Eight-Hour Mining Law

Correspondence Between Government and Members, Miners and Managers.

Feeling on the Matter as Shown by Communications Sent and Received.

· A return of all correspondence between parties interested prior to the enforcement of the eight-hour clause of the Inspection of Mines Act Amendment Act has been presented to the legislature by Hon. J. Fred Hume.

The return consists of now fewer than sixty documents, comprising an equal number of full foolscap pages, the first in the series of communications being a

"Is the miners' eight-hour law to be enforced here?" R. F. Green, M.P.P., Kaslo, same

V400 2

date, writing the minister, says: "Section 4 of the amendments to the Inspection of Metalliferous Mines, Act is creating a good deal of excitement throughout the Slocan. You are no doubt aware that the wages in this district have always been \$3.50 per day, while beg to offer a few remarks: at Rossland and in Nelson-notably at chapter 134, Consolidated Statutes, the with the consent of the Minister of ed class. I had no request from any miner in my benefit to labor. riding asking for the eight-hour day, and I desire time to find out their wishes in the matter."

that the limit of eight hours in every 24 doing the same work.

gard to the operation of this particular the good ones that we have now.

The Minister of Mines replied to Mr. You will do any of these seven-freen's letter, informing the member for measure, and let not any of these seven-the Slocan that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-the Slocan that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teenth century political philosophers pre-that the delegation he had teen the properties of the pre-that the delegation he had teen the properties the pre-that the delegation he had teen the properties t Green-would "receive every considera- pie." tion on the part of the government."

March 14 saw a netition forwarded from the mine owners of the Sandon give this letter to the press." neighborhood-signed by seventeen large companies, headed by the Payne group, and employers of 884 miners-urging that the enforcement of the eight-hour on April 5, in these terms: ciause "practically compels the mine owners of the Slocan to adopt one of the 1st instant, stating that the newspatwo alternatives-either to reduce the pers do not represent the real views of present rate of wages, or to close down the people with regard to the enforce-have been frequently changed. their workings.'

The petitioners added: sistently paid the highest rate of wages views of the moneyed class. I beg to paid in the province, and owing to the thank you for this expression of opinclimatic conditions prevailing here it is ion, and I trust that, as you say, both necessary for us to do so in order to ob- labor and capital will benefit by the actain skilled workmen. There has so tion of the government in this question." far been no conflict between employers and employees in this camp, but the enforcement of clause 13, Victoria 61, munication, on the 1st April, M. F. Teetchapter 134, will work unavoidable dis- zel, and many other business men of Neiaster in this district. We therefore beg | son, addressed the following to the interyou to do your utmost to grant such re- ested minister: lief as may lie in your power."

Hon. Mr. Hume acknowledged this petition on the 22nd March, in a letter to Manager F. A. Wood of the "Last Chance," with the observation:

"I have received a letter on the same subject from the member for your district, and I would request you to inform the petitioners that their question is reing the hours of underground labor in ceiving the earnest consideration of the the metalliferous mines. From our in-

heard from on March 30, when President John Leaden and Financial-Secretary James Devine, of the Rossland Miners' Union, wrote to the minister to this effect:

"You would greatly oblige the officers and members of this union if you could give us some knowledge when the eighthouse law is going to take effect. To out. We think there would be good re-

sults if the law was enforced at once." Three days later, Hon, Mr. Hume replied that the matter was under consideration by the government, and expressed the hope that he would be in a position shortly to send definite instructions to the inspector of mines in the matter. 29th March, telegraphed Hon. Mr. Hume

"Eight-hour law thoroughly enforced; perfect harmony. Never mind Slocan kickers. Expect letter." Two days later H. G. Needlands sent

to the minister from Nelson, this mes-"Delegates leave here Monday to in-

terview you. Will you be in Victoria?" William Hunter of Silverton gave his views on the question in a letter addressed to Hon, Mr. Hume on March 31, in

which he said: "You have no doubt received many letters with regard to the new eight-hour shift for men underground. It seems that the bill was rushed through in a

