

this were changed about as I suggested, it would not be restricted to any routes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I read the hon. gentleman's remarks yesterday, and what he said is quite correct; the Act at present provides for that. The Dominion may lay out a road anywhere without closing any other road.

Sir SAM HUGHES: That is all right.

On section 2—to authorize grant of minerals in forest reserves to Province of British Columbia, under agreement of February, 1890:

Mr. MEIGHEN: It will be remembered that the Privy Council has held that the title to the precious metals in the railway belt is in the province, and that the title to the baser metals and to the surface is in the Dominion. In the administration of the Act in the past, constant difficulties arose, which difficulties were got over by the agreement that is referred to here whereby it was provided that if an applicant worked mineral rights in the province, and lived up to the provisions of the Mineral Act of the province, he could acquire patent on payment of a fixed amount, or he could acquire title to the surface rights and to the baser metals. That arrangement has been working ever since 1890, and in consequence we do not administer any of the baser metals in the Railway Belt except coal, and there is very little coal. But when the Dominion Forest Reserves Act was passed in 1911, there was a clause of that Act by which the Minister was refused permission to convey title to any lands at all within the limits of a forest reserve. These lands were locked up and no one was empowered by authority of Parliament to issue a patent for any purpose whatsoever. The result was that wherever there were mineral claims in relation to these lands it was impossible to carry out the terms of the agreement of 1890. By this amendment we propose to make it possible to carry out the terms of the agreement in respect to forest reserve lands just as in respect to other lands in the railway belt.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I did not exactly follow what was said by my hon. friend (Mr. Meighen). By a decision of the Privy Council one class of metal was held to be the property of the province and another class of metal was held to be the property of the Dominion?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

[Sir Sam Hughes.]

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: The baser metals were held to be the property of the province?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No, of the Dominion; the precious metals were held to be the property of the province.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Under the law as it is to-day the baser metals belong to the Dominion, and the object is to transfer these baser metals to the province?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No, not quite. The object is not to transfer the baser metals in toto to the province by any means. The object is to enable us to carry out the arrangement as to the transfer of the baser metals to the patentee of the province in individual cases, which arrangement we made in 1890 but which, by reason of the Forest Reserves Act of 1911, cannot now be applied in the case of forest reserves. Under the arrangement of 1890, it was provided that wherever a man was, under the law of the province entitled to a patent, having lived up to the regulations and to the Mineral Act of the province, he could get a patent from the province to the precious metals, and that he thereby became entitled to a patent from the Dominion to the baser metals and surface rights upon payment of a fixed amount. But, by the Forest Reserves Act, it was provided that no patent could be given under any conditions to any lands in the forest reserves. Consequently a patent could not be given to a patentee of mineral rights in the province. This amendment provides that we may carry out the arrangement of 1890 as respects forest reserve lands just as we could previously carry it out, and as we now carry it out, as respects other lands in the railway belt.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: It means that the metals which belong to the Dominion may be transferred to the province and by the province granted to somebody for the purpose of exploitation?

Mr. MEIGHEN: May be transferred direct to the patentee of the province.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Exactly. Is not this possibly interfering with the policy which guided Parliament when it passed the Act of 1911, that is to say, to preserve the forest reserves certain restrictions are necessary as far as possible to keep the forests in a state of nature and prevent exploitation by human hands. The great tendency to-day is toward the exploitation of minerals in forests, and, in consequence, valuable quantities of timber land are destroyed every year. Now, as I understand,