

OPPOSED PROPOSED TAX.

DEPUTATION PRESENT VIEWS TO THE MINISTER OF MINES.

Do Not Want Acreage Tax on Undeveloped Mining Lands in the Lake Superior Country—Bill Will Probably be Introduced This Week.

In speaking to a deputation which waited on him on Saturday to express opposition to the reported proposed tax on mining lands, Hon. Mr. Cochrane intimated that the revenue to be derived as a result of any such measure would be used, in part, to encourage the refining and smelting of ores in this Province. He felt that the Government would be doing something greatly in the interests of holders of mining lands if they could bring about such a condition. To him it did not seem right that Ontario ores should have to be shipped from Canada to another country for treatment. The place for that was here. To other objections to a tax on mining lands Hon. Mr. Cochrane expressed the opinion that it would be an impetus to the holders of them to get to work to see if they could not be made to produce mineral wealth, or if they were not fit for agricultural purposes.

The deputation was chiefly composed of legal and other gentlemen who on behalf of clients or themselves are largely interested in mining. They spoke particularly in respect to mineral lands in the Lake Superior country, considerable areas of which had been patented many years ago. In addition to the purchase price, these lands pay a tax of one cent per acre, and some of them, being now in organized municipalities, also pay such municipal taxes as mining lands are subjected to. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, it was stated, had been spent in development work on these lands, the net result simply being in most instances positive proof that no minerals existed. In other cases there had been some discoveries, but owing to the distance of the lands from railways it had been impossible to work the deposits, the transportation of supplies being far too costly. Several suggestions were advanced by spokesmen of the deputation; one being that if it was decided to impose a flat rate acreage tax on mining lands, productive or otherwise, it should not go into effect in the territory they referred to for a fixed number of years. Another was that as the proprietors would not in many cases be able to pay the proposed taxes, the action of the Government would practically amount to confiscation. The Government should, therefore, buy back the lands at the purchase price plus the taxes at the rate now existing. It was also urged that the only proper basis of taxation was ability to pay, and for that reason they contended that there should be no taxation except on actual production.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane met all these contentions quite frankly, and although the discussion was quite good-natured, he seemed to be firmly of opinion that there should be an acreage tax on mineral lands wherever situated on which no work is being done.

Among those on the deputation were Messrs. J. F. Hellmuth, K.C., Frank Hodgins, K.C., A. R. Boswell, K.C., W. W. Vickers, H. S. Mara, A. M. Wylie, Port Arthur, and Col. Hay.

At the close of a Cabinet meeting held on Saturday afternoon the Premier said, in answer to the newspapermen, that the mining taxation bill would be

admitted. There will be no admission of Edward W. Miller, organist and of sixty voices is under the direction of J. Rawsthorne Slack, baritone. The piano; Arthur B. Sanderson, tenor, and