hurry, for no one seemed to know any- amendment of the mining law constitu- in making it impossible to induce capiwork the ten hours for the larger pay. It seems too bad that when things were moving along so quietly, this question should have been brought up, as everyarrangements. The trouble would have satisfied. come soon enough without the government being the first to move in the matter. Now if there is any way of letting matters rest the way they are in the Slocan it will be much better, for if any trouble arises I am afraid that some of the mines that are only in the prospective stage will be apt to shut down at the present price of silver. I hope you will give the matter your earnest attention, and try and avoid trouble." The reply of the Minister of Mines to

this letter was written on the 5th of April, and contained the following: "I am afraid that it is more than probable that there will be some little friction in certain localities where this act is enforced, but I trust this will only be of a temporary nature. At the same telegram addressed to the Minister of time, I would have you bear in mind-Mines by F. A. Heap, Ainsworth, March that this legislation was introduced upon 16 last, in which the question is asked: the expressed wish of different mining constituencies, and I presume they had fully considered beforehand the probable result of their action."

> On the 1st of April, Charles Angus McKay of Nelson was heard from in a letter to the minister in which he said: "In view of so much opposition to your efforts in the enforcement of the eighthour law, as a representative of labor I

"First, we deplore the fact that our the Hall mines—they have only paid \$3 newspapers by no means voice the sentiper day. The owners here threaten to ments of labor on the question, but, cut wages to meet the situation, to \$3, nevertheless, labor here is, I may say, which will in my opinion result in a unanimous in favor of the law. We ap-Under section 34, Victoria, preciate your stand, shown in the efforts you are making to enforce the system prosecutions under this act can only be. The agitation got up here against the act instituted by the inspector of mines or represents nothing more than the money-

Mines. A delegation of mine owners is "Their fancied 'detrimental to the best on its way to the Coast to interview interests of Kootenay' is false, and will you on the subject, and I would suggest not hold good under any experiment. that you accede to their demands for an . They are mistaken economists. We hold assurance that no prosecutions will be that we can produce just as much in instituted until you notify them to the eight hours as in ten, therefore it is no contrary. I ask this for the reason that hardship on capital, and is of much

"Comparing other classes of labor with underground mining, as has been done in the Nelson Miner, is very foolish. Un-Next, under the date of March 17, is derground men have to contend with bad an instruction from the Minister of air, whereas the others have not. Now Mines to Inspector James McGregor, di- if we can do a day's work in eight recting his attention to the section of the hours, it would be poor economy to stay act, and requesting that he "see to it down in a smoky mine for ten hours,

"The effects of the system will be most Hon, Mr. Hume replied to Mr. Heap: beneficial to all concerned, both capital "I shall esteem it a favor, therefore, if and labor, inasmuch as it will in time reyou will let me know of any expressions sult in gathering the very best of minof opinion you may have heard with re- ers to this country, and in keeping here "In conclusion I would say that I hope

The Minister of Mines replied to Mr. you will do all you can to enforce the referred to had had an interview, and vent you from doing your duty, as I can conveying the assurance that their repre- assure you you have the warm support sentations—as well as those made by Mr. of the great mass of the common peo-

As a postscript, Mr. McKay suggested that: "If you see fit, Mr. Hume, you can

It does not appear that Mr. Hume "saw fit." The minister acknowledged the letter

"I beg to acknowledge your letter of ment of the eight-hour law, and that the agitation organized in certain districts "In the Slocan district we have con- against this measure represents only the

Coincident with Mr. McKay's com-

"We, the undersigned business men of Nelson respectfully beg to ask you as our representative to do everything in your power to prevent the disaster which we foresee to us and to the district in which we are interested through the enforcement of the legislation passed at the last session of the legislature affecttercourse with the miners in the neighborhood of this town, we are convinced The workmen in the mines were first that they have been, satisfied with the wages they have been earning, and with their hours of labor, and from our knowledge of the conditions we believe that them have come to better their circumstances here. We have invested our money in this place, and have staked much of its growth and prosperity from us it seems the hour for action has ar. the increased working of present mines rived; the men's patience is almost worn and the development of new ones, and if, as we believe to be the case, this interference with the free right of contract of employer and employee be persisted in, we anticipate that present operations will be greatly reduced; and that the James Wilkes, of Rossland, on the away of capital, which is known to be both as to hours of labor and rate of prosperity and growth of the mining in- | day. dustry and to the district as a whole, "We beg also to point out that the that we cannot too strongly urge you to mines in this district cannot be classed leave nothing undone, or to take any among the dividend payers, and that any action no matter how strong or unusual, material increase over the present cost to prevent any interference with the of working would render our operations state of things which has hitherto ex- so much less likely to be profitable that

isted between employer and employee." An independent view of the situation, cost, we will discontinue operations. under the same date of April 1, is con-

