

Oliver) with reference to the value being placed on the lands that are already held by the other provinces, I would call attention to the remarks made by the hon. gentleman on the 24th of March last. He said :

I find that the province of Ontario, with a population of two and a quarter millions in the year 1902, derived from its lands \$1,499,000.

We find, by the arrangement that has been made with these Northwest provinces, that when their population reaches that of the province of Ontario, they will be deriving two and a quarter millions in respect of their lands.

He was leading us, as I understand, to believe that the provinces were receiving two and a quarter millions for their lands whereas Ontario was only receiving \$1,499,000. If he is basing his argument on the value of the lands in that Territory, I think he would find that his statement is not in accordance with his present argument.

Mr. OLIVER. What is the objection ?

Mr. FOSTER. Some explanation may have been given when I was not in the House, and if so I would not like to call upon the Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding) to give it again. But I do not remember having read it. There must have been some method by which these figures, as to either the quantity of land or the valuation of the lands, were arrived at. I would like to know from the Finance Minister what that method was. Take, for instance one province. Would the Minister of Finance tell us by what method he and the government arrived at the quantity of lands that would be fair to allow in comparison with the total area of the province. And then I would like to know by what method he and they arrived at the conclusion that a fair valuation of the land would be \$1.50 per acre. I do not imagine for a moment that the government assembled around the Council Board would arrive at a conclusion as to the quantity without first going into the quantity of lands in the province. Nor would they reach a conclusion as to the value to be allowed without taking the different grades of lands and values of those different grades. Having done this, I should think they would come to the conclusion that, if they did not give the lands in toto to the province, they ought to make a compensation of a certain number of acres. Then they would make an estimate, based upon the best data possible, of the average value of these lands. Now, if we had the method by which the government arrived at these figures, we should be in a position to reach our own conclusions as to the justness of the grant and the fairness of the valuation. If something like that was not done, if the government made no investigation and took no trouble in regard to the matter ; if they simply came to the conclusion, as the Minister of the Interior hinted, that a certain amount was necessary for a revenue for these provinces

Mr. ARMSTRONG.

in lieu of these lands, and, without calculation of any kind, put it at a round figure 25,000,000 acres and, without estimating the value of the different kinds of lands, wheat lands, grazing lands and the rest and averaging the whole simply jumped at a valuation, of course that is a wholly different case. If they simply said : We want to give them \$37,500,000, and we will play at valuation and play at estimates of area, and will put a formula before parliament very dignified and very satisfying to the eye, but merely an excuse—and under that will give \$37,500,000 in lieu of lands, then why all this pother and bother about the quantities of lands or valuation per acre ? If all they wished to do—and it is the only thing the Minister of the Interior intimates they sought to do—was to give \$37,500,000, what is the use of this arrangement of \$1.50 upon 25,000,000 acres of land ?

Now the province of Saskatchewan has either a right to all these lands or it has a right in compensation to a certain proportion of its lands at a fair valuation ; or if you are not going to take the lands into account at all, it has a right to ask you to say what amount of money you will give it per year, simply that and nothing more. What is the use of going to Saskatchewan or to the other province and telling the people : We have given you 25,000,000 acres of your land, which is a certain proportion of all the lands in Saskatchewan, at a good average valuation of \$1.50 per acre, if you are doing nothing of the kind ? If 25,000,000 acres is a fair proportion of all the lands in the province of Saskatchewan, that is to be, get at the proper valuation of them, not a rule-of-thumb valuation, and give the province which is to be, the value of those lands on what is a fair valuation. Now is \$1.50 a fair valuation of the average lands in the province of Saskatchewan ? That is what I think the Minister of Finance is bound to ascertain, unless he admits what the Minister of the Interior intimated—but of course the Minister of the Interior was not there at the time, and he may just have thought that that would be the easiest way by which a minister could accomplish such an object, and therefore there is nothing in it but the idea of giving so much money and making an arbitrary basis upon which it was to be given. But I do not like to think that the government has come down to this parliament, under show of making an elaborate calculation, and given the proper proportion of lands in the province to the province, and given them without a valuation which is fair and just in commutation. I would like to hear from the Minister of Finance as to whether he is right in this respect, or as to whether the Minister of the Interior is right, as to whether my first supposition is right, or as to whether the supposition that one would take from what the Minister of the Inter-