour through organization to better its conditions are thoroughly justifiable, and in the interests of liberty and justice, as the history of trade-unionism amply proves. Though some organizers, led astray by the pursuit of visionary aims, may go to the extreme and would destroy much that is good in our industrial system, it cannot be doubted that the promotion of the organization of labour is doing much to benefit the condition of the labouring-class as a whole.

Recommendation.—Your Commissioners therefore consider that no employer should be at liberty to discriminate against a workman because he belongs to a union, and that it would be beneficial to enact legislation making it an offence on the part of an employer to discriminate against a workman merely because he is a member of a union. On the other hand, we recommend legislation protecting, by the imposition of suitable penalties, workmen who prefer to continue working in cases of industrial disputes against intimidation and threats and the use of offensive epithets, such as "scab," "blackleg," or words of similar import.

COMPULSORY ARBITRATION NOT FAVOURED.

In spite of the various strikes found existing, legislation is not sought by either the workmen or employers for the compulsory incorporation and registration of trade-unions or for compulsory arbitration of all strikes. In the opinion of your Commissioners, no such legislation would be effective without the support of the two principal parties to industrial disputes, and to ensure this would appear to have proved almost impossible. Compulsory arbitration has been tried in

Australia. The general consensus of opinion is that it has been a failure. It has not prevented strikes and seems only to have succeeded in creating antagonism between the employer and the employee. When the State intervenes to force workmen to work for a particular master, as well as to compel the master to employ particular men, it is using its power in a manner which is not in accordance with liberty and justice.

SUGGESTIONS OF INDUSTRIAL PEACE ASSOCIATION.

The suggestions offered along the lines of conciliation by the Industrial Peace Association merit some consideration, but, as the draft of the Bill submitted by this body to the Commission conflicts to a certain extent with the "Industrial Disputes Investigation Act" now in force in Canada, we would consider their suggestions should more properly be presented to the Dominion Government. Your Commissioners, however, have no hesitation in going on record as in favour of the necessary amendments being made to the "Industrial Disputes Investigation Act," to the end that the machinery for investigation could be more readily set in motion for the proper investigation of all disputes in industries where public utilities are concerned. The public interest and concern in such industries and in the speedy adjustment of all conflicts is paramount to the interests of the respective parties to the dispute. We believe that in all industries where public utilities are involved the Minister of Labour should himself, without reference to the wishes of either the employer or the employee, have the necessary jurisdiction to appoint a Board of Inquiry to investigate and lay before the general public the true causes of such conflict. When the employees request arbitration, for the purposes of expressing their opinion, a petition signed by two-thirds of the number of such employees should be considered as sufficient notice of their desire for a Conciliation Board to be appointed to enable the Minister of Labour to appoint such Board. The necessity for such an amendment is manifest by a reference to the conflict now being waged in the coal-mining industry on Vancouver Island, in which case both parties to the dispute were at first adverse to any Board of Inquiry being appointed under the before-mentioned Act.

CAUSE OF COMPLAINTS.

The many and various complaints received by your Commissioners might to casual observers indicate that the material condition of the working-people of British Columbia was unsatisfactory in almost every respect, but it is to be borne in mind that many of the expressions of discontent are caused by a desire for improvement in living conditions. The dissatisfaction with the existing conditions arises not from a hopeless despair, but from a determination to improve social conditions and from a genuine spirit of human brotherhood.

HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING.

Your Commissioners, after a survey on the entire Province, are pleased to be able to report that the conditions of life of the working-man are improving, and that there are on every hand evidences of a higher standard of living, and that what were the luxuries of former days are now becoming to be considered as the ordinary necessities of a well-regulated household. The workman of thrift and industry is more frequently to be found than the malcontent. It was a noticeable feature of our investigation that legitimate trade-unionism flourished most among the workmen of our own nationality and race, while organizations of pernicious principles, such, for instance, as the "Industrial Workers of the World," can find few adherents except among immigrants to our Province from countries where the economic conditions are and have been for centuries deplorable. We have seen evidences that the representatives of the "Industrial Workers of the World" force themselves upon certain occupations where large classes of foreign labour are employed. This organization is entirely foreign to our economic conditions and surroundings, and will no doubt disappear as our development continues. Though a very large proportion of the foreign labourers engaged in railway-construction work are members of the "Industrial Workers of the World," very little evidence is found of any attempt to carry into practice the principles of this organization; their efforts have been mostly devoted to organization of those men who are unable to speak or understand our language, and it is believed that it was only the result of centuries of unjust economic conditions that enables such organizations to obtain an influence over foreign labourers, and there are not lacking signs that a residence in this country will have the effect of making such men useful and law-abiding citizens.

Your Commissioners have had every opportunity to study this problem at close range, and our conclusion is that when the members of this organization have had time to appreciate the opportunities which this Province offers to them, the influence of such organizations will gradually decrease and eventually disappear. It must be said that even in Naramata and Penticton, where, your Commissioners found, the labourers were on strike, no attempts were made to violate the law or destroy property; in fact, it was noticeable that very little trouble is experienced by the Provincial Police Department in maintaining law and order among them, and the percentage of crime is very small.

INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSION.

LABOUR AND CAPITAL BOTH AFFECTED.

Evidence given before the Commission has shown that the temporary curtailment of industrial operations and the depression of the building trades have thrown out of employment large numbers of workmen. Some employers complain that they are operating at a loss; the workmen complain of the reduction in the proceeds of their labour without any reduction in the cost of living. The evidence we have received has made it strikingly apparent that periods of industrial depression affect both capital and labour alike. Some of the demands made by labour, we consider, would simply hamper industry to such an extent as to react on labour itself and defeat the ends sought. Others are justified by the evidence as tending to promote the happiness of the labourer and those dependent on him, and we believe are based on sound economic principles, and will be dealt with in detail.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES.

UNSATISFACTORY WORKINGS OF PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES.

Though a great deal of unemployment necessarily exists in times of depression, your Commissioners are convinced of the unsatisfactory working of private employment agencies. Some unscrupulous managers, concerned only with the collection of fees from workmen out of employment, receive moneys under false representations. The workman is assured that employment is to be obtained, only to find, after seeking work and spending his time and incurring expense, that the reported vacancy has been filled. The evidence we have received justifies the need of efficient public control to prevent employment agencies being conducted solely for profit.

SHARING OF COMMISSION FEE BETWEEN MANAGER AND FOREMAN.

Several managers of private employment agencies were subpœnaed to appear before the Commission. One of these witnesses was frank enough to admit that collusion sometimes existed between the manager of the employment agency and the foreman of the contractor requiring labour, whereby the foreman received a share of the agency fee on all workmen placed with the contractor. The obvious result of such an arrangement is that workmen are discharged after a few days of work to make way for new men, who in turn are soon displaced by others.

Recommendation.—In our opinion legislation should be enacted making it an offence on the part of any employment agency to give, and on the part of any foreman to receive, a share of any such fee.

FREE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT BUREAUS.

Inasmuch as the problem of unemployment is one of public concern, and the obligation of doing all that can be done to eliminate unemployment and to secure work for labourers with the least possible delay and without charge is one that can fairly be stated to be one that rests upon each community as a whole, your Commissioners are of the opinion that it would be beneficial to require every city with a population of ten thousand or over to install and maintain a free public employment bureau. This public duty has been recognized by the City of New Westminster and at the present time by the City of Victoria, and the placing of such employment agencies upon a permanent basis would, we believe, lead to much improvement. Such employment bureaus should be under the control of a superintendent, whose duty it should be to organize, establish, and control the same, securing the co-operation of employers of labour, and no fee should be permitted to be charged to any person applying for employment or help through any such bureau.

NATIONAL LABOUR BUREAUS.

We consider that it would be still more in the public interest if national labour bureaus were established by the Dominion as a whole and taken entirely from the hands of private agencies. We note that the Government of the Dominion of Canada recently cancelled licences of some private employment agencies in British Columbia, and a most stringent supervision along this line would, in our opinion, be advisable.

TIME AND MANNER OF PAYMENT OF WAGES.

TIMES OF PAYMENT OF WAGES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE.

The time for payment of wages within the Province varies greatly in different employments; in stores and in the building trades the custom generally is to pay weekly; in mines, factories, and railroad-construction camps the payment of wages is, as a rule, made monthly. All of the workmen examined by the Commission pronounced emphatically at least for a fortnightly pay-day, which, they contend, would result in diminishing the credit system, enabling them to purchase at better prices, and tending to make them more independent and to encourage habits of thrift. The employers urged that a fortnightly pay-day, especially in the mining districts and in the construction camps, would involve them in increased expense, inasmuch as a larger clerical staff would be necessary. Whilst this is undoubtedly so, we are of the opinion that legislation enforcing payment of wages at least fortnightly would tend to increase the prosperity of the workmen, and so conduce to the benefit of the employer as well as the employee.

EMPLOYERS' STORES.

The payment of wages at long intervals has a tendency to discourage the workman and to force him in many instances to trade at the store of his employer, who is thus enabled to get a double profit from his employee. While on behalf of the employer it is urged that these stores are operated for the benefit of the workmen, we are of the opinion that the cheapest prices are not always there obtainable, and that it would be in the interests of the workman that there should be more competition, which there cannot be where the pay-day only comes at long intervals, during which time the workman must have the necessaries of life and must in many instances go to his employer to supply him. It is true, however, that owing to the location of many logging and railway-construction camps being remote from the head offices of the companies operating such camps, and being many miles from any bank, the enforcement of a general fortnightly pay-day would be a practical impossibility. As a matter of fact, many workmen in such industries prefer to allow their wages to accumulate until they have completed the season's work. Miners, however, residing at Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Fernie, and other centres undoubtedly do experience a great deal of inconvenience on account of pay-day coming only once a month. The mine operators claim that each pay-day is made an occasion for the men taking one or two days off as a holiday, and express the fear that a fortnightly pay-day would increase this custom and disorganize the operations of their mines. We believe it would have an opposite effect; as before stated, it is the opinion of your Commissioners that the payment of wages at long intervals has a strong tendency to encourage intemperance and drinking, and that the payment of wages at regular and short intervals encourages sobriety, thrift, and contentment.