Minister of Mines:

son or Rossland, where the wages were interested in mines has been appointed that should be heeded. only \$3, but I am afraid that if it is en- to go to Victoria, backed up by a petition one seemed satisfied with the existing dies out somewhat, all parties will be

"Of course there are miners who are continually agitating for something, and there are mine owners who are never satisfied, no matter how much work they get for a dollar. I think the law should be optional in properties under development, if miners are agreed to work, 10 hours should be satisfactory; in deep workings, where air is bad, 8 hours is plenty. I should advise you to stand

Mr. Bunker also adds: "You are at liberty to use this note."

In acknowledging the letter in question, Hon, Mr. Hume says: "The government are giving this matter their serious consideration." The acknowledge ment bears date of April 7-"and I shall be glad to place before them your views on the subject."

The previous day, however, it would appear that the government had arrived at a partial understanding, for on that date a telegram was sent by Hon! Mr. Hume, to Inspector of Mines McGregor, at Nelson, instructing him in the following terms

"Withoud enforcement of section 4, Inspection of Metalliferous Mines Act, as amended last session, until further ad-

This message was not delivered, as a telegraph company note to the sender "Party addressed left town, Now somewhere in Slocan country-think San-

don "

The wire was worked from Ymir the same day. April 6, and Hon. Mr. Hume received the following from L. A. Snyder, of the new mining camp: "Good results obtained by enforcing

eight-hour law." Next in order came a petition bearing the date of the 1st of April, signed by the London & British Columbia Goldfields, Ltd., the Ymir Gold Mines, Ltd., the Hall Mines, Ltd., and many others. It read:

We, the undersigned owners, represent-

atives of owners, and managers of mines in the Nelson district, desire respectfully to urge upon you the great necessity of using the controlling power invested in you by the act, entitled "An Act for securing the safety and good health of workmen engaged in or about the Metalliferous Mines of the Province of British Columbia, by the appointment of an inspector of metalliferous mines," section 34, chapter 27, to render non-effective section 13 of the said act, amended at the last sitting of the legislature to read: "No person shall be employed underground in any metalliferous mines for more than eight hours in every 24 of the said clause is interest of the progress and well-being of such districts, and we submit the following reasons in support of the justice and reasonableness of our request:

"1. It is universally recognized that mines should not be made without mature consideration, and for reasons so strong as to render it probable that a as uncertainty with regard to the laws affecting those interests has the effect of deterring eapitalists from investing money in a country whose mining laws

"2. Legislation affecting such large vested interests should not have been passed without an opportunity having their opinions upon the desirability of such legislation. "3. That the clause in question was

not enacted in deference to the spontaneous desire of the majority of those affected by it, but at the suggestion of those representing labor unions, at the dictation of the management of labor union organizations in other places than those districts affected by the act in

"4. That it has been concurred in by members of the union in some of the mining districts in the belief that they would receive the same wage for eight hours' labor as they have hitherto received for ten hours.

"We would respectfully submit, with reference to the first objection named, that the amendment to the law referred to was passed so hurriedly, and with so little previous notice, that none of us were aware of the intention to propose this change; and we were therefore unable to make known to you, our rethey are better off than the miners of presentatives, the disastrous effects the United States, from where many of that we believe will follow the enforcement of such legislation. That you being absent from the House at the time, and most of the members being unfamiliar with the conditions of mining in this district, the legislative assembly was influenced by the opinion of an individual member, whose mine owning constituents were unaware of his intention to introduce such legislation.

