

ior has said, is correct. Are we saying to the provinces: You have so many millions of acres of land in all, an average proportion of these we are giving to you as compensation, and we are putting a fair valuation upon the average proportion that we are giving you? That is what any gentleman from one of those provinces would think was being done, by virtue of the long detailed resolutions which, if they infer anything at all, infer an absolute and well proportioned classification as to the quantity of the lands, the proper valuation, and the proportion which should be given out of that quantity.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend is aware that in the preparation of this Bill we took the position that the government of the new provinces was not entitled of right to the lands. We took the position that the lands fairly belonged to the Dominion. At the same time we had to take into consideration the fact that the lands which were given to the older provinces, not to Manitoba, were to them a valuable asset which enabled them to carry on their business. We thought therefore, since we retained the lands, we should do as was done in Manitoba, we should give something in money in lieu of the lands. But my hon. friend knows better than I do, because he was long connected with the government which dealt with Manitoba, that Manitoba was not dealt with upon any rule which is known, at least, to the average mind. From time to time Manitoba was given some advantage, but they were always given in the absence of any principle which could be properly explained, which, so far as I know, has never been understood. When we came to discuss what would be a fair compensation --I do not like to use the word compensation in regard to this matter--

Mr. FOSTER. That is the word you have used.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I know it, still we sometimes use words when we think we might use better ones. The word 'compensation' is not a word I would like to use. At all events, what I have in my mind was this, that when we came to consider what we should give to the new provinces as an equivalent in money if we retained the lands, we had to find a basis for a calculation as to the value of the lands. As to the number of acres, we have had calculations made more than once, my former colleague, the present member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) has stated to the House that there were 50,000,000 acres of land available in the two provinces, that is to say, between the province of Manitoba and the Rocky mountains. We did not imagine that we had 50,000,000 acres immediately available for settlement, but that is the quantity which

could be disposed of apart from the homestead lands.

Mr. HAGGART. Is that apart from the homestead lands?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is outside the homestead lands. We calculate we have 50,000,000 outside the homestead lands which can be disposed of; at all events, that is the way I understood the calculation. With regard to the price of these lands, I think it is not possible to ascertain a fair average value by what has been realized by railway companies in the disposal of their lands, and what has been realized by the disposal of school lands by auction, or what has been realized by the Hudson Bay Company for their lands. The Hudson Bay Company chose its own time to sell its lands, at a time when it thought the best price could be obtained. The school lands are all disposed of at auction, they are not disposed of indiscriminately, they are put up at auction always with a view of realizing the best possible price. Then with regard to lands disposed of by the railway company, we know that they always dispose of them with a view of getting the best price, and they dispose of only such lands as have increased in value by railway facilities. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lake) will admit that we could not take the prices obtained for their lands by these various companies, as a fair average price for the whole 50,000,000 acres. That would be no fair basis of comparison. But we thought we would have a fair basis of comparison in the transaction that took place some years ago between the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the government when, if I remember right, the government redeemed 6,000,000 acres of their land at a price, I think, of \$1.50.

Mr. FOSTER. They realized \$10,000,000.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That was the basis of our calculation. There were some 6,000,000 odd acres of land disposed of by the company to the government, and the price realized I think was \$1.50 an acre. It is possible that to-day the lands in question might be sold for a little higher, or possibly they would not bring as much. But since that time we have undertaken national obligations, and we count upon this land as an asset to help us meet those obligations. I do not pretend to say that we could dispose of all the lands we have to-day at \$1.50, I think we ought to realize more. The government will not dispose of them immediately, they will be sold from time to time as the country develops, and I daresay they will bring to the government enough revenue to enable us to meet the liabilities we have undertaken. But, I believe that if you put it as a fair business,