FORTNIGHTLY PAY-DAY RECOMMENDED.

We would therefore recommend the enactment of legislation entitling any workman or labourer engaged in manual labour, including in this definition miners engaged in coal-mines wherever situate, to the payment on demand of his wages every fortnight, preferably every alternate Friday; such legislation, however, not to apply to persons engaged in agricultural, horticultural, or pastoral pursuits, or on railroads or on railroad-construction work or logging camps, or on such other industries or employments as may be from time to time exempted by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council from the operation of such a law; and provided that any employer may withhold wages earned by such employee to within eight days of the date of such payment. The above proviso for withholding payment for the period of eight days will, it is believed, enable employers in large industries to adjust accounts to fixed dates, as it would be

obviously impossible in mines, for instance, to pay wages to date where the work is done by piece-work and there are various deductions for supplies, and in some instances union dues, to be made.

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE.

Wages are generally throughout the Province paid by cheque, though many of the department stores and also some of the larger employers pay in cash. Although the "Truck Act" provides for the payment of wages in the "lawful money of Canada," and only by cheque when the workman consents to that method, we find as an actual fact that the payment of wages in cash is the exception rather than the rule. It is probably through ignorance of the provision of the "Truck Act" in some cases, and in others through fear of dismissal, that more workmen do not rely upon their statutory rights to have their wages paid in cash. The employers, as a rule, favour the cheque system on account of its obvious advantages to them, and they also contend that in logging and railroad-construction camps, if wages were paid in currency, it would be dangerous, inasmuch as it would stimulate gambling and lead to theft and robbery. Many workmen agree that in such industries payment in cash is inadvisable. The strongest claim for payment in cash is made in the cities, where, on account of the short banking-hours on Saturday, it is difficult to secure the cashing of cheques that day except at saloons or hotels, which tends to encourage drinking and intemperance; but any inconvenience from this cause might to a great extent be removed by the payment of wages on Friday

TIME-CHECK EVIL.

Closely allied with the bank-cheque system is the custom of giving workmen time-checks which are non-negotiable, and which in many instances can only be exchanged for a bank-cheque or cash at the head office of the employer, in some instances as many as fifty miles distant from the place where the time-check is issued. This is a great hardship on the workman, and your Commissioners found it to be one of the most prevalent causes of discontent and complaint. Many of these time-checks are nothing more than identification cards, certifying that a certain employee has worked so many days and has earned so much money. At the sitting of this Commission held at Mission, evidence was received from a Justice of the Peace to the effect that men recently employed by a railroad company, and having in their possession time-checks showing that moneys were due to them by such railway company (but which time-checks they could not cash until reaching the head office of the company), were actually arrested for stealing a ride upon the train of the same railway company which was at the moment indebted to them, the conductor, of course, having no authority to accept time-checks in payment for railway fare. Along the line of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, especially from Tete Jaune Cache to Fort George, the same practice of issuing non-negotiable time-checks was universal, only in this instance merchants as well as workmen were hampered by the system of time-checks in use there. It was stated in evidence, and, in fact, practically admitted by the railroad contractors, that merchants had been compelled to sign agreements not to accept time-checks in future in consideration of the contractor cashing those time-checks that they had already taken. Such a condition of affairs is, in our opinion, in restraint of trade and commerce, and it is not in the interest of the public or the workmen that competition should be allowed to be throttled by such methods. Contractors operating stores along the right-of-way are thus given a practical monopoly of the trade, with the almost inevitable result that the workmen have to pay more than the fair market price for the goods they purchase.

TIME-CHECKS SHOULD BE NEGOTIABLE.

In the opinion of your Commissioners, legislation should be enacted to stop the growth and abuse of the time-check system, both in the interests of the public and the labourer, and we therefore recommend that all time-checks when issued should be made negotiable, subject to correction at head office for genuine errors only; or, as an alternative, that the issuing of time-checks which are non-negotiable be prohibited, and that all labourers when discharged from logging camps or railroad-construction camps be provided, when required, with the necessary means of obtaining transportation to the nearest office of the employer, where a final settlement of wages due can be obtained; and, further, that in default of such payment on account in order to provide for such transportation, every employee shall be entitled to recover a reasonable mileage from his employer.

COST OF LIVING IN RELATION TO WAGES.

Speaking generally, we are of the opinion that, whilst wages have increased in the last few years, they have not increased out of proportion to the increased cost of living. Even with steady employment throughout the year, we cannot consider the wage of $3 per day any more than the living wage at the present time within the Province of British Columbia.

PROPOSAL OF MINIMUM WAGE.

As a remedy for insufficient wages and for the purpose of eliminating Asiatic labour, the Trades and Labour Council of New Westminster have laid before your Commissioners a proposal that a minimum wage of $4 per day of eight hours for unskilled labour should be enacted. It has also been strongly urged before the Commissioners that a minimum-wage law should be enacted for women and children. Employers of labourers state that such a law would destroy their industries. Their contention is that, were such a minimum-wage law in force, it would be impossible to compete with the industries of other Provinces in Canada and foreign countries where such laws are not in effect. In the case of stores, it is urged that the large departmental stores of the Eastern Provinces of Canada would be given a much greater advantage over smaller establishments doing business in our own Province.

EFFECT OF MINIMUM-WAGE LAW.

We believe that a minimum-wage law would have a ruinous effect upon the industrial activities of the Province. Many factories, especially those in which competition is keen and which are operated by men of small capital, would undoubtedly have to cease operation. The destruction of industries and the withdrawal of capital to more favourable fields of investment would inevitably be followed by an exodus of labour, which would be compelled to seek other countries for employment. Where the interest of humanity dictates, the State should exercise its power and intervene, but to establish a blanket law of a minimum wage of $4 per day would eventually be as disastrous to labour as to capital. The prosperity of our country cannot be attained by such "short-cut" methods as that suggested, and in our opinion only the prevention of intolerable social conditions would justify any interference with the economic conditions which regulate rates of wages. What right, it may properly be asked, has the State to interfere to virtually prevent the labourer, whose standard of efficiency is low and the demand for whose labour is correspondingly scarce, from selling his labour? If the labourer is unable to command the wages fixed by Statute, is he to be told that he must become an object of charity and that the State refuses him the right to preserve his independence?

PROPOSAL OF MINIMUM-WAGE LAW FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN.

The evidence we have received shows that many of the principal stores are urged by parents to give young girls some employment at almost any wage, in order to keep them off the streets and to provide a business education that may lead ultimately to better pay, in addition to probably the chief reason, that the few extra dollars earned, however small the amount may be, are of benefit and advantage to the family. If it be true that the few dollars earned by the youthful members of a family are of real benefit to such family, it is much more necessary for a young girl to be able to earn something for herself if she has no home of her own. We believe that the result of an arbitrary minimum wage for women and girls would be the same as that for men—i.e., that those who are not considered competent would never be employed at all, instead of being able, as at present, to earn something while gaining knowledge and business experience, and that the minimum would ultimately become the maximum.

WOMEN INSPECTORS.

The opinion of your Commissioners is that the best interest of women and girl workers can be better served by the appointment of a sufficient number of thoroughly qualified female Inspectors, with ample authority to see that all such workers are treated with every consideration demanded by humanity in respect to their hours of labour and the sanitary conditions surrounding their employment. In the case of young girls and women employed in steam-laundries and factories of various kinds, we believe that female Inspectors would prove to be the means of bringing about many minor reforms and improvements that would be much appreciated by this class of labour.

PUBLIC INFLUENCE.

In the case of certain stores and other places where there is good reason to believe that women and young girls are unfairly treated by being underpaid, it is in the power of the general public to bring influence to bear by refusing to patronize such establishments. It is unfortunately true, however, that many people who complain about the payment of unfair and insufficient wages are themselves patrons of those business firms which by means of underpaying or overworking their employees are enabled to sell cheaper than their more fair-minded competitors.

HOURS OF LABOUR.

LENGTH OF WORK-DAY.

Hours of labour vary greatly in different employments throughout the Province. Agricultural labourers, labourers in railroad-construction and lumber camps and in sawmills and factories in small centres of population, have for the most part a ten-hour day. A nine-hour day is the almost universal working-day for city and municipal labourers, as well as skilled labourers in the smaller cities and in municipalities. In the Cities of New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, the working-hours are more generally eight hours. It is to be noted that in these places eight hours constitute the working-day for city labourers.

PROPOSAL OF UNIVERSAL EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

The almost unanimous opinion of working-men is in favour of a universal eight-hour day. They urge that as much can be accomplished as in a longer day; that a labourer who is employed more than eight hours has exhausted himself, and that it would be sound economic policy to limit the hours of labour to an eight-hour day, so that more time is allowed for recreation and mental improvement. Many employers have given their opinion that, whilst as much labour could be accomplished in eight hours as in nine hours, their experience has been that as much labour is not actually done, and they doubt whether the additional hour given would be put to any good use. This latter contention does not appeal to your Commissioners, as we do not consider it the duty of employers to prolong working-hours for fear the labourer should fail to make beneficial use of his leisure moments.

OBJECTIONS TO EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

A more forcible objection to a universal eight-hour day is that as many industries are started and carried on in British Columbia by men of small capital, and that as the industries of this Province have to compete with the Eastern Provinces of Canada and many foreign countries where such a law is not in force, it would militate against the successful operation of their industries. Employers are practically unanimously of the opinion that a general eight-hour day would destroy their industries, entailing financial loss to themselves and throwing out of employment their workmen.

EIGHT-HOUR DAY SHOULD BE NATIONAL IN EXTENT.

Your Commissioners believe that many employments, such as farming and the fishing industry, are not suitable to an eight-hour day, and that a general eight-hour law enacted by the Provincial Government would, owing to its limited scope, prove a handicap to the industries of the Province, and that to be satisfactorily effective such a law should be national in extent.

CUSTOM OF SUB-CONTRACTING IN RAILROAD-CONSTRUCTION WORK.

SUB-CONTRACTING.