"With reference to the third reason submitted, we have by inquiry among opening of new mines and the develop- the employees of our mines elicited the meat of the country generally will re- statement that they have been satisfied ceive a heavy blow from the frightening with the already existing conditions, very timorous where there is danger of wages, and we are convinced from our abor troubles. The results which we and experience that miners in this district ticipate would be so ruinous to us have not suffered in health or well-being whose business is dependent upon the from laboring underground ten hours a

"6. That no greater evil can befall and that the example of New Zealand as Minister of Mines wrote:

hurry, for no one seemed to know any- amendment of the mining law constitu- in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it impossible to induce the mining law constitution in making it induces the mining law c I do not know how it will work in Nel- ground working, a delegation of parties ment of a country, should be a warning government:

"7. That some of us have already by forced here it will cause no end of to the government to repeal such clause fair trial proven that the cost of worktrouble, for the mine owners declare said law affecting interested parties re- ing per foot, with three shifts of eight ing for ten hours. that they will shut down before they garding the 8-hour section. I would say hours, is considerably greater than and the men say that they would rather as a disinterested party, neither employ- at the same rate of wages per shift; and ten hours. ing miners, or wanting employment in that, although it might be possible that mines, that the law is giving general during a month of trial, the men might the government for the reduction of satisfaction, and I think that after giv- so over-exert themselves to prove that hours. ing it a fair trial, and the excitement this would not be the case, in a short time the result of our experience would prove to be correct, and we consider that the situation would only be rendered more difficult, and no good end accomplished, by such an experiment.

"8. Some of us have recently returned from Europe, having succeeded ourselves, and being aware of the success of others, in arranging for a large amount of capital for the development of mines in this district during the coming season, and we feel in a position to state that, if the provisions of the section of the act to which we object, be enforced, very little, if any, of the promised capital will be available.

"We have commissioned Captain Duncan, J. J. Campbell, and S. S. Fowler to present our request to you, and to provide you with such further information as to our views upon the subject as you may desire."

The matter was brought to an issue by a telegram from Sandon on the 7th April. signed by F. A. Wood, and reading; "Inspector is here to notify us of eight hour law. What shall we do?"

Hon. Mr. Hume replied immediately to Mr. Wood: "Ask McGregor to await telegram which is now at Nelson."

Next in the long series of communications came a telegram from Montreal, from Clarence J. McCuaig, one of the directors of the Payne Mining Company, dated the 8th April, and reading: "Directors of the Payne Mining Com-

pany informed that you intend to post notices eight-hour law in Slocan dis-Owners principal mines have agreed to shut down if law inforced unless men will accept \$3 for eight hours' work. We must necessarily follow suit. Ground being easy to work men preferten hours; seven-tenths Payne owners here. Majority of money for development British Columbia comes from Montreal. Any serious trouble will destroy confidence and seriously hinder development. Earnestly request your grave consideration and postponement of action for present. A reply will be appreciated,' The reply, which Hon, Mr. Hume sent

the same day, read thus: "Until further notice and more information, eight hour law will not be enforced in the Slocan district."

Just one day later, J. J. Campbell, one of the Slocan mine owners' delegates referred to in a previously considered petition, addressed the Minister of Mines from Victoria as follows:

"In order to avoid any possibility of inaccuracy in reporting to the mine owners whose petition I handed to you, the decision of the government, I will be greatly obliged if you will kindly write to me upon the subject, in order that 1 may transmit copies of your letter to the different mine owners interested. "Pending the receipt of this, I will in-

form those who I have an opportunity of seeing, that in view of the representa- memorial to you asking relief in this law. and yourself, has promised that until it changes in the legislation affecting the Kootenays, the feelings of the elec- side of the question, we may get relief. I tors in their various districts, you will have acquainted our directors in London instruct the Inspector of Mines not to with the particulars of the case, and we prosecute for any infraction of section are now prepared to resent very strongly change when made will be permanent, 13 of the Mines Inspection Act, and that labor interference, although in the you will refuse the necessary permission meantime we will do all we can in jusfor any other person to presecute, and tice to the men; we will pay the best that if you should decide that it is the wages, and do everything to maintain wish of the electors in those districts harmony, and if we are led into a disbefore any prosecution will be permitted, and nothing will be so damaging to our been given to those interested to express and that no permission would thereafter mining industry abroad as the fact that the given for prosecution for any infrac- we are having serious labor troubles tion of the act prior to the date stated here. I may shortly be in Victoria when in such notice."

the following day:

inst., and beg to say in reply that the so informed. government have instructed the Inspector of Mines by wire as follows: "Withhold enforcement of section 4.

