

from these lands. Argument was made and the policy distinctly announced by the ex-Minister of the Interior in the session of 1903. He said: We have 25,000,000 acres of land which will be readily disposed of, and we can sell them within ten years at \$3 per acre, and in that way we can reimburse the country for more than its expenditure in connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

Mr. OLIVER. I do not dispute the statement, but I do dispute the inference. If the leader of the opposition will make a comparison between the statement said to have been made by the ex-Minister of the Interior in regard to the sale of these lands at a low fixed price and the suggestion made a few minutes ago by the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) that the lands should be treated on the same principle as our school lands which are held for the purpose of squeezing the last cent of value out of them, he will realize the difference between the two policies and systems of administration; the difference between the idea held by the people out west and the idea so persistently advanced by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House in this discussion. In one case the idea was that these lands should pass out of the hands of the Dominion and into the hands of the settlers. I think that idea was specifically stated in the remarks of the Minister of the Interior; certainly, it was the intention; and, inasmuch as that hon. gentleman mentioned a fixed price, whether that price should be adhered to or not, it was clear that the idea was absolutely contrary to the idea suggested by the hon. member for North Toronto.

Mr. FOSTER. Will the hon. gentleman allow me a word? When the ex-Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) sold for \$1.50 an acre, part in money and part in scrip, a very large acreage to the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, did he do it with the idea that the land should pass at the cheapest rate possible from the hands of the government into the hands of the settler? Let my hon. friend say from the information that he has whether one single acre of this land which passed for \$1.50 of money and scrip to that land company, has gone into the hands of the actual settler at less than from \$5 to \$10 per acre. There is a practical proof of what my hon. friend's predecessor thought with reference to it. Add to that the proposition explained by my hon. friend that 50,000,000 acres could be set apart and sold in order to reimburse the cost of the Grand Trunk Pacific, and you have both the proposition and actual thing carried out, and both are against my hon. friend.

Mr. OLIVER. I do not gather that the sale to the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company is at all against the proposition I laid

down. The sale was made to the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company at a certain price per acre, as the hon. gentleman has said, a low fixed price per acre, on condition of the lands being settled. The company which got the lands at that low price were under contract, it was a condition of purchase, that they should place settlers upon the lands, and neither he nor I have any means of knowing to what expense the company was compelled to go in securing these settlers and placing them on those lands. The essential point is to get settlers on the land, and that is a point which our hon. friends opposite seem to miss. The land as land has no value, it is worth nothing, it is the use of the land that gives the value, it is the requirement of that land by the people that gives it value. That land may stand from now till doomsday, as it has stood from the creation until now, without being of any value unless settlers go upon it and make it of value by producing wealth out of it.

Mr. FOSTER. My hon. friend must not carry that argument too far, because the instance I cited is directly against them. The land does have value given to it by the work of the labourer. The land has a value before the labourer has put his spade into a single foot of its soil. The land that was sold for \$1 or \$1.50 per acre had no settlers upon it, the land that was retailed out by the go-between company had no labourer's spade or plough put into it when it had increased in value from \$1.50 up to \$5 or \$10, but it was the prospective idea that by-and-by the real worker would come in and would raise enough from it to enable him to pay the \$10 that came to the go-between. But my hon. friend has no basis, financial or otherwise for saying that there is no value in the land until the settler goes to work on it, there is.

Mr. OLIVER. Of course I do not wish to enter into an academic discussion with my hon. friend at this moment on the question between us. He must know that that particular land was not worth anything until it came into the possession of the worker. The value that it had was because of somebody having worked the land and having demonstrated that it could be worked to advantage. The ultimate increase in the value of the land does depend, not necessarily on that particular piece of land being worked, but on the possibility of its production being demonstrated by the work on land there or thereabouts, and the demand for that land that comes by reason of the presence of the settlers. The company who bought that land had to go to the expense of advertising it and of bringing settlers there. I do not know, and he does not know what the expense was, and there is where our hon. friend's opposite altogether miss the point of how the value of land comes about. Our lands lay there for many years after they came under