We received a great deal of evidence relating to the contracting system generally in vogue throughout the Province. The actual labourer is compelled to pay high prices for his supplies and to submit to many deductions from his none too liberal pay. The rule in practice appears to be for a firm of contractors to secure the contract for a very extensive mileage, upon which they may or may not do any work themselves, but most of which is sublet by them at a clear

profit to some other firm, which may be a branch of the main firm, who in turn sublet to some one else, not without profit naturally, who again sublet to stationmen, who do the actual work and receive the smallest profit of all. The original contractor furnishes all supplies to the first sub-contractor at a profit of at least 10 per cent., who in turn supplies the next sub-contractor and the third sub-contractor at a further profit; each handling of the supplies rendering a profit of at least 10 per cent., until the final customer, the man with the shovel, has to pay an excessive price for what he needs. These arrangements lead to a great deal of dissatisfaction and discontent and should be prevented. Your Commissioners therefore recommend that the Government should take the necessary steps to prevent the letting of contracts, whether upon railroads or upon other public works, to any one firm in any large mileage or to any greater extent than such firm can handle directly under its own management and responsibility, and without the necessity or opportunity of adding more than one reasonable profit to any supplies furnished to the actual labourer or consumer.

CARRIAGE OF MAIL NOT COMPULSORY.

A custom is prevalent in many camps of making a deduction of 25 cents per month from all workmen engaged therein to meet the expense of conveying mail from the nearest post-office to the camp. Many of such labourers receive no mail, and it would appear to be an inequitable tax on such labourers that they should be compelled to bear a share of the expense incurred. We consider that the cost of conveying mail to the camp should be borne solely by those receiving such mail.

PRESERVATION OF HEALTH AND PREVENTION OF UNSANITARY CONDITIONS.

GENERAL CONDITION OF RAILWAY AND LOGGING CAMPS.

Your Commissioners inspected many railway-construction, lumber, and mining camps in different parts of the Province, and received much evidence of a contradictory nature. Many of the working-men employed in these various camps complained of poor ventilation or filth and dirt in the camps, and of a total lack of control of sanitary conditions, while other workmen frankly admitted that part of the fault was due to the fact of the large proportion of foreigners, who were uncleanly in their mode of life. As a result of the inspection made and of the evidence your Commissioners have taken, we are of the opinion that, whilst some contractors are doing their utmost to properly control the sanitary conditions, others are extremely negligent. There was found to exist no general system of ventilation or construction. Some camps were properly heated and provided with windows and were not overcrowded. Others had neither heat nor windows, and too many men were allowed to sleep in the bunks.

Many of the difficulties in connection with the maintenance of railway-construction camps in proper sanitary condition and in making them habitable arise from the fact that these structures are merely temporary, and on account of being remote from towns and cities it is no easy matter to maintain them in a manner satisfactory to the workers. Your Commissioners noted that in several instances where the works carried on by the employer were more permanent the living conditions were much more satisfactory to the men employed; in some instances the buildings were much smaller in size and only four men were allowed to inhabit each building. Undoubtedly the improvement in living conditions has a great influence on making the labourers more contented and, we believe, more efficient.

PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING CONSTRUCTION RECOMMENDED.

It is the opinion of your Commissioners that the "Health Act" requires more stringent enforcement and the employment of more Health Officers in the unorganized districts of the Province. Your Commissioners are convinced that the time has come when the Provincial Board of Health should exercise the powers given it by the "Health Act" and promulgate regulations for the sanitary control of all camps and industries carried on in unorganized districts, and would recommend that all employers of labour, whether in railway-construction, mining, or lumber camps, be required by Provincial regulations under the "Health Act" to observe the following:—

(*a.*) Upon the establishment of each and every camp, the promoter to notify the Provincial Board of Health and thereafter to report, with such information as may be required. This, it is believed, would enable the Provincial Health Department to keep more in touch with such camps and enable supervision to be more thoroughly carried out:

(*b.*) That no camp should be allowed to be erected nearer than 100 feet to any body of stagnant water, and that the location of any camp shall be promptly moved at the request of the Provincial Board of Health to a more suitable site when required by any Inspector.

In the construction of such camps, we would recommend that the following regulations be made compulsory:—

(*a.*) Each camp, tent, or dwelling occupied by employees should contain at least 600 cubic feet of air-space for each occupant, and be further provided with sufficient means of ventilation:

(*b.*) All bunks to be constructed parallel with the walls of the building to prevent overcrowding; the lower tier of bunks to be raised at least 1 foot from the floor; the floor to be constructed of boards or planks or other material equally suitable, and these boards or planks should extend completely to the walls.

We further recommend that Government Health Officers and Inspectors should be required to give special attention to the enforcement of these regulations and to the proper disposal of all kitchen waste and garbage, as well as to the location of closets at a safe and proper distance from all other buildings.

SYSTEM OF MEDICAL ATTENDANCE IN VOGUE.

Medical attention for injured workmen is usually provided by a contract with a physician, and the sum of $1 per month generally deducted from the pay due each employee. In several instances your Commissioners found that hospitals controlled by physicians under these contracts were poorly managed and unsatisfactory in equipment. At Fort George witnesses were produced before the Commissioners who appeared to have been discharged from the hospital there in a weak physical condition, absolutely unfit to return to work. There is a prevailing opinion among the workmen that the provisions of the "Master and Servant Act," which requires the employer to pay the sum deducted from the wages to the physician, are not observed; and that in many cases the physician is merely himself a salaried employee, and that the employer is reaping a profit on the money so deducted. In all instances, however, both employers and physicians denied that such was the case. Probably through ignorance of the privilege granted by section 18 of the "Master and Servant Act" of inspecting and auditing the accounts which the employer is required to keep of all such moneys so deducted, your Commissioners found no instance in which workmen had availed themselves of the right of inspection and audit.

Recommendation.—To ensure that these moneys are all paid to the physician, your Commissioners would recommend that the employer, or his agent, should be required to forward semi-annually to the Provincial Board of Health a statement of all moneys deducted from wages for hospital dues, and showing to whom paid; such return to be verified by statutory declaration as to its correctness. We also recommend that the Provincial Health officials endeavour to obtain support from employers of labour for those hospitals in receipt of Government assistance by paying into such hospitals the monthly dues collected from their employees; further, that physicians so employed in connection with camps should be required semi-annually to report to the Provincial Board of Health all camps under their supervision, with a sketch or plan of each camp showing the location of the various buildings, with distance apart, location of water-supply, slopes of ground, with drainage and such other information as may be required by the Provincial Board of Health.

SANITARY CONVENIENCES FOR WORKMEN.

We received complaints from men employed upon the construction of buildings that no conveniences were provided for their use, and we recommend that the contractors in all cities and towns should be required to furnish temporary water-closets for the use of their workmen upon all works to the satisfaction of the Health Officer.

SANITARY CONDITION OF BAKERIES AND RESTAURANTS.

We have received evidence that the prevailing conditions in many underground bakeries and kitchens of restaurants are very far from satisfactory, and are, in fact, distinctly detrimental to the health of the employees and of the patrons; the insufficient light and ventilation, inadequate drainage, and unsuitable location of closets being a serious menace. We recommend that all these places be thoroughly and frequently inspected by Health Officers, and would further urge the rigid enforcement of the "Shops Regulation Act" in this respect.

SANITARY CONDITION OF BARBER-SHOPS.

The need of regulations of sanitary conditions in barber-shops was brought before your Commission by representatives from the Barbers' Union. They drew attention to the spreading of certain parasitical skin-diseases by the instruments in the hands of some barbers and hair-dressers, and urged the necessity of the issuing of regulations respecting all barber-shops. They recommended the frequent sterilizing of all razors and scissors in general, and that fresh and clean towels be provided for each customer.

While these matters might be satisfactorily dealt with by Provincial regulations, as in the Province of Manitoba, we recommend that the necessary authority be given to all cities and municipalities to pass by-laws and regulations governing the sanitary conditions of barber-shops. We would further draw the attention of the Government to the fact that barber-shops do not come within the purview of the sections of the "Shops Regulation Act" which provide for early-closing by-laws. Barbers generally are subject to the competition of many barber-shops under the control of Asiatics, who do not appear to regulate in any way their hours of employment, the result being that these shops are left open long after the other shops are closed.

PROTECTION OF LIFE.

ACCIDENTS DUE TO DEFECTIVE SCAFFOLDINGS.

Many complaints were received by your Commissioners in regard to accidents to workmen in hazardous employments, and various suggestions offered in regard to the precautions that should be taken for the preservation of life. In the building trades defective scaffolding is a very frequent cause of accident. We note that the City of Vancouver, which has had the necessary authority for some time past, has only recently appointed an Inspector for this purpose, and your Commissioners are of the opinion that it should not be merely optional for cities to appoint Scaffolding Inspectors, but obligatory on them to do so.

Recommendation.—We would recommend, therefore, that all cities with a population of 10,000 or over be authorized and required by Statute to appoint a sufficient number of Scaffolding Inspectors, and that power be given such cities to pass regulations dealing specifically with all scaffoldings used in the erection, alteration, and demolition of buildings.

ACCIDENTS TO ELECTRICAL WORKERS.

Another class of workers—namely, the electrical workers—have presented to your Commissioners a statement which shows a very high percentage of accidents in their employment. They do not regard the "Electrical Energies Inspection Act" now enforced in this Province as sufficiently stringent for the proper protection of life. While it is conceded that section 9 of that Statute gives very wide powers to the Provincial Inspector, it is urged that the Inspector should be assisted in his work by regulations regarding the placing of wires. In the opinion of your Commissioners, it would be of great advantage to the workmen to have exact information as to the location on poles of wires of different voltage, and for this purpose we would recommend the most stringent regulations dealing with such matters. We have had submitted to us by the Provincial Inspector a very comprehensive set of regulations, and we would recommend that such regulations be approved by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and enforced.

ASSISTANT INSPECTOR RECOMMENDED.

The work of this Department has increased to such an extent, and as the protection of the lives of a large number of men is dependent on the thoroughness and frequency with which this inspection is made, we believe it would be beneficial to appoint an Assistant Inspector.

FIRST-AID INSTRUCTION.