instructions." "The government has taken this step pending the receipt of reports from the representatives of the districts affected the eight-hour law. "If after receiving this information it

is deemed in the public interest to enforce the act, 30 days' notice will be given by advertising in the Gazette." Two days subsequently, on the 10th of bary of the Miners' Union at Sandon, the meanwhile,

wired the minister: We request that the mining inspector

On the same day the minister replied by telegram: "Upon representations by mine own-

sideration."

nam, who wrote:

"Your telegram was somewhat of a surprise to the miners up the Slocan untry, as they knew it was a just law. and had all confidence in the government ten by A. G. Fraser at Kuskanook, on to enforce it. Now if the mine owners the 15th April, and acknowledged by and their hirelings are going to defeat the wishes of the miners, misrepresenting the facts, it is time the government was paying some little attention to the miners those who pay their just proportion to the taxes who go to support the government. Now I will say without fear of contradiction, that miners

tained in the letter of Alfred Bunker of us than the beginning of labor troubles. were addressed by Hon. Mr. Hume in

lowing representations have been made shifts, thus giving employment to min-

"1. That the mine owners could not consent to pay the same rate of wages laughed at; the men here say the owners eight hours as they have been pay-

"2. That the miners themselves are will pay \$3.50 for eight hours' work; as a supporter of the government and with two shifts of ten hours each. satisfied with the old working day of "3. That they the miners, did not ask

> "4. And that they would prefer the ten hours to a reduction of wages. "5. And the mine owners state that

rather than pay \$3.50 for eight hours, they would close down. "The government have carefully considered the whole matter, and will leave ings, etc., the workmen have had be it for the miners themselves to dec de ter health, the masters better work, ar whether it is to their interest or no to the merchants increased business. onforce the art, the government in the the country at large it is much be meanwhile withholding their consent to to have two men earning \$5 per day the any prosecutions or enforcement of the one man earning \$3.50. If these san act until the general feeling among the miners can work in Rossland, Nelson and miners has been more cleanly ascentain other points on shorter time, why and they have laid their case before in the Slocan? If they are forced

not hesitate to do so." Writing from Rossland on the 12th April, to Hon. Mr. Hume, W. A. Carlyle, as mining engineer in charge o' the works of the British American Corporation, was next heard from as follows:

"With respect to the eight-honr law.

it for the time being. I would be very wage, and everyone will be benefited. glad if you would let me know whether This opinion is the result of interviewing any such step has been taken? I would over fifty working men, with whom like to say that this new regulation com- have talked since the eight-hour law peling us to adopt the eight-hour law, was passed." was totally unknown to the mining men here, and we could scarcely believe that it had been passed. Prior to that time there had been no dissatisfaction among | April, in which he says: the men, and no complaints had arisen whatever. Yet, without giving the min- making inquiries from the voters, resiing men any opportunity whatever to discuss this proposed change, it was from persons who are more or less intermade law. When we got notice from the inspector of mines, we at once adopted without changing the rate of wages for the time being, in order that we might learn what difference it made in the cost of working. I might say that | diately, we are doing everything to prevent any conflict with labor, as such would be a government should most certainly en severe blow to the province and very force the law to the very letter, notwithhard on the mining companies. The standing the Nelson delegation to the Miners' Union is becoming more and contrary, who, by the way, only repremore aggressive, and the fact that two sent a few disgrunted mine owners of of three of their members were able to the Slocan who are ready to reduce secure the passage of this bill bodes ill wages, even when working the ten hours, for the mining industry. In reference and I am sure that the action of the to this eight-hour law, it was not in government in enforcing the law will be vogue in Rossland, as has frequently been endorsed by a great majority of the peostated, except in two or three working ple. During my visit to Rossland a few places in the War Eagle. We already days since I made it my business to find, in the Le Roi, that our costs for make inquiries from a reliable source the same production per day have been whether there was any dissatisfaction materially increased by the passage of among the mine owners, and I found this act, compelling us to work thus. The that everything seemed to be working result may be that we shall have to reduce wages, which may lead to a disagreement between ourselves and our men, when hitherto there was complete accord. I am sure that in this matter | April wrote again to Hon. Mr. Hume. we have your sympathy, as you will fully understand the conditions that ex- ers and others held at Ymir on the

