

THE EIGHT HOUR SYSTEM.

Operation of the Law in Springfield Armory.

We take the following interesting letter from a Springfield, (Mass.) correspondent of the New York Sun.

Sir: As the eight-hour question is of public interest, I trust you will pardon me for respectfully inviting attention to the operation of the eight-hour law, in the National Armory.

Col. J. G. Benton, commanding the National Armory, at Springfield, Mass., in a communication to the Chief of Ordnance, comparing the working of the eight and ten hour systems with reference to piece-workmen, says: "They have managed to make, under the old tariff of wages, quite as much per day under the eight hour as under the ten-hour system; while I believe that the day workmen have worked harder and more faithfully under the eight hour than under the ten hour system."

The foreman of the milling department reports (Aug. 17th, 1868) that the average earnings of twelve of his piece workmen under the ten-hour system, in the month of June previous, was \$2.60, while in July under the eight-hour, they earned \$2.88 per day. In other words, they did considerably more work for Government in a day of eight hours than in one wherein they worked ten hours.

The foreman of the water shops reports that the average earnings of twenty three piece workmen in his department, which under the ten hour rule were \$3.12, under the eight-hour system were \$3.13 per day. From statistics obtained from the Armory, the price of the work alluded to in the reports has been reduced over nine per cent. since the passage of the Eight-Hour law.

The average earnings of twenty-nine piece-workmen (so the foreman reports in the filing department) were, under the ten-hour system, \$2.95, and under the eight-hour, \$2.82 per day. The workmen in this shop gradually began to earn in eight hours their usual wages when they worked ten hours, and even more; so that the officers were able to reduce the price from 16 to 17 per cent, since the enforcement of the law.

The Hon. Mr. Robeson, Secretary of the Navy, testified before the French Arms Committee of the House, relating to the manufacture of 10,000 Remington rifles, that:

"As the work could be done cheaper at the Springfield Armory than at the manufactory of E. Remington & Sons, an application was made to the Ordnance Bureau of the army for permission to have them manufactured there."

At the period when the guns alluded to were made, the Armory was working under the eight-hour law, the workmen being paid a full day's wages for eight-hours' labor. The establishment of E. Remington & Son's at the same time was working under the ten-hour system.

During the late rebellion the Springfield rifle muskets cost the government when made at the National Armory, \$11.70, including interest, rent, &c., of the establishment, while those manufactured in private establishments cost \$21 each.

The above facts show:

First, That work is done cheaper under the eight-hour than under the ten-hour system at the Armory.

Second, That the workmen were not overpaid when the eight-hour law went into operation, for they produced more work for the same amount of expenditure than could be obtained of private establishments for the same amount of money.

The wages now paid in the National Armory are:

Best machinists, \$3.50; best filers, \$3; best polishers, \$3. In Springfield establishments, best machinists, \$4.50; best filers, \$3.50; best polishers, \$3.25. And with other workmen the difference is in the same ratio.

Under the eight-hour law twenty per cent of the wear and tear of machinery, cost of oil, coal and gas is saved to the Government. The cost of gas alone for the first full quarter after the eight-hour law went into force was \$1,044 less than for the same period of the preceding year.

The workmen in the armory, fully appreciating the fact that the experiment of testing the eight-hour law was by the petitions of workmen from every State in the Union entrusted to their keeping, have manfully endeavored to faithfully perform their duty, as the above record show, notwith-

standing the fact that the officials of the Ordnance Department were and are opposed to the enforcement of the eight-hour law.

As the effect of the law upon the workmen, I find that it has not produced dissipation, but on the contrary has tended to promote mental culture and general improvement in the armorers and their homes.

Should the above facts find a place in your valuable paper, please say to the workmen in New York that the Government workmen wish them success, and as much prosperity under the eight-hour system as has been enjoyed by

THE ARMORERS.

Family Oracle—"Yes, my dear, this, a mere toy, may become, in my hands, a death-dealing instrument to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, even to the biggest beast."

Little Wife—"Oh, dear, then pray take care you don't hurt yourself."

A number of wealthy Hebrews in New York intend to start a daily newspaper there, and say they are prepared to risk half a million dollars in such an enterprise, or more if it be required. They have made an ineffectual effort to buy several established journals in that city, offering, it is understood, as much as a million dollars for one of them.

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