

friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake) says, in a different manner from the other provinces which were given control of their lands at the time of confederation. It seems to me that the argument brought forward for the giving of these Crown lands to the provinces is strong and unanswerable, particularly when we find that a territory consisting of a good many thousand square miles has been given to the province of Quebec by the Dominion. Will it be said that the people of that province are any more capable of administering the Crown lands thus given them from a territory belonging to the federal government than would be the new provinces of administering the Crown lands within their own borders? That is not my opinion. I think that the people in these new provinces, except perhaps that portion which used to be the cause of considerable solicitude to the Minister of the Interior, are just as intelligent as any in any of the other provinces, and have just as much public spirit and regard for the welfare of their country. I fail to see on any ground why this distinction should be made. I fail to see why the new provinces should be deprived of the control of their own Crown lands. They have been given a sum of money in excess of what they would be entitled to according to population, and they have been given this as a sop for depriving them of their public lands and treating them as in that respect inferior to the other provinces. Had we had a splendid administration by the Department of the Interior, had there been no such scandal as the Northwest Land Company deal and others of the same sort, there might be some argument why these new provinces should not be allowed to administer their own lands, but in view of these scandals I fail to see how a case can be made out in favour of the government policy. Not only have the lands of this country been frittered away in the manner I have mentioned, but the timber has also been squandered in the same way, by being given largely to friends of the government for very small consideration. We have had the splendid timber reserves along the railway belt given away in the most corrupt manner. These are matters within the knowledge of almost every member.

Mr. INGRAM. Particularly of some.

Mr. FOWLER. Yes; and these facts dispose at once of the argument that the administration of these Crown lands would be better entrusted to the federal government than to the new provinces. I shall therefore support the amendment offered by my hon. friend from Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake). As far as the second part of this section is concerned, I consider it perfectly right. The Rocky mountain part should be under the control of the federal government; but so far as the first clause is concerned, it is my firm belief that the Crown lands within

the limits of the two provinces should be handed over to them.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. Having already stated my views as fully as I could regarding the retention of these Crown lands by the Dominion government, I shall not detain the committee at any length. But the reasons why the federal government wants to keep these lands are rapidly coming to light. One of the principal reasons, no doubt, is to maintain the large army of government officials who are up there to-day looking after the administration of these lands. Only a few evenings ago the Minister of the Interior stated that application were now in, south of township 34, for 500,000 acres of land under a close lease.

Mr. OLIVER. I said that there had been leases granted for about a million and a half, and there were further applications in for five million.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. What is the policy of the government? Are these leases going to be granted to friends of the government and refused to others? That is a burning question in that country to-day. I put the question fairly before the hon. minister the other night, and he answered that he would tell me when the proper time came. I desire to know when the proper time is coming. Applications are coming in from all quarters for closed leases in that country. Is the government going to grant large closed leases such as they granted two years ago for their own friends, covering thousands and thousands of acres of land? Or, are all parties to be placed upon an equal footing?

Mr. OLIVER. If it will ease the hon. gentleman's (Mr. M. S. McCarthy's) mind I may tell him that the fact that a gentleman has ever voted for a Liberal candidate will not debar his claims from consideration.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. That is what I charged. These lands are being retained for the purpose of being exploited by the friends of the hon. gentleman opposite. I ask again what is the policy of the government on this subject?

Mr. OLIVER. I can tell the hon. gentleman (Mr. M. S. McCarthy) that the lands are not being retained for the purpose he suggests.

Mr. M. S. McCARTHY. I have only to say to the minister that if he makes the statement in this House with the idea of belittling the southern part of that province, when he says that 1,500,000 acres of land south of township 34 are fit only for pasturage, his statement is due to ignorance or worse. The people of that country are fairly entitled to know what is the policy of this government with regard to these lands. Do they intend to continue the closed lease system? For some years past