

confidential matter ; but, he said, "I expect to be able to give you information in a very few days." That was all that took place between the hon. Minister and myself. He gave me no information ; I did not know the Government were negotiating with Messrs. Mann & Mackenzie at all, or that they had a contract, or that the Government were not going to do the work themselves. I feel it my duty to make that frank statement to the House.

I do not intend to take up the contract itself until we have the papers before us ; but I think the Government may well turn their attention—and the sooner they do so the better—to the mining regulations of that country. One of the gravest charges made against this contract—and it is a very strong charge—is that while a wealthy and powerful body of contractors have only to pay a royalty of one per cent, ten per cent is exacted from the miners. I may say that what took place between the hon. Minister and myself in British Columbia I stated publicly at a banquet given to me in the city of New Westminster, and I did it designedly, for the purpose of bringing public opinion to sustain the pressure which I was endeavouring to bring upon the hon. gentleman. I took great exception to the mining regulations, and I am glad they have been modified ; but I am satisfied that when the matter is examined, it will be found utterly indefensible to exact a royalty of ten per cent. Why, Sir, what does it mean ? You must remember that the mining in that country is not carried on by capitalists ; it is poor man's mining. It is a description of mining in which a man with a vigorous constitution and a year's provisions to sustain him, and clothing, and a pick, a shovel and an axe, possesses all the appurtenances he requires to carry on the business. Suppose a man goes in at the risk of his life, as many did, or at the risk of his health, as many did, and takes up a mining claim ; and suppose, by dint of great industry he takes out in the course of a year \$22,500 worth of gold. Wages are enormous, the cost of living is enormous, the circumstances under which the work is done are of the most terrible character, and it is not at all unlikely that it will cost him \$20,000 to take out the \$22,500. What is the result ? The result is that you deduct the first \$2,500 before you assess the product ; that leaves \$20,000, on which ten per cent is \$2,000, and the man has \$500 left for his year's work, while the Government has \$2,000. That in brief is the argument, and I think that what would meet with the most hearty approval of this country would be the reduction of the royalty imposed on the miners, if not to one per cent, certainly to not more than two per cent. In the province of British Columbia, a poor province, where there are an immense number of mines, the royalty on gold is one per cent. In the province of Nova Scotia, where gold-mining has been

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carried on as a successful industry for many years, the royalty on gold is two per cent. I believe that if the Government will give this subject their careful consideration, they will come to the conclusion that there is no act they could do that would meet with more hearty approval in this House or out of it, than a great reduction of that heavy charge.

There is another point of grave importance, and as there are probably some negotiations going on in reference to it, I want to direct the attention of the House to it. It is this. The Government of this country have an opportunity which they never have had before and never will have again, of dealing with the unjust labour laws of the United States of America. Every person recognizes, and it came to be recognized in this House, that the right hon. First Minister was obliged to pledge himself at the last general election, that, if he could not obtain a modification of the repeal of those labour laws that were found to be so oppressive to Canadians along the border, or to Canadians who wanted to go into the United States for work, this Parliament would be asked to retaliate by passing a similar act. Now, Sir, no country can complain with any foundation if another country adopts its own legislation ; and what I would ask this House and the Government seriously to consider in the interest of Canada, is to pass a law to provide that the same laws shall be applied to the citizens of any country which that country applies to Canadians. While the United States shut us out from obtaining a free miner's license or from working in a mine in the United States, I would not allow a citizen of the United States to work in our mines. I would simply adopt their own legislation with reference to alien labour, mining and everything else that affects the mutual rights of the two people. If they complained of it, they would complain without any possible ground of justice ; and I take this opportunity of drawing the attention of the Government to a matter which I regard as very important ; and that is the desire and determination of the United States to capture to a large extent the gold and trade and business of the Canadian Yukon district. I believe this Government have an opportunity that will never occur again. Now, Sir, I am sorry to have taken up so much of the time of the House, but I shall close in very few words. I am delighted to find the Government are going to bring in a Superannuation Bill. I believe that the frightful injustice perpetrated since the Government came into power must convince every member of this House that the sooner the superannuation law is changed the better it will be.

With reference to the Franchise Act, I would like to take this early opportunity of saying—I do not know that I am able to speak for every person, but certainly I can