ist in Kootenay, but as I know you were standing for re-election at the time this James Graham, J. J. Roets, Wm. Delaw was passed, you were unable to give lahay and A. L. Knox had been apus you support. The mining men of pointed to draft resolutions protesting Rossland had not as yet presented a against the suspension of the eight-hour tions made by them and others, the gov. but they have by no means accepted it ernment, through the Minister of Mines without thought of doing so, and I sincerely hope that until the mining men is ascertained through the members for have an opportunity of presenting their that the provisions of the amendment astrous struggle with labor, it will not be referred to should be enforced, notice of hard on us and the men alone, but it one month or six weeks will be given may lead to trouble all over the province, I hope to have the pleasure of a talk To this the Hon. Mr. Hume replied with you upon this subject. If you have decided to withhold this measure for the "I am in receipt of yours of the 7th time being, I will be very pleased to be

The acknowledgment of this included a statement of the conditions of the with- Minister of Mines, addressed from Vanholding of the act in operation, coupled Inspection of Metalliferous Mines Act, with an expression of satisfaction that said: as amended last session until further the British American Corporation was doing all possible to avoid a conflict eight-hour law in the mines was repeatwith the labor interest.

On April 15th, the section of the British Columbia board of trade, Victoria, plication to deep mining to be correct transmitted copies of the resolutions and in line with good precedents towards passed at the quarterly meeting of that oody, urging as the unanimous opinion of the board that time should be given both mine owners and miners to fully present their respective cases, the act April, Grant Cox, the financial secre- being allowed to remain inoperative in

Hon Mr. Hume replied to this communication that the government had al- | be entertained for the present, it being now here inforce the eight-hour-law at ready instructed the inspector of mines understood that such would become the to take no action toward the enforce- statutony meaning at the legislature's ment of the act until further advised,

"The government are taking such ers of Slocan and others, the inspector stops as the case demands, to have the has been instructed not to coforce the opinions of the mine owners and the eight-hour law until further advised, miners upon this subject. After both The government is giving it careful cin- sides of the case have been laid before to receive, as they will be of great asthe government, and if in their opinion This message was acknowledged by the act should be enforced, thirty days' at a decision in the matter." the union on the 13th April, over the notice will be given through the B. C. signature of its president, Jos. Stock- Gazette. I should like to have copies of any objections which your board may have received from mine owners, etc.

> Another extended communication writ-Hon, Mr. Hume on the 18th, contained the following:

"The subject (of the eight-hour law)

has been pretty thoroughly discussed "And whereas there are certain penal-here by the railway laborers. There are ties for not complying with the said enno mines in operations in this section, actment: but quite a number of prospectors and miners have been at work during the that the legislation in question will not outside of the union have asked the winter on the N. & B. railway, the ma- only work great hardship upon the mine we have reluctantly determined that Miners' Union to use their best efforts jority of them being from the Slocan. owners of this district but also upon the rather than continue work at increased to have the eight-hour law enforced at They are without exception in favor of mines themselves, for the following reathe eight-hour day; they claim that a sons Presumably the arpended remarks greater number of men would obtain work: and that more and better work district at the present time are entirely Nelson, in which the writer says to the from which we have hitherto been free, reply to this, for on the 17th April, the would be done working eight hours than unproductive, owing to the lack of faciliworking ten hours, Instead of working ties for the reduction of ores, in conse-"Through an excitement caused by the showing the disastrous effects of strikes | "I beg to say in reply that the fo'- one shift mine owners would work two quence the expense of operating the said

made by the mine owners is simply are here to develop their properties and make money, that it is a matter of indifference to mine owners who they pay wages to, provided the work is done The fact that organized labor has been fighting for years in all civilized comtries for eight hours' work, eight hours' pay and eight hours' sleep,' and that the greater number of working men in th country are asking for the eight hours should be sufficient to convince the gov ernment that the legislation as carrie will work mutual benefit. Where it been tried heretofore, in factor es, bu

government. At the same time I part of them are forced, to leave can assure you that if it is shown to be. Slocan, and work on the railways in the interest of the miners and the \$2.25 for ten hours' work, can they general prosperity of the country to work at a profit at \$2.80 for eight hours enforce this act, the government will. The question is simply one of avarie The fortunate ones who get \$3.50 don't want to divide with their less fortunate brothers. The mine owners will not reduce wages, nor will they close their properties. They will pay the same rate per hour, and other districts will follow, because labor will not be so plen-William D it is reported here that the inspector of titul. They will employ more men, pro mines has been instructed not to enforce duce more ore, pay a bigger aggregate

