

Northwest Territories or not, if the basis which I have just suggested, is the one on which the government is proceeding. And, if the government is proceeding on any other basis, we would like to know it. They have not suggested any other basis, except that my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) declares that it is only a question of what the Territories require. But the government, by their resolution, declare that it is only a question of doing justice to the Northwest Territories in respect of lands which we hold as trustees for them. And, notwithstanding the declaration of the Minister of the Interior, we shall hold them to that until we have some announcement from the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to the contrary. Here is a declaration on the part of the government that we should compensate them for these lands on the basis of \$37,500,000 for each province, or \$75,000,000 in all. What possible justification is there for departing from the figures that were given by the Minister of the Interior, when as we must suppose; he was endeavouring to place before the House and the country the fair value of these lands, a fair estimate of the number of acres and also a fair statement of the resources this country as a whole possessed for the purpose mentioned in these lands?

Mr. FIELDING. I think that the argument of the hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) is somewhat defective so far as touching the particular point he speaks of is concerned. He spoke of the value of these lands ten years hence. If they become more valuable than now, it will largely be because of the large expenditure by this government, and it would not be right to compensate the provinces—if compensate is the word to be used, though I do not admit that it is in view of this amendment—that compensation should not be on the value ten years hence, when that value will be to a large extent the result of the expenditure of money by the people of the Dominion. I think the hon. gentleman will see that his argument does not reach the conclusion to which he has pointed.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. To what expenditure does the hon. minister refer?

Mr. FIELDING. Expenditure in the construction of railways, for instance; and the vast sums of money which we are expending, and will continue to expend, on immigration; and all the various expenditures which will flow from the national treasury to the benefit of that Territory, and which, owing to the nature of the country, must be on a liberal scale.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I have never understood that the National Transcontinental

Railway was to be built solely for the purposes of the Northwest Territories. On the contrary I have understood the position of the government and its supporters to be that this railway was to promote the general interests of Canada, the eastern provinces as well as the Northwest Territories. Therefore, I cannot see any very good reason for charging the whole of that expenditure against the Northwest Territories. That does not seem to me a fair basis. So far as the value of the land is concerned, it is true that the ex-Minister of the Interior says that in ten years these lands will be worth \$3 per acre. But he does not venture to say that they are not worth more than \$1.50 per acre at present. And the hon. gentleman (Mr. Fielding) will notice by the terms of the resolution that the value upon which we are to pay the Territories in ten years from this time is not raised to \$3 per acre, but remains for all time at \$1.50 per acre on 25,000,000 acres. According to the former view of my hon. friend from Western Assiniboia—and it seems very much borne out by the terms of the resolution—it is not so much a matter of compensating the people of the Northwest for the lands as endeavouring to do simple justice to them in giving the entire benefit of their lands. At least, that position ought to be adopted if the government accedes to the view which the hon. gentleman put forward at the time. It might be provided that, for the first ten years, an advance would be made to those for whom we hold these lands in trust. But the mere fact that you are only making an advance for ten years is no reason, in my judgment why you should not do full justice to them at some future time. With their increased population and their increased necessities we should certainly bring the value of the land up to the figure which the ex-Minister of the Interior himself has suggested.

Mr. SCOTT. It is my opinion that the resolutions before the House do substantially meet the views I expressed four years ago, and three years, and two years ago. Even if that were not the case, even if the hon. gentleman's interpretation were the one to be accepted, in his statement that it must then be impossible for me to accept the resolutions, he is setting up a standard for me which he does not allow to govern himself on all occasions. If I recollect aright, on the 22nd of March last, he put on the record in parliament in the form of a resolution, his view that full autonomy should be granted to the Northwest Territories—

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Hear, hear.

Mr. SCOTT—full autonomy with regard to schools and also with regard to lands.