

SUGGESTIONS ON MINING LAWS

APPOINTMENT OF MINING COM- MISSION IS THE BEST METHOD.

Conditions as They Now Exist in Oregon Require the Enactment of Laws Governing the Mining Industry—Aggregate of Output and Dividends Should be Known—Mining Inspectors Badly Needed.

It has come to THE MINER from a fairly reliable source that there will be an effort made to quash any mining legislation which has, or may hereafter come before the assembly now in session at Salem.

The proposed method is to indefinitely postpone consideration of such bills, and allow them to die a lingering but legal death. This is considered the most expeditious method of getting rid of a number of features which are obnoxious to many.

In lieu of the measures, the proposition is to have a law enacted whereby a mining commission will be appointed. This body to draft a bill covering every point necessary, and submit the same to the legislative assembly at their session two years hence.

Should this scheme be carried through, as its progenitors appear to desire; except that a commission will be at work framing a law, the mining laws of Oregon, to use a legal phrase, will remain in statu quo.

Although the measures now before our lawmakers have called forth much adverse criticism, and are more or less faulty, yet they are legally before either the senate or house of representatives for discussion or amendment, and each constituent of every member, has the glorious American privilege of entering his protest, if he has any.

THE MINER has expressed its views and made its criticism on these bills as they exist in their present form. How they will appear after issuing from the committee room, or what resemblance they will have to their originals after being considered by the committee of the whole, is beyond the human range of vision to foresee.

There is no question of doubt, however, but that the state of Oregon needs mining legislation, and needs it badly; and it is to be hoped that a modified form of the Robbins bill, for instance, will be passed at this session, even if a mining commission should be appointed which would make recommendations to the next legislature.

In the first place, there should be an act whereby the output of the mineral production of the state should be known. The public need not be made aware of the amount produced from each mine, but the aggregate of all metals, minerals, clays, building stones, abrasive materials, etc., produced.

Next, it should be known the amount of dividends that have been paid by metalliferous mines. To give an example; for the year 1902, mining journals are publishing the dividends of the mines in different states and territories of the United States, British Columbia and Mexico. To make this point much plainer, they are hereby given as totals, the names of the mines being left out:

Alaska.....	\$ 600,000.00
Arizona.....	116,115.00
British Columbia.....	452,000.00
California.....	1,017,774.50
Colorado.....	3,281,212.00

Idaho.....	682,000.00
Montana.....	6,710,925.00
Michigan.....	3,440,000.00
Missouri.....	345,000.00
Mexico.....	2,685,000.00
Nevada.....	44,210.60
South Dakota.....	1,139,000.00
Utah.....	5,799,000.00
Oregon.....	129,500.00

Grand total.....\$27,555,622.10

It may be as well to state that the Oregon dividend was declared by the Helena Consolidated Gold Mining company, whose property is located in the Bohemia district. Not the name of a single eastern Oregon mine appears on the above list of dividend payers. Does not this fact make some legislation necessary?

Another matter which urgently requires the passage of a mining act at this session, is the great need of one or more mining inspectors. Several accidents in mines have occurred in the Sumpter district during the present year. Although no doubt some of these mishaps were entirely unavoidable, yet doubtless one or more would not have occurred had a mining inspector thoroughly examined the ground. Can any one be so bereft of reason as to claim that mining inspectors are not absolutely necessary when, according to reports at hand at the time of writing, 200 feet of the main shaft of a prominent Sumpter district mine caved in after the last load of human freight had been hoisted from the depths?

It is far better not to load down our representatives at the state Capitol with too many suggestions. It is far easier to give advice to others than to apply the same rule to ourselves. But there are other regulations which might be adopted that would be of benefit to the mining industry. One is the qualification of assayers, for instance.

Those who engage in this important branch of business should, in a measure, be hedged around by rules similar to those who follow other professional occupations. In the opinion of the writer, there should be an examining board before whom all assayers who do custom work should appear, and on passing such examination would be granted a certificate. In this manner an honorable and responsible profession would be protected, and only those who had the requisite knowledge would be allowed to perform work for the public. Of course prospectors or mine owners who make tests for themselves, would not come under the provisions of such a law.

It is presumed that the members of the state legislature, or at least those who are from the mining districts, have sufficient knowledge of the needs and requirements of their respective constituents, and are endowed with plenty of stamina so that they will have passed some enactment which will better mining conditions. No matter what blame can be laid at their doors for the bills already introduced, they should be given credit for one wise move; they shut out place hunters from drafting bills to a considerable extent. The suggested establishing of a mining bureau, and all appointments coming from that source effectually covered this point.

It is an absolute impossibility to create a statute to cover every point which may come up; hence some laws are general in their nature. Therefore, give the people of Oregon a law which will, in a general way cover some of the defects now existing, and we can follow the rule of U. S. Grant. If it is bad we can have it repealed; if good we will have its benefits.

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