> Wm. Delahay was again heard from in a letter dated at Ymir on the 13th "I have complied with your wishes in

dents and business men of Ymir, also ested in mining properties in this locality; and I have not met with one who is opposed to it. The mines working here are the Tamarac and Ymir, which when notified complied with the order imme-

"In voicing the sentiments of Ymir, the very satisfactory indeed. In conclusion I hope the government will not weaken in enforcing the eight-hour law."

The same Wm. Delahay on the 18th as chairman of a mass meeting of minevening of the 17th April, stating that clause, and forward them to the Minister of Mines and the Ymir Miner, for publication. These resolution, subsequently presented read:

"1. That the eight-hour law passed by the Legis'ature of British Columbia was highly satisfactory to the miners of Ymir district "2. That the action of the government

is now suspending the operation of the said law is highly detrimental to the interests of the miners of this district. "3. That the Minister of Mines be requested to immediately enforce the operation of the eight-hour law in the diswict of Ymir.

"4. That the assurance that one month's notice be given to the mine owners be immediately rescinded, as such notice was never contemplated in the law. "5. That the statement made by the

deputation of mine owners to the effect

that the law was obnoxious to the mine owners, is entirely incorrect." A more moderate tone pervades a communication from B. R. Atkins to the

couver on the 26th April, in which it is "While in Victoria the matter of the edly brought to my notice, and my opinion asked concerning it. I believe the principle of the legislation in its apspecial classes of employment, but I think that there should be some qualifying amendment attached limiting its application to deep mining only.

"Regarding the enforcement of the act in this particular, the suggestion of its operation only in cases where the working may be properly called deep, might next session. Of course this is merely my personal idea upon the subject, and given only in that sense. Hon. Mr. Hume, replying to this letter,

"Such expressions of opinion I am glad sistance to the government in arriving

Next in order of communications is a resolution adopted at a meeting of the mine owners of the Boundary Creek district as follows:

"Whereas it has been enacted by the legislative assembly of the province of British Columbia that no person shall be employed underground in any metalliferous mine for more than 8 in every 24 hc

"Now this body respectfully submits

"1. The mines in the Boundary Creek

ind not upon "2. The m with the pre-and have me 3. Thut hours of labo duce the way an eight-hou great hardshi consequent d of employer harmoniously "Therefore trict respectf tioned amend

ance, at lea The mine camp also to May, to place approval of spectfully to ment be dela tations could ment on the Minister of M ment did no eight-hour c full inquiries mine owners miners them thirty days' the law shou

from on the "The gener hood (Ymir) enforced, not fluence may contrary. It that the majo pose the pres present gove means they l them both your own (I tion. Conse but right ar and to your strictly enfor

On the 27 secretary of transmitted . ing those par and labor co hour law be following wa "Whereas the miners government throughout the said law Trail Creek beyond any as a majorit now oppose also opposed prior to the that we hear passed by t of Rossland On the 2n

that a memo signature se mine owners of the Ko clause. He "I may sa subject, and ment widl r law, and tha he'd in abev of the legisla This was Semlin, as a with the d ment had all ful conside enforce the being publis 11th of May

confirmed by

mine owner

The resolu ers' Union. of Miners. dent John I Devine on ing letter re "Accordin honor to inf tioned organ last regular unqualifiedly the Trades eight-hour

with enclose

ate that so generated ag ed so much metalliferou only at mo same footing as obtains every comm where mini carried on. the argume duced the go were of suc the Executi over-estima situation. clear becaus that such r they were to demonst of the enfor be, since the test of the s tions of con let us com Eagle Minir hour princ ploys proba ployed in al sented by th ents who fo wait on th exempt then law if possi War Eagle Blackstockdiately upor perties in t hour princi

are conce quired to operate the nspector manager, he comple fortnightto the ner That very sued orde workmen o eight hours it ever rem erham syn

tional, inter