

district; Dr. Ells will be in Argenteuil and counties north of the Ottawa River; Mr. Giroux, mapping out certain portions of the Eastern Townships; Mr. Low will continue exploration in the waters north of James Bay and will cross the waters of the East Main River to work there, in accordance with the request made by Sir Hector Langevin in reference to the northern boundaries of Quebec. In New Brunswick, Mr. Chalmers will continue his work of mapping soils and distribution of forests. In Nova Scotia, Mr. Fletcher will continue his work in the Counties of Cumberland and Colchester, and Mr. Faribault in Halifax County. Prof. Bell will be engaged in Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties. Mr. Ingall will give most of the summer to the investigation of the new district in Kootenay and the south-western portion of British Columbia.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. There is only one point on which I would like to have some information in a little more detail; that is, what information has the hon. gentleman to give us about the discoveries in the petroleum district, and what do the Government propose to do in the way of disposing of petroleum licenses or lands? More particularly, I would like to know if the Government propose to reserve any particular portion of these petroleum-bearing lands for further developments?

Mr. DEWDNEY. In reference to any further developments, there have been none since last session. Mr. McConnell, who was then just about returning from his investigations there, has described what he thinks is an extensive petroleum area, about 400 miles square. There has been no basin discovered, because no borings have been made; but the indications appear over a very large district. He calculates that there are some 58 square miles of what he calls tar-sand, that is, immense banks saturated with tar; and so dense is the tar that it will burn freely in a fire. I fancy it would make a first-class natural asphalt for making roads. There having been no boring, it is only possible to surmise the depth of these petroleum beds. It is thought that in the neighbourhood of Athabasca Landing, some 80 miles north of Edmonton, you would have to bore 1,500 feet in order to reach the basin; and it is estimated that a little farther north on the Athabasca River it would be necessary to bore to a lower depth. Mr. McConnell's investigations this year will be extended further east over a track of country almost the same size as that explored before, and in which no white man has ever been. The Government have not yet considered what disposition they will make of these lands. There have been some applications made from parties in England, and also from parties in Canada, but no scheme has been formulated and no determination come to. The question was raised a short time ago whether it would be wise for the Government to send up boring machines and do some boring ourselves; but I did not feel inclined to advocate that course, because in sending machinery where it would be difficult to obtain renewal parts and repairs in case it should get out of order, there is no knowing where the expense would end. With regard to the disposition of the lands, the Government have come to no conclusion at all—in fact, they have hardly thought of it.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would like to ask whether the Government have agreed upon Mr. DEWDNEY.

any terms as to leasing these lands? I have a strong opinion that in the case of great resources of this kind, the state should not part with its right, but should impose a royalty. I am quite aware that this is against the opinion of speculators in such lands, and I am quite aware also of all that has been said as to the desirability of encouraging enterprise, and so on. But in other countries very considerable revenues have been obtained from royalties on resources of this kind, and I do not see why we should not derive a similar benefit from these resources, more particularly as our properties in the North-West have not benefited us financially to any great extent so far. I would like the hon. Minister to state what policy the Government propose to pursue with regard to the property—whether they think it desirable to part with it, or whether they intend to preserve some kind of interest in it?

Mr. DEWDNEY. I may state that there were regulations framed under our Dominion Lands Act for the working of minerals, amongst others petroleum, but they were found to be utterly unworkable. I think they were to this effect: that any parties in petroleum districts could stake off 160 acres, and by expending a small amount every year could hold that property for five years at \$100 a year. A great many parties in Southern Alberta located and took up a large quantity of these lands. Twenty or thirty of them clubbed together and applied to be allowed to bunch their expenditure at one spot. They were given that privilege, but their work did not amount to anything. They endeavoured to make arrangements with capitalists to bore for them, but the negotiations fell through. I came to the conclusion that the regulations were unworkable, and they were cancelled, and no more petroleum lands were allowed to be taken up under them; and as soon as these entries that were made fall in, the lands will, of course, become public property as they were before. There have been applications for petroleum lands, but there being no regulations the Government have not disposed of them. I look on petroleum property as somewhat different from ordinary mining property, with regard to royalties. I do not think if the Government were to resolve this royalty on petroleum, there would be the same objection to it that there is among capitalists to royalties on mining properties generally. I will bring the matter before my colleagues, and if we can come to any conclusion I will inform the House of it.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would like to know, when we come to concurrence, what has been decided upon, as the matter is one of considerable practical interest?

Mr. FLINT. If I am not mistaken, there are 20,000 volumes of the large reports and a large number of volumes of the smaller reports, which are bound together to make the larger reports, in the possession of the librarian of the Geological Survey and not given to the public. I would suggest that a number of the copies be placed in the Parliamentary Library, and that some scheme be devised by which the surplus now encumbering the cellars of the Geological Department should be distributed to public libraries and schools and people generally throughout the country. If an hon. member desires special reports, there is a cast-iron rule by which he has to pay for them,