At Nakusp the suggestion was made to your Commissioners that it would be of advantage to men working in mining and logging camps situated at a distance from business centres, and having no hospital or medical attention within easy reach, if a system of first-aid instruction were so organized that sufficient men could be trained to render necessary assistance in the case of accidents. Your Commissioners subsequently received considerable evidence that Government assistance and encouragement to this end would be welcomed by men employed in such camps in remote districts, and we are of the opinion that the Provincial Health Department should evolve a satisfactory and effective plan upon a somewhat similar basis to that now provided in coal-mines.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES.

EXISTING LEGISLATION INEFFECTIVE.

As a result of investigation, your Commissioners find the "Employers' Liability Act" and "Workmen's Compensation Act" to be ineffective, and providing at the best a cumbersome method of securing compensation for injured workmen. Dealing more particularly with the "Workmen's Compensation Act," under which a majority of compensation claims are settled, we believe it to be inadequate in its scope and capable of much improvement in its method of providing compensation. Taking as its basis the principle that injuries to workmen in hazardous employments should be compensated for as part of the cost of production, your Commissioners are of the opinion that the Act is too narrow in its scope; for instance, certain hazardous occupations, such as logging operations and electrical workers, are not in the majority of cases within the purview of the Act. The crippled workman or his dependents in such instances have no remedy except under the common law and "Employers' Liability Act," under which some act of negligence must be proven. In the opinion of your Commissioners, longshoremen, loggers, and electrical workers properly come within the meaning of the term "hazardous employments," and are as deserving of compensation as those classes enumerated by the "Workmen's Compensation Act." It was further urged that the section of this Act which limits its operation to buildings over 40 feet in height was arbitrary and unreasonable, inasmuch as a workman could in many instances sustain as severe an injury in a building of less than this height.

ECONOMIC WASTE OF EXISTING SYSTEM.

Then, again, its method of operation is found to be more expensive and cumbersome than we believe was ever contemplated by the framers of this legislation. The evidence your Commissioners have received is in many instances that the cost of arbitration proceedings under the "Workmen's Compensation Act" is excessive. It is in some parts of British Columbia the settled practice of arbitrators to charge a fee of $100 for sitting as arbitrator. To an applicant for arbitration, in nearly all cases a poor man, this is a considerable burden. Various limitations and injustices in connection with the operation of the "Workmen's Compensation Act" have been cited before the Commission, but in view of our opinion as hereinafter expressed, it is unnecessary to make recommendation for the amendment of this Act. The proper remedy, in our opinion, should not be in amending existing legislation, but in the introduction of a system of compulsory State insurance. Your Commissioners find the existing system of compensation unsatisfactory, both from the standpoint of the employer and the employee. It creates unnecessary friction between the master and the servant and is slow and wasteful in operation. The proportion of those who obtain compensation at all is small, whilst the litigation that is forced upon them is often protracted and expensive. The injured workman has not the same financial resources to engage in lengthy litigation as the insurance companies, which in the majority of instances are behind the employer. There is also a waste of funds which are taken out of various industries in the shape of premiums or accident policies on the workmen. Commissions to agents, salaries to officers, dividends to shareholders, the payment of litigation fees, and other incidental expenses absorb a very large proportion of such premiums. With a view of eliminating this waste and to enable the workman to obtain fair, quick, and certain settlement of his claim, we would recommend the introduction of a system of compulsory State insurance against industrial accidents.

BASIC PRINCIPLE OF "WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT."

Although the "Workmen's Compensation Act" has been unsatisfactory in its operation, the basic principle of that legislation is that industry should bear the burden of its accidents as part of the cost of production. This principle has been accepted and acted upon by our Legislature since 1902. The problem of compulsory State insurance is not, therefore, entirely a new one to this Province, but rather one of the extension of the principle underlying the "Workmen's Compensation Act," and an alteration in methods of operation as well as the consideration of the problem whether the Government is justified in making insurance compulsory—i.e., whether the State is justified on the one hand in taking from the workman the right to sue in tort for damages commensurate with the loss he has sustained for his peculiar injury, and on the other hand to take from the employer the defences of contributory negligence, inevitable accident, and common employment so long known in our law.

COMPULSORY STATE INSURANCE RECOMMENDED.

We believe that, though each class surrenders to the State certain rights, it is in the public welfare that this should be so. The employer in submitting to the levy of taxes upon his industry receives the benefit of protection from expensive litigation, the workman in return, though he loses the precarious right to sue in tort for damages, receives in return a stipulated amount based upon his economic position in the community. Both the employer and the employee, as well as the State as a whole, benefit from the elimination of the friction and loss which necessarily attends all litigation. Your Commissioners have had recommended to them and discussed before them various systems of State insurance, particularly that in force in the neighbouring State of Washington, as well as the proposed legislation of the State of Oregon and the Province of Ontario. After a consideration of the legislation of the various unions of the United States and the Statute drafted by Sir William Ralph Meredith for the Legislature of the Province of Ontario, the system of compulsory insurance as proposed by Sir William Ralph Meredith commends itself in the main to your Commissioners as the most suitable to the jurisdiction of our Province. Several of the American Acts are specially devised to overcome constitutional restrictions; fortunately our Canadian Legislatures are not hampered in regard to constitutional limitations as to their jurisdiction.

PRINCIPLES OF COMPULSORY INSURANCE LEGISLATION.

We therefore recommend the introduction of a system of compulsory State insurance against industrial accidents based upon the following principles:—

(*a.*) Compensation should be certain and prompt, and should be in lieu of all rights of action which the workman may have against his employer, who should be free from all liability apart from his liability to contribute his assessment. One of the greatest advantages of State insurance is the fact that it eliminates the question of the continued solvency of the employer. At the sitting your Commissioners held at Merritt a very practical instance of the uncertainty attending the existing system of procuring compensation was given in the evidence of two widows whose husbands had been killed in a mining disaster. The mining company did not contest their claim, as in law there was no defence, but although they had children dependent upon them for support, owing to the company being in financial difficulties, they had not received any pecuniary payment, but had to be content to receive a few articles of wear and household goods from the company store. The foregoing instance is uncommon among large employers of labour, as it is generally the smaller employer who carries no insurance and whose solvency is uncertain. The assumption of the obligation by the State to pay compensation by the imposition of a tax upon each industry throws the loss upon the class instead of upon the individual. The loss is spread over a wide area and each employer is supported by all other employers of the same class:

(*b.*) Compensation should be payable to workmen engaged in hazardous employments, and the Compensation Board should have jurisdiction to add from time to time any industry which in their opinion should be included as a hazardous employment. Though the purview of any system of State insurance must in its initial stages be

limited to what are generally recognized and classed as dangerous employments, yet it is believed that when employers in other industries realize that such a system of insurance is one that really insures, instead of, as at the present time, having insurance which does not always protect them, they will voluntarily apply to be admitted to the advantages of such a system, even though the assessment rate should be higher than that of private insurance companies:

(*c.*) A Workmen's Compensation Board appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for a fixed period of ten years should be constituted, with jurisdiction to examine and determine all questions of liability, with power to levy and collect all assessments upon employers. This would necessarily include jurisdiction to properly initiate and attend to all the details in connection with its procedure and operation, including the power to engage such technical actuarial assistance as would be required for the fixing of insurance rates as well as the employment of medical assistance:

(*d.*) The assessment should be based upon the percentage of accidents in each class of employment and on the amount of the pay-roll. As an inducement to employers to take precautions to prevent accidents, the Board should have full power to increase or decrease the assessment in proportion to the number of accidents. Many employers contend that a proportion of the tax should be deducted from the wages of their employees, but when we consider that the workmen secures no compensation for trivial injuries, and even in cases of more serious injuries only a proportion of his wage during the period of his incapacity, it must be conceded that he does, indirectly at least, bear a share of the burden:

(*e.*) Compensation should be payable in all cases where the workman is disabled for a period of at least two weeks, and should in such cases be computed from the date of the accident. Practically all systems of compensation withhold payment where the injuries are only trifling, in order to reduce to a minimum the evils of simulation and malingering:

(*f.*) Compensation should not be payable where it is proven that the injury is due solely to the serious and wilful misconduct of the workman, unless death or serious disablement ensues. Your Commissioners believe that the workman who is careless should be penalized when it is proven that he has been guilty of serious and wilful misconduct, as the employer who does not take proper precautions to prevent accidents is penalized by an increase in assessments, inasmuch as we believe it should be the aim of the State to give every incentive for the prevention of accidents. Sir William Ralph Meredith has in his draft Bill restricted compensation to dependents of workmen coming from countries which have similar legislation. This system of limiting the benefits of the Act to dependents residing in only those countries which have what may be termed reciprocal legislation would, in our opinion, be an inducement to employers to secure workmen from countries having no such legislation, inasmuch as in the event of fatal accidents no liability to pay compensation would ensue. Such countries would not be the most enlightened, and no employer should be given any inducement to secure workmen from such countries to compete with our own citizens, as well as those who may be immigrants from other countries which protect the lives of their workmen by compensation legislation:

(*g.*) Workmen in many occupations suffer from what are known as occupational diseases. At the sitting of your Commissioners held at Trail evidence was adduced of the prevalence of lead-poisoning among smelter-workers. Inasmuch as occupational diseases are risks of particular employments, we believe that the employment should bear the burden of those risks as part of the cost of production, and that workmen suffering from them should be included in any scheme of State insurance:

(*h.*) Compensation, in our opinion, should be payable weekly, with power to the Board to commute weekly payments for a lump sum. The commutation of payments, in our opinion, should be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, as, for instance, where the purchase of an artificial limb is necessary. One of the chief

underlying principles of State insurance is to afford protection against pauperism by the weekly payment of a proportion of his earning-capacity to the injured workman. Were commutation indiscriminately allowed, many workmen would be reduced to poverty through ill-advised investments, though others might be more successful:

(*i.*) The fixing of the scale of compensation for dependents and injured workmen is peculiarly a matter for the Legislature, upon which we do not feel it is our duty to offer any suggestion, except that it should bear a fixed proportion to the to offer any suggestion, except that it should bear a fixed proportion to the earning-capacity of the applicant, and in case of death, where the dependent is the widow or an invalid husband, a fixed monthly payment, with the additional allowance for children under the age of sixteen years; in all other cases the amount of compensation should be proportionate to the actual pecuniary loss sustained:

(*j.*) Although it is necessary and advisable that the decision of the Compensation Board should be final and conclusive and not open to question or review in any Court of law, the Board itself should have jurisdiction at its discretion to state a case for the opinion of the Court of Appeal of British Columbia. Such stated cases should be limited entirely to questions of law, the Board itself being the sole judge of questions of fact.

