

THE PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL-IN-COUNCIL.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Frederick Arthur Stanley, Baron Stanley of Preston, &c., &c., Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada, in Council, Ottawa :

The humble petition of the undersigned proprietors of mining lands, and persons interested in mines in the Province of Quebec, represents :

That there was passed at the last Session of the Legislature of the Province of Quebec, an Act intituled, "An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Mining Law."

That your petitioners respectfully allege that the said Act is unconstitutional, that it has a retroactive effect, that it interferes with private rights unjustly, and confiscates private property, that it is contrary to the policy of the Dominion, and is injurious to a large and increasing commercial industry.

Your petitioners submit to Your Excellency-in-Council the following grounds on which they ask for the disallowance of the said Act :

1. Sub-section 2, of clause 1, repeals the existing law contained in Article 1425, of the Revised Statutes of Quebec, and enacts: "As it is admitted that mines, whether upon public or private lands, belong to the Crown, any person discovering a mine may purchase the same by complying with the provisions of this section." Your petitioners represent that it is not a fact that it was ever admitted that minerals, other than gold and silver, on conceded lands, belonged to the Crown; but that, on the contrary, the whole course of legislation and jurisprudence in the Province of Quebec, as well as the system of administration by the Crown Lands Department of the Province, admitted the contrary to be the case.

2. The Statute complained of proceeds to provide, from section 1455 to 1512, for a system of confiscation of the minerals on private lands; any person desirous of acquiring the minerals on the land of another, obtains from the Government a permit of exploration, and after satisfying himself of the quantity of land which he will require, a surveyor's plan, with an offer of price is deposited with the Commissioner, and unless the proprietor elects to pay the price offered, the property in the minerals passes to the holder of the exploration permit.

3. The Statute law of the Province of Quebec, as it stood previous to the passing of the Act in question, is to be found in the Revised Statutes, from Article 1421 to Article 1582, inclusive, which articles are taken from the Act of 1880, chapter 12.

4. Previous to the passing of this Act the Department of Crown Lands had made regulations for the sale of the Crown Lands containing mineral de-