

## QUEBEC MINING ACT.

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INTERVIEW WITH THE HON. H. MERCIER.  
—

11TH FEBRUARY, 1891.  
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Pursuant to resolution adopted at meeting of 30th January, the following deputation held an interview with the Hon. H. Mercier, at the Government Offices, Montreal, Wednesday forenoon, 11th February: Hon. George Irvine, Q.C., Capt. R. C. Adams, Ald. R. Prefontaine, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. B. T. A. Bell; also, Messrs. S. P. Franchot, A. H. Murphy, and Major R. G. Leckie.

HON. GEORGE IRVINE reviewed at some length the legal objections to the new mining law, pointing out that it confiscated rights which had been obtained by purchase, and declared all mines to be the property of the Crown, even though the Crown had previously ceded them to individuals for a consideration. Such a revolutionary enactment, he intimated, would in all likelihood, be disallowed by the Dominion Government, but before taking any steps in that direction he desired to call Mr. Mercier's attention to the matter, trusting to his sense of justice to revise the enactment.

CAPT. ADAMS, speaking especially for the phosphate interests, pointed out practical objections to the new law. He said that if the royalty was to be collected by the original purchasers, who had bought lands at low prices from the Government, there could not be much objection, beyond the point raised by Mr. Irvine, that it involved a breach of contract, but in nearly every instance the mines now working, had been purchased at prices varying from \$50 up to \$1,000 an acre, and these prices had been paid solely on account of the assurance conveyed by the Crown patents that the title gave absolute ownership of the minerals forever. The amount of capital thus invested in the land created a heavy interest charge, and the imposition of a royalty in addition would prove ruinous to some of the less prosperous mines. Already it had checked investment in the industry, and an agent of foreign capitalists in-