SUNDAY LABOUR.

In view of the recent reversal of the decision given in one of our Courts to the effect that a labourer engaged in manual labour on a Sunday has no remedy against his employer, inasmuch as he is engaged in an illegal work in contravention of the "Lord's Day Act," it is perhaps unnecessary to make any observations; but in the event of the result of any further appeal being such that it should finally be established that a workman engaged in Sunday labour has no remedy at law for injuries sustained on that day, your Commissioners wish to express the opinion that a labourer engaged in Sunday labour should not thereby be debarred from compensation. Where an employer requests a workman to pursue his ordinary labour on that day, it does not appear to us to be equitable or just that he should be exempt from all liability. It is undoubtedly the fact that many employers, especially those engaged in railway-construction work, anxious to push their work to completion, are desirous that the labourers should continue work on that day; and, on the other hand, a large proportion, especially of foreign labourers, have no religious convictions which preclude them from working on Sundays. Many of these men who lose time on account of wet weather are anxious to take advantage of all days suitable for outdoor work. We would consider, therefore, that such men, by reason of working on Sundays, should not lose their remedy at law in the event of sustaining injuries by reason of being engaged in their employment on a Sunday.

COAL-MINING INDUSTRY.

The coal-mining industry is one which merits special attention on account of the large number of employees and the many grievances placed before your Commissioners at Ladysmith, Cumberland, Nanaimo, Merritt, and Fernie.

GAS COMMITTEES.

The difficulty in securing workmen to serve on the gas committee was dwelt upon by witnesses at various places. Your Commissioners found existing among many miners the opinion that if a workman in the employment of the operators reported gas he was discriminated against and sometimes let out of employment. As a remedy, it was suggested that the miners should be at liberty to appoint miners not employed in the mines to be inspected to serve on the gas committee. The operators deny that discrimination has ever been shown, and state that they regard it as in their own interest as well as in the interest of the miners that frequent and efficient inspections be made. It is also further said on their behalf that any man not in the employment of the operator, and not working in the mine, would not understand the conditions of the mine as well as miners actually engaged at work in the mine. Some operators express the fear that the appointment of outsiders on gas committees would lead to the introduction of spies on their premises for the purpose of securing information for the benefit of

competitors. Your Commissioners are of the opinion that the best and most thorough inspection would be made by employees who understand the conditions in the mines in which they work, and who would also have a personal interest in seeing that the mines were kept clear of gas, thus feeling more responsibility in regard to the efficiency of their inspection than mere outsiders would be apt to do. We recommend, however, that the members of the gas committee be elected by a pit-head ballot of the men employed underground. One of the most potent factors of the difficulty in securing workmen to serve on gas committees is that the position is the most thankless one in a miner's life. Members of gas committees are too often subjected to the unwarranted slurs and abuse of a certain section of their fellow-labourers who are too ready to impute dishonest motives to others. When the gas committee's report shows the mine clear of gas, the members of the Committee are often met with the sneer that they are either in receipt of favours or were currying for favours from the management, the result being that self-respecting miners are loath to accept a position on the gas committee. The consequence is that too often the men chosen are merely agitators and not the competent miners, who, on the strength of being gas committee men, proceed to usurp the powers and functions of the mine manager. The operators state that they welcome reliable reports from the gas committee, and even eliminating the humanitarian point of view, but regarding it solely as an economical question, no one has more to gain from the accuracy of the report than the operator.

WASH-HOUSES.

At Ladysmith and Nanaimo the necessity of miners being provided with suitable washing facilities on coming from work was brought to the attention of the Commission. Many miners working at Extension reside at Ladysmith, some miles distant, going to and from work on trains provided by the operators. It is thus frequently more than an hour before they have an opportunity for changing wet clothing after quitting work, the result being in some instances injurious to health. Your Commissioners are of the opinion that it should be made obligatory that operators of coal-mines where twenty or more men are employed provide a suitable wash-room or wash-house convenient to the principal entrance to the mine, so that the workmen may change their clothes after the day's work is done; that this accommodation should be in a building or room separate from the engine or boiler room, and be maintained in good order, properly lighted and heated, and supplied with clean cold and warm water, and also provided with all necessary facilities for persons to wash, as well as suitable lockers for the safe-keeping of clothing. The cost of maintenance after the wash-house has been established we believe should be borne by the miners engaged, for which the operator should be entitled to deduct from their earnings a small charge merely sufficient to pay operating expenses.

APPOINTMENT OF CHECKWEIGHMEN.

Another cause of dissatisfaction, especially dwelt upon at the sittings your Commissioners held at Ladysmith, was the difficulty of securing the appointment of a check-weigher. The operators allege that the miners have had difficulty in securing men to act as checkweighmen by reason of paying them insufficient wages. The miners contend that the operators have in some instances approached miners individually to induce them to forego their statutory rights to have a checkweighman appointed, and that through fear of dismissal or discrimination miners have been led to take no steps toward the appointment of any checkweighman.

AMBIGUITY OF STATUTE.

It was also a grievance that the "Coal-mines Regulation Act" is not sufficiently explicit in specifying the rights of the checkweighman, inasmuch as the term "every facility" used in the Statute was too indefinite and led to disputes as to the exact rights and powers of the checkweighman. Instances were given of checkweighmen not being allowed sufficient facilities to check the weights, inasmuch as no desk room was allowed for the checkweighman in the office. Your Commissioners would recommend that the "Coal-mines Regulation Act" be amended to permit the miners to appoint their checkweighman by ballot, and that the rights of the checkweighman be definitely stated by providing that he shall have every facility for examining and testing the weighing-machine and checking the tareing of the cars when necessary; that he also

be provided with shelter from the weather and a desk or table at which to work and in which to keep all papers under lock and key; all to be furnished by the operator. Your Commissioners are further of the opinion that every checkweighman should be a resident of the Province, and a practical miner of at least three years' experience, and should be elected by a pit-head ballot of the men producing coal in the mine.

DOCKAGE FOR REFUSE.

A further grievance was presented in reference to the system of dockage for stone or refuse found mixed with the coal. The workmen complain that sometimes working in wet ground with a safety-lamp the dirt will come down so that it is practically impossible to load the car with a load of clean coal. At Cumberland witnesses complained of the whole car being confiscated if 200 lb. of rock or refuse were found in it. The mine manager at that place would not admit in his evidence that such was the case, but stated that he had confiscated a car which was half rock at the bottom. The loading of the car with rock was, in his opinion, done intentionally, as the miner would know by the weight of his shovel whether he had got coal or rock. At Ladysmith the mine manager estimated that 3,000 tons per month of dirt was washed out of the fine coal or screenings which was paid for as coal, as also was the rock which was picked out of the coal on the picking-belt; he further explained that the arrangement there was that when over 100 lb. of dirt was found in the car it was confiscated, and when over 200 lb. the management had the option of discharging the workman. At Fernie an arrangement exists which is satisfactory to the workmen whereby the proceeds from all cars confiscated is paid to an athletic organization formed and maintained by the workmen. To the operator the maintenance of a coal with a minimum quantity of refuse or foreign matter in it means the difference between commercial success or failure. A coal once noted to the trade as a dirty coal can only regain its good name by persistent and patient efforts, often taking years. The operator contends with great force that the miner is paid a certain rate to furnish clean coal, and that for the certain quantities of refuse which are deemed as being within the possibilities of getting into a car, even with careful cleaning, there are no penalties. It would seem that the operator is justly entitled to get what he pays for, and that there must be some method of penalizing infringements beyond reason. It has been suggested that a *pro rata* deduction be made from each car to cover the cost of extraction of refuse, and this method is favoured by operators, but your Commissioners do not consider it equitable that the honest and efficient miner should be fined to pay for the misdeeds of his less scrupulous fellow-workman.

COST OF SUPPLIES.

The powder used in the mines is generally purchased from the operators. Miners do not object to this; in fact, agree that it is in their interest to do so, inasmuch as it obviates the danger attached to their carrying powder in the trains and the storage of it in their homes; objections, however, were taken at Cumberland to the price charged for it at that place. It was pointed out that at Nanaimo the charge made by the operators to the miners was 16 cents per pound, whilst at Cumberland the price charged was 30 cents per pound. The transportation charges would necessarily increase the price at Cumberland over Nanaimo, but it was contended that the difference in price was excessive, and it was urged upon your Commissioners that the operators should be required by Statute to furnish powder and tools at the actual costs of the same, including the costs of transportation, storage, and hauling. Objection is taken to the operator deriving profit from material used in producing the coal. Your Commissioners would recommend that any company or employer supplying powder, oils, or tools to workmen in mining coal be limited in their charges to the actual cost before stated, including all fair and reasonable charges for handling, and that in the event of any dispute the price be settled by arbitration.

CONDITION OF PASSAGE-WAYS.

Complaints were presented at Ladysmith and Cumberland in reference to the condition of the passage-ways of the mines communicating with the place of exit. Your Commissioners personally inspected some of these, and found passage-ways existing which were improperly drained, the result being that water accumulated in depressions. In our opinion, such passage-ways

should always be 5 feet at least in height and 5 feet wide, and in order to allow free, safe, and dry passage should be so drained as to prevent the accumulation of water in low places. Also that when the same passage-way in a tunnel or slope is used by horses and mules as well as by human beings, such passage should be kept as free as possible of all refuse. We would also recommend that where the passage-way to an exit is intersected by other roadways or entrances, conspicuous signboards should be placed indicating the direction which it is necessary to take in order to reach the place of exit.

SPEAKING-TUBES.

