

Miners' Licenses.

The question of miners' licenses is another that has had the very serious consideration of the government. It is, understand, as in the case of the mortgage tax, one which has always been in existence in British Columbia, and for which this government is not in any way responsible, as you would be led to believe. This government has simply not altered the law, that is all. It was announced some time ago that this tax on working miners in metalliferous mines would be taken off, but a great deal of opposition was raised, on the ground that the majority of the miners in the new districts, many of whom, by the way, are prospectors and claim owners as well, are not British subjects, and while earning a livelihood and having all the advantages of citizenship, would contribute practically nothing to the revenues of the country. This is something the force of which cannot be denied. I am willing to admit the justice of there being no distinction among working miners of any class, and the government is disposed to place all on equal footing as soon as it can see its way clear to do so. The government will endeavor to so adjust the matter, keeping in mind the objection which has already been referred to, as to meet the whole requirements of the case. It is a matter surrounded with some difficulties; but can, I believe, be remedied satisfactorily. Bear in mind that the miners of Kootenay have not asked to have this tax taken off; in fact, there were strong representations made that they desired to have it left on. They did not object to the tax, as they wish the privileges of locating and recording claims; but they do object to the working miners in the coal mines being exempted. There is a good deal of difference, however, after all, between metalliferous mining and coal mining, and the privilege of locating and recording claims, which is valuable to those engaged in one is totally useless to the other. There is really a new condition of affairs we have to deal with, now that mining has developed into a permanent industry,

and it is one with which former governments have not had to deal.

IMPORTANT INTERESTS.

I have not so far dealt specifically with the many important interests which have had the consideration of the government for a number of years—such as mining, agriculture, labor, etc., etc. Concerning these I have but to say that the legislation affecting them is before you in the statute books, and it is with pleasure that I can point to the fact that in each of these the government has adopted the most advanced and practical measures that are anywhere to be found in operation on this continent. In some important respects we have set the pace for the rest of the Dominion.

Mining and Mining Laws.

Our mining laws have reached a state of development admittedly equal, if not superior, to those of any other mining country in the world. The facilities which they afford for the prosecution of the industry, the protection which is extended to the interests of capital and labor employed therein, and the equitable manner in which the laws governing it are administered, are all recognized as eminently satisfactory and beneficial. The Dominion government has paid this Province the high compliment of adopting our code in its entirety for the whole Northwest Territory, and unorganized portions of Canada. I need not refer to the character of the work done by the mining bureau, inaugurated a year or two ago, or the splendid results that have been achieved. There is but one sentiment throughout the province in regard to that. The reports issued have inspired confidence everywhere, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that they are eagerly sought after and are reliable guides to our mineral resources.

Agricultural Legislation.

I have been accused of having made a "hobby" of finance by a leading member of the opposition, the editor of the News-Advertiser, who states that a man with a "hobby" is dangerous. Well, I never regarded it as a bad thing at all!