During the course of the inspection your Commissioners noted the absence of all means of communication between the lower workings of the mines and the top of the shaft. To provide for cases of accident or sudden emergencies, your Commissioners consider it would be beneficial to require the operators to install speaking-tubes and telephones in all shafts and in all mines wherever necessary where the distance from the exit exceeds 1,000 feet.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

Both at Ladysmith and Cumberland a widespread feeling of discontent was found to exist with the method of fixing wages. The "contract system" in force there regulates the price according to the difficulty in working the coal; it was stated in such instances the workman did not know beforehand what he would be likely to receive, and complaint was made that there was not a set price for different classes of work, the workmen having to depend largely on the generosity of the operator or his officials for the amount of the remuneration which he would receive. At Nanaimo there is in force a system of "collective bargaining" with their employers which was satisfactory to the miners, and which system the miners at Cumberland and Extension were anxious to adopt. The objection taken to the system of "collective bargaining" was that it was not legal and not binding on the parties. This contention was raised by those opposed to the agreements in force at the time of your Commissioners' sitting at Nanaimo in an effort to secure the repudiation of their contract by the miners engaged there. The system of "collective bargaining" commends itself to your Commissioners as being in the best interests of the miners, and we believe also in the interest of the operators, inasmuch as it regulates the prices on a set basis and ensures the workman a definite rate of pay which he is aware of and consents to at the time he enters the employment. Such a system, if properly legalized, would tend to secure better relations between the employer and the employee. Your Commissioners would recommend, therefore, that mutual agreements should be legalized for a period not exceeding three years, and suitable penalties provided for the breach of same.

MINER'S LIFE.

No class of worker is, in our opinion, more entitled to generous pay for a fair day's work than the coal-miner, who has to spend many hours of his day far removed from daylight and often in an impure atmosphere. We believe that such men can be relied upon to do a fair day's work, and are entitled to know definitely what they are to receive for it, equally as much as those who work in metalliferous mines or any other occupation.

DUPLICATE STATEMENTS OF EARNINGS.

Complaint was also made to your Commissioners by some coal-miners that the statement of their earnings given to them by the company a day or two before pay-day had to be given up when getting their pay. We consider the claim made that a man should be entitled to retain a copy of his statement well founded, and that all employers should be required to comply therewith.

We further recommend that Inspectors be given authority to compel coal-mining companies to provide and utilize the latest and most approved machinery designed for the improvement of the condition of the air by washing and by the precipitation of dust, wherever such may, in his opinion, be necessary for the safety of the workmen. It must be said, however, that the ventilating machinery now used in the large operating mines of the Province compares favourably with that found anywhere.

METALLIFEROUS MINING.

"BOUNDARY SCALE" SATISFACTORY.

Your Commissioners had the pleasure of receiving evidence from many employers and employees that the conditions under which metalliferous mining was being carried on throughout the Province were never more satisfactory, and it was especially gratifying to have this opinion freely confirmed by the officials of the labour unions in many places. The agreement between masters and men known as the "Boundary Scale" appears to be working very successfully in the interests of all concerned.

EMPLOYEES OF SHOPS AND FACTORIES.

"FACTORIES ACT."

The evidence taken before your Commissioners has shown that the "Factories Act" has not been strictly observed. Your Commissioners found that in several instances employers within the scope of the Act were not aware that such an Act was in existence, and its provisions relating to the number of hours that women and young girls may be employed were not observed. The chairman of the committee appointed by the British Columbia Federation of Labour to wait on the Commission, a gentleman conversant with the practical working of this Act, in his evidence expressed the opinion that the Factory Inspector, though a competent official, was overworked. Our own observations confirmed this opinion. Your Commissioners consider it an impossibility for one official to properly inspect all the classes of employment within British Columbia coming within the scope of the "Factories Act." Moreover, it is to be noted that the Factory Inspector is also the inspector of elevators in buildings over two stories in height. In the opinion of your Commissioners, the present Inspector should be placed in complete charge of the system of factory inspection, with power to employ such number of assistants as will be necessary to properly and effectively enforce the provisions of these Acts. Complaint is made that the operation of the "Factories Act" is restricted to where five or more persons are employed, and that the conditions of employment are in many instances more in need of inspection and regulation in factories employing less than this number. We believe it would be beneficial to extend the Act to include workshops in which three or more persons are employed.

"SHOPS REGULATION ACT" NOT ENFORCED BY CITIES.

Owing to the lack of supervision by Municipal Councils, the "Shops Regulation Act" is in many respects merely a dead letter. We found on investigation that seats for female employees in stores were not always provided as required by the statutory regulation, and that in other instances, though seats were actually provided, they were not used by employees through fear of dismissal for so doing. Though much complaint was made regarding conditions in stores, very little action has ever been taken by municipal authorities to carry out the provisions of this Act.

WOMEN INSPECTORS RECOMMENDED.

Regarding the appointment of subordinate Inspectors, your Commissioners are of the opinion that a sufficient number of the Inspectors should be women, owing to the large number of women and girls employed in stores, factories, laundries, and other employments. It is evident that there would not be the same diffidence on the part of female employees in making complaints to women Inspectors as exists at the present time in reporting grievances to a male Inspector.

NEED OF PROTECTION.

The class of labour employed in factories and stores is largely unorganized labour without the force of a union behind it, and must therefore depend largely on the protection afforded by Inspectors. It has appealed to your Commissioners strongly as the class of labour which, on account of its weakness in organization and its consequent inability to protect itself, necessitates the most thorough inspection.

EVIDENCE OF WOMEN AND GIRL EMPLOYEES.

A general reluctance to give evidence regarding the conditions under which they labour was found among shop assistance, due partly to lack of organization and partly to the diffidence your Commissioners found among women and girl employees to ventilate grievances or suggest improvements in their working conditions. At the sittings held at the Cities of New Westminster and Vancouver, on complaints being received from persons interested in social work, subpœnas were issued and served on various female employees engaged in stores and factories to attend and give evidence before the Commission, but they failed to substantiate the complaints that had been made. Fear of dismissal and a patient endurance of the conditions under which they labour was evident, but your Commissioners cannot conclude that their working conditions are satisfactory.

MORALITY.

Your Commissioners are pleased to be able to report that suggestions made to the Commission that immorality was prevalent among female shop and factory employees due to low wages are unfounded, and we find are resented as a slander upon industrous and hard-working women and girls who are compelled by circumstances to earn the necessities of life. The readiness with which even many of those who claim to be social reformers will cast imputations on the chastity of a hard-working class is much to be deplored.

LONG HOURS OF LABOUR OF SHOP EMPLOYEES.

A real grievance of shop assistants, in the opinion of your Commissioners, is the long hours of labour. The Retail Employees' Organization of British Columbia, in a statement presented to your Commissioners, has estimated the hours of labour of clerks engaged in retail stores on Saturday as ranging from thirteen to sixteen hours. The chief offenders in overworking assistants and also in opposing an early-closing law are not the larger employers, but many of those operating smaller stores. Some of the better-class stores have voluntarily closed at an early hour on Saturday; others would do so, but are prevented by the competition from smaller stores, which reap the advantage of the early closing of their competitors. Merchants are generally of the opinion that with shorter hours the same business can be handled as at present.

Recommendation.—In view of the fact that the work of the shop clerk and the factory-hand is largely monotonous and confining, and that a large proportion of the employees consists of women and girls, your Commissioners would recommend the enactment of an early-closing law on one day of each week, and that the limitations of total working-hours in each week as in force at the present time be maintained.

SATURDAY THE MOST SUITABLE DAY FOR EARLY CLOSING.

Different views have been laid before your Commissioners as to the most suitable day for early closing. Some maintain that an early closing on Saturdays would work a hardship on labouring-men, who are generally paid on Saturdays. The retail clerks and merchants, on the other hand, contend that, while such inconvenience would possibly ensue, it would be only temporary in its nature, and would result in the changing of pay-day from Saturday to some other day in the week. They also urge that there would be less interruption of business by a closing from Saturday noon to Monday morning than by a closing on any other day. Moreover, the employees would get the benefit of the longer relaxation from work. We are of the opinion that more benefit would be derived from an early closing on Saturday than on any other day.

METHOD OF ENFORCEMENT OF EARLY-CLOSING LAW.

Various suggestions have been made as to the most effective method of enforcing such a law. Some witnesses urged that the Legislature should delegate to the cities and municipalities the power of fixing the day of the week to be chosen for early closing, and that a discretion be allowed as to what classes of business and factories should be included within the scope of any enactment. Such an opinion does not commend itself to your Commissioners, inasmuch as it would tend to make such a law ineffective in certain portions of the Province and might lead to

discrimination in exemptions from its operation. We are of opinion that the Provincial Legislature should retain control of the operation of such law, and should itself provide for the necessary exemptions from the operation of the Act, such as druggists' shops and restaurants.

PERIODICAL FIRE-DRILL RECOMMENDED.

Another matter of some importance to factory employees and shop assistants is the question of fire-drill. The necessity for fire-drill is apparent to your Commissioners after inspection of the larger departmental stores and the larger factories, and we would accordingly recommend that it be made compulsory on all employers of labour in buildings of over two stories in height, and where twenty or more employees are engaged, that fire-drill be given at least once a month. Further, that the Inspectors of shops and factories be empowered to require such drill to be given at the time of any inspection.

ASIATICS EMPLOYING WHITE FEMALE HELP.

Some complaint was made that Asiatics employed white female help. We cannot find as a fact that this exists to any appreciable extent, but such employment must have a demoralizing influence. We would recommend, if it be found that the Province has jurisdiction, that legislation be enacted forbidding such employment.

STATIONARY ENGINEERS.

UNQUALIFIED ENGINEERS ON RAILWAY-CONSTRUCTION WORK.

The evidence of stationary engineers given before the Commission has established the necessity of legislation on their behalf. Complaint is especially made that railway contractors bring into British Columbia engineers from the United States and other countries who are unlicensed and are given charge of engines and boilers on railway-construction, to the detriment of licensed stationary engineers resident in this Province. There also exists a prevalent opinion that the "Boilers Inspection Act" does not apply to engineers engaged in railway-construction work, this contention having been raised in prosecutions undertaken under the Act. In order to remove any doubt existing in the public mind on this question, we would recommend that the Statute be amended to specifically include engineers engaged in the above work, as well as engineers engaged on pile-drivers, derricks, and scows working in waters over which the Province has jurisdiction.

DUTY TO MAKE DISCLOSURE OF DEFECTS NOT RELAXED.

It was further urged on their behalf that, whilst the "Boilers Inspection Act" imposes the obligation on an engineer of disclosing to the Government Inspector any defects which he believes to exist in any boiler or engine under his charge, no protection is afforded against dismissal by an employer as a result of giving such information. There is a prevailing opinion among stationary engineers that discrimination and dismissal have followed in some instances when workmen have supplied this information to Inspectors. Your Commissioners believe it in the interest of the fellow-workers of a stationary engineer that this statutory obligation to disclose knowledge of defects should not be relaxed, but we are also of the opinion that any employer found guilty on a summary prosecution of dismissing or discriminating against an engineer for giving such information to the Inspector should be severely penalized, and would recommend accordingly that the necessary amendments be made to provide for such prosecution and penalty.

EVASIONS OF STATUTE.

The testimony given on behalf of stationary engineers has further disclosed evasions of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the "Boilers Inspection Act" in the employment of unqualified engineers, advantage being taken of the permission given by section 53, subsection (1), to retain the services of unqualified engineers for a period of thirty days. It is contended that it is with

some employers the practice to retain these employees until the expiration of the time allowed by the Statute, when they are dismissed, replaced by qualified engineers for a few days. who are in turn replaced by other unqualified engineers; these men being not properly qualified can be obtained at a lower wage than qualified engineers, the result being an evasion of the intention of the Act

UNQUALIFIED ENGINEERS.

Realizing the serious danger in permitting unqualified men to control large engines and boilers, your Commissioners are of the opinion that the Statute should be amended to prevent the employment of those who do not hold any class of certificate, either permanent or temporary, but that the District Inspectors, as well as the Chief Inspector, should be authorized in cases of necessity to issue temporary certificates to those whom they consider competent, until such time as the regular certificate can be obtained. By this method it is believed that the abuse of the privilege now granted by the Statute can be remedied and a proper supervision had of all engineers in charge of engines and boilers.

NECESSITY FOR PRACTICAL TEST ON EXAMINATION.

Inasmuch as the certificates now issued to engineers include power to take charge of engines where hoists or derricks are used, we consider it would be advisable, in view of the danger to men working in the vicinity where such hoisting machinery is in use, to make it obligatory on all applicants to prove to the satisfaction of the Board, by a practical test, their competence to operate and take charge of any hoist or derrick. Were such a test made imperative by Statute it is believed that the risk of accident in this class of work would be considerably lessened.

LACK OF INSPECTION IN REMOTE PARTS OF PROVINCE.

We further beg to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that in the more remote and less accessible parts of the Province your Commissioners found the inspection of engines and boilers was not systematically carried out, due, we believe, to the present staff of Inspectors being inadequate in numbers to effectively do the necessary work of supervision and inspection.

OPERATORS OF ELEVATORS.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT OPERATORS OF ELEVATORS BE LICENSED.

Your Commissioners have observed many passenger-elevators operated in buildings by young boys not experienced in the handling of elevators and having no appreciation of the dangers connected with their operation. We believe it to be in the public interest that no person should be permitted to operate a passenger-elevator in any city without being licensed by the Building Inspector, or preferably the Provincial Factory Inspector, and that such Inspector should be required to examine each applicant as to his knowledge of the construction of elevators and his experience and ability in their operation, and, if the applicant be found qualified, a licence be issued for a period of one year, for which a small fee be imposed.

PAWNING OF INDUSTRIAL TOOLS.

NECESSITY FOR REGULATION OF PAWNBROKERS' BUSINESS.

The necessity of the further regulation of the business carried on by pawnbrokers has been urged by witnesses at different sittings of the Commission. Whilst legislation protecting workmen against the theft of industrial tools may appear to be unnecessary, the evidence received by your Commissioners has convinced us that the theft of workmen's tools is by no means uncommon, and it is believed that a certain class of pawnbrokers profit by the pawning of such stolen tools knowing the same to be stolen. The difficulty in connection with their prosecution under the criminal law of Canada being the inability to prove knowledge that the tools were so stolen, and as in the majority of cases the thief is not located and prosecuted to conviction, the owner of the tools has no remedy and is not entitled to their return.

RESTRICTIONS RECOMMENDED ON PAWNING OF INDUSTRIAL TOOLS.

Your Commissioners would recommend that certain legislative restrictions, either Provincial or by municipal by-laws, be placed on pawnbrokers receiving in pawn any tool, implement, instrument or appliance used in connection with any manual trade or handicraft. These restrictions may be briefly summarized as follows:—

(*a.*) Pawnbrokers should not be permitted to take in pawn any industrial tool or tools from any person claiming to be the owner thereof, unless such person shall, when offering such tool or tools in pawn, deliver to the pawnbroker a statutory declaration, signed by such person in the presence of a householder, declaring that such person is the true and lawful owner of the tool or tools specified and described in such declaration:

(*b.*) In the event of the owner of any such industrial tool or tools being physically incapacitated from attending in person the pawnbroker's place of business for the purpose of offering such tool or tools in pawn, he should be permitted to execute in the presence of a householder a written statutory declaration of authority to pledge the tools, and certifying that owing to physical incapacity the owner is unable to attend in person at any pawnbroker's place of business, and in consequence such owner nominates the person specified in such declaration as his agent for the purpose of pledging the tool or tools:

(*c.*) That the forms of statutory declaration required shall only be attainable by the owner of the tools or his duly authorized agent by application at the police station nearest to the place of residence of such owner on any week-day, and that all such forms shall be stamped with the official police stamp and dated by the Inspector in charge or his deputy for the issue thereof, and such Inspector or deputy shall be entitled to put any questions to the person applying for such forms with the view of testing the credibility of any of his statements:

(*d.*) Any such statutory declaration should not be valid or effectual unless delivered to a pawnbroker not later than the second day following that on which the blank form of such declaration was issued by the police, exclusive of the day or days on which the pawnbroker is prohibited the carrying-on of business. Every pawnbroker receiving such declaration shall within twenty-four hours forward to the Inspector of Police at the station whence the form of declaration was obtained full particulars in writing of the tool or tools pledged, together with a statutory declaration duly executed, and such description and particulars shall be immediately made available for the inspection of any person presenting himself at the police station between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.:

(*e.*) That suitable penalties be imposed on any person making a declaration knowing the same to be false in any material point, and on any pawnbroker receiving any industrial tool or tools in violation of the foregoing requirements.

It is believed that the foregoing restrictions on the pawning of industrial tools would very much lessen the number of thefts. If the theft has been committed, the strong probability is that the thief will not willingly go to any police station and take the statutory declaration required, and in any event the declaration would enable a prosecution for perjury to be entered. Whilst this proposal may cause some slight extra trouble in the pawning of industrial tools, we do not believe that, in view of the additional protection afforded owners of these tools, any objection will be taken by workmen going through the procedure required.

WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS.

UNSANITARY CONDITIONS AROUND WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS.

In several places at which the Commission held sittings complaint was made that the sanitary conditions of the workmen's dwellings were unsatisfactory. At Hosmer it was stated that the miners' dwellings in the district known there as "New York" were crowded together, and that after each pay-day the miners who lived in this section, and who were principally foreigners, engaged in carousals lasting two or three days. One witness estimated that about 500 beer-kegs were to be found lying around these dwellings. In the Coast cities there is found

evidence that workmen live in tenements which are overcrowded and which are unsuitable environment for the rearing of children. It is believed that to the landlord these tenements yield a larger profit than houses of a better class. Municipal authorities, in our opinion, should take action to prevent the Health Inspectors becoming apathetic in regard to the condition of these tenements, and we further believe that the letting of any house in a bad sanitary condition should be forbidden by law.

SALE OF PUBLIC LANDS ADJACENT TO CITIES IN SMALL LOTS.

With increased facilities for transportation, there is a noticeable tendency on the part of workmen to remove from the congested parts of our cities to the suburbs, where conditions are more satisfactory in every respect and more suitable for family life. Valuable assistance in promoting the ownership of homes by workmen could be given by the Government making it a uniform policy, in the sale of public lands lying adjacent to any of our cities, to offer such lands as are suitable for small holdings for sale in lots of such size and on such terms that workmen possessed of a modest competence would be able to purchase the same.

ELECTORAL PRIVILEGES.

ABOLITION OF DEPOSIT NOT FAVOURED.

Several witnesses have urged upon the Commission the abolition of the deposit of $100 now required from each candidate at any Provincial elections. Inasmuch as the deposit is only a reasonable amount and is returned to each candidate who obtains a number of votes at least equal to one-half the number of votes polled in favour of the candidate elected, your Commissioners believe that the deposit operates to protect the public from candidates who have no appreciable following.

TRANSFERS ON VOTERS' LIST.

Other witnesses thought that working-men should be allowed to transfer their votes from one electoral district to another by means of the presentation of a card certifying his right to vote, and that this card would be accepted by the Polling Clerk as sufficient evidence that the person presenting it was qualified to vote, and that suitable penalties be provided for duplicating it or for impersonation. Such a proposal could not equitably be limited to any class of the community, and its general extension and operation could readily be made a political device for securing the election or defeat of candidates by the importation of non-resident voters. Political parties could by this method of permitting the transfer of voters on the eve of any election easily encompass the defeat of a candidate obnoxious to them. *Bona-fide* transfer of residence is now provided for by the "Election Act" in permitting registration thirty days before any election.

LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN DISSOLUTION AND ELECTION.

A still further suggestion was that at least two months should intervene between the dissolution of the Legislature and the date of election. The prolongation of political turmoil to such a period would, in our opinion, be detrimental to the business and industrial interests of the Province.

MOTHERS' PENSIONS.

IMPORTANCE OF PROBLEM.

A social problem of grave importance has been discussed before us at Victoria by representatives of the Social Service Commission. Many women who are either widows or deserted wives have children dependent on them for support and are obliged to go out charing or to do other work. Their children are either left at home or placed in some children's creche.

It cannot be denied that the best and highest interests of the State are served by preserving the integrity of home life. Children left without proper companionship drift into the delinquent class and so become a charge on the State. The conservation of the home must be conceded to be more important than the conservation of our material resources.

DIFFICULTIES OF ADMINISTRATION.

The difficulties in connection with a system of State aid to mothers supporting infant children arise from the administration of such legislation. Such a scheme involves placing a very heavy financial burden on the State; in many States of the neighbouring Republic it is felt that a large proportion of the moneys granted for this purpose are wasted, and your Commissioners have not had placed before them sufficient data upon which to base any specific recommendation. Inasmuch as such legislation in other countries is yet in the experimental stage, we believe that the Government of the Province of British Columbia should, whilst studying this problem, wait until time has tested the administration of the legislation now in existence elsewhere, to the end that we may derive the benefit of the experience of other countries.

EDUCATION.

FREE TEXT-BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

The providing of all school-books free of cost has been urged upon the Commission. The Government has already made a start in providing certain books in the primary grades of the public schools free of cost, and the law of the Province now empowers any Board of Trustees to supply without charge all the necessary school-books to children of parents in indigent circumstances. This is felt to be a species of charity which many poor but independent people do not care to accept. Inasmuch as the cost of providing school-houses, teachers, maps, and general school supplies is met by the imposition of a general tax, we cannot see any reason why the same system should not be applied to school-books. As long as all school-books are not provided free of cost, our public-school system cannot really be said to furnish a free system of education. The extension of the system of free school-books would, in our opinion, tend to make the attendance of children of poor parents more regular. The system of public-school education in British Columbia has generally been the subject of much praise by educationists, and we believe further advancement would be made by making all text-books absolutely free.

Whilst liberal provision is being made for the higher branches of education, it is to be borne in mind that approximately 95 per cent. of pupils do not advance beyond the public school. The desirability, therefore, of bringing the public schools within the reach of all, where a practical education can be secured free of cost, is at once manifest.

ALIEN LABOUR.

ONLY BRITISH SUBJECTS SHOULD BE EMPLOYED ON PUBLIC WORKS.

We beg to draw the attention of the Government to the large numbers of alien labourers, both skilled and unskilled, whom your Commissioners have observed in various employments. It is evident that there is a large class of transitory labour which enters Canada during periods of prosperity and competes with our citizens for employment. Your Commissioners believe that the Government should, at least in regard to public works carried on by either the Province or by any municipality, enact legislation that no person not a British subject should be employed either upon or in connection with such Provincial or municipal work or upon such works over which the Provincial Government by reason of granting any aid or assistance can exercise any control, except in cases where unusual circumstances arise and it is found to be impossible to obtain the requisite number of labourers of British birth or citizenship.

IMMIGRATION.

INFLUX OF LABOUR.

One of the problems fraught with difficulty is that of immigration. The influx of labour and the necessity of Governmental supervision and control has been emphasized by many witnesses. The head-tax imposed upon Chinese immigrants has proven a failure in checking their incoming to our country. It is alarming to observe the increase in the numbers of Asiatics immigrants who can never become assimilated into the citizenship of our Dominion.

PROPOSAL OF INDENTURED LABOUR.

At the sitting of your Commissioners held at Duncan, a deputation from the Board of Trade submitted a proposal for the total abolition of the head-tax upon Asiatics and their free admission for agricultural and domestic purposes for a limited period under a system of indentured labour, at fixed minimum and maximum wages. The minimum wage was suggested at $10 and the maximum at $25 per month, with board. It was urged that the farmer at the present time has to do work which he should not be compelled to do, and that such a class of indentured labourers would, as one witness expressed it, act as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for them, doing the rougher and lowest class of labour. After the expiration of the time fixed by the indenture of each labourer, which was proposed at a period of from five to seven years, the immigrant would be deported to the land of his birth. It was further contended that the Government, which, it was suggested, should bear the charge of transportation of these Oriental labourers, would be partially repaid by a small fee from every employer of this class of labour. It was further suggested that a Labour Board be established, upon which representation should be given to labour unions as well as employers; that this Board be given power to fix the numbers of workers needed for each current year, and to make arrangements to engage labourers at the wage to be fixed by the Board; that the Board should keep a register of each Asiatic labourer entering the country, and be empowered to fix a penalty on any employer paying wages in excess of the fixed rate, and further be empowered to deport any Oriental at the expense of the Province who should prove unsatisfactory for the class of work for which he is imported.

INDENTURED LABOUR NOT FAVOURED.

Your Commissioners have no hesitation in expressing their opinion that such a proposal is abhorrent to all feelings of humanity, and that any development of the resources of this Province which might be attained by a system of virtual slavery of any race is bought at too great a price.

EXCLUSION OF RACES WHICH CANNOT BE ASSIMILATED.

The paramount consideration in dealing with Oriental immigration should be the preservation of our own nationality and race; and we believe that no international relations should be allowed to interfere with the rigid application of this principle. Therefore, without the slightest intention or desire of being in any way unfriendly to any other nation or race, but simply and solely as a matter of self-protection, and with all due regard to Imperial interests and international obligations, we recommend that any Asiatic or other nationality or race which cannot be assimilated and absorbed into our Canadian citizenship be refused the privilege of permanent abode in our country.

ASSISTED IMMIGRATION.

Though believing that the immigration of farmers, farm-labourers, and domestic help to British Columbia would promote prosperity and prove beneficial, it is our opinion that a large proportion of moneys expended in assisting immigration is wasted, inasmuch as many immigrants drift to the cities, where they enter into the competition of a market for unskilled labour which is at the present time overcrowded. We are further of the opinion that money assistance to any corporation or individual bringing immigrants of all classes into the Province should be withheld, and that any financial assistance should be limited to farm-labourers and domestic help, and then granted only in times of the need of such immigrants, and only when it has been established to the satisfaction of the Minister of Agriculture that such immigrants are *bona-fide* farm-labourers and domestic help.

"MECHANICS' LIEN ACT."

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR FILING LIEN NOT FAVOURED.

Some requests were made to us for the extension from thirty days to sixty days for filing a lien, but such requests were not at all general. If such extensions were made, it would be possible to tie up building operations for a period of three months. The law of our Province

now gives to labourers thirty-one days in which to file a lien, and a further thirty days if required in which to bring action, and your Commissioners consider the Act satisfactory in this respect.

"DAYLIGHT-SAVING."

Closely relating to the improvement of conditions for workmen of all classes is the agitation for "daylight" legislation, which deserves our attention, although very little evidence in regard to this subject was received.

In a country of such great extent from east to west, it is impossible for all our citizens to get the full enjoyment of correct sun-time without frequent changes in the clock. We are therefore in accord with the proposal to take more advantage of the daylight hours at our disposal, but we realize the many difficulties in the way of adopting any radical change in the present arrangements that would prove satisfactory to the people as a whole, without incurring the opposition of scientific authorities and business corporations whose interests are entitled to consideration. Your Commissioners therefore recommend that legislation be enacted to advance the standard time one hour from existing Pacific Coast time throughout British Columbia, excepting the eastern portions of the Province, where the time in use is already one hour ahead of that at the Coast. Such a change could be made effective with the least inconvenience to the public at midnight on any given Saturday.

More than one legal time in the Province is undesirable, and we consider that the use of different times in the same town or neighbourhood is unbusinesslike and confusing. But whether it would prove more satisfactory to the general public to have a change of time every spring and fall instead of one change only, the advanced time to remain permanent throughout the year, is a matter requiring very careful consideration on the part of the Government.

SANITATION.

NECESSITY FOR SANITARY CONTROL.

Your Commissioners were very much impressed with the necessity for more careful sanitary conditions in connection with the installing of sanitary systems in the different municipalities. The systems employed and the results which follow, so far as the testimony given by the Mayors in several municipalities regarding this most important matter, were quite a revelation, and in many ways were subject to very serious consideration by your Commissioners. The testimony given was of such a nature as to convey to your Commissioners the great necessity for Government inspection and supervision, so as to ensure the more scientific method regarding the disposal of sewerage. The present systems which have been adopted regarding the disposal of sewerage which obtain at the present time are deserving of immediate attention. There are several incorporated municipalities where the outlet is directed into some river, lake, or stream; while it may be the way of least resistance from a monetary point of view, it cannot be other than exceedingly dangerous as time goes on. While the cities contain only 3,000 to 4,000 of a population, the systems adopted might be efficient and might be thought to be the best; while these municipalities with their expansion and growth have been great, your Commissioners anticipate a greater growth and expansion as time goes by; that cities established and projected on the banks of the Fraser River and its tributaries, from Tete Jaune Cache to New Westminster, will, if present indications count for anything, contain tens of thousands in population, and the present number of cities will be greatly increased as developments in the great interior with its splendid opportunities take place. Those great tributaries to the Fraser River have now commenced to show that commercial spirit which is much to be admired, and with this great development commanding greater responsibilities and necessity for installing and putting into operation the more scientific sanitary systems for those cities which are and will be large commercial manufacturing centres.

Your Commissioners cannot think of any matter so important and which requires as much care and vigilance as the keeping of the tributaries which contribute their quota to all the great rivers pure and wholesome, and no greater calamity could befall the Province than that these streams, which are such sources of health and wealth, should be contaminated. Your Commissioners would urge that, in so far as it is possible, wherever any of the present municipalities

have installed a sewerage system and there has been no provision made for arresting the crude matter before entering into any river, stream, or lake, and when after examination it is found that the disposal of sewerage is not in accordance with modern sanitation, the Provincial Health Department should have the necessary legislative power to enforce such alteration as will ensure the necessary purification by the most improved scientific method.

Your Commissioners have had various complaints and grievances placed before them having reference to particular matters, and where these have affected any of the departments of the Provincial Government they have been drawn to the attention of the particular department having jurisdiction; other matters, whilst of public interest, were, in our opinion, without the scope of the Commission, and in regard to such we refer the evidence in its entirety to the consideration of the Government.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Third day of March, 1914.

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