

cost more than the province would ever be able to make out of them. That is the reason which was given for a great many years. But a change came over the scene in 1885, or a little previous to that, when it was discovered that the lands had an exceptional value. The Prime Minister, in stating his main reason for withholding the public lands from the new provinces, quoted from an Order in Council of the year 1885; but he did not quote the main reasons which were given in that Order in Council by the Conservative administration of the day for withholding the public lands from the province of Manitoba. He only quoted a consideration which 'had much weight' with the sub-committee after three or four of the main reasons had been stated, that consideration being that it would be advisable in the interests of immigration that the Dominion government should continue to hold the public lands in its own hands. Now, to my mind that is a very unsound argument. The Immigration Department is for the whole of Canada—for all the provinces, and for no one more than another. It may happen, and it does happen, that the province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are the most attractive field for immigrants to-day; but to-morrow it may be Ontario or Quebec or British Columbia; we do not know. As a matter of fact, we find that the Immigration Department is working hard in the interest of the other provinces of the Dominion, just as hard, I imagine, as it is for the Northwest Territories. Here is an extract from the report of the Minister of the Interior with reference to the immigration into Ontario:

In order to relieve to some extent the situation in the province of Ontario, where there has been such a great dearth of labour, the department took steps early in the year to direct its agents in the old land to divert as much as possible the farm labouring classes to that province. The result of this has been that some thousands of labourers who perhaps would have gone to western Canada were induced to remain over in Ontario, all of whom were immediately distributed by the Ontario bureau amongst farmers throughout the country. It has been found almost impracticable to divert much of the foreign population, even of the farm labouring classes, to eastern provinces, many of these people coming through to meet friends, and, moreover, nearly all of the farm labourers from the continent appear to be desirous of securing lands for themselves first.

That shows that the Immigration Department is working for the province of Ontario, and for the other provinces of Canada just as well as for the Northwest Territories; and I do not think it can be said that any very great inconvenience is caused to that department by the fact that the lands of the province of Ontario are in the hands of the government of that province. Farm labourers and small tenant farmers

are certainly the very best class of immigrants, and I have no objection to their being diverted to Ontario to get their first experience of Canada. But if the lands of the Northwest Territories are to be retained in the hands of the Dominion government, simply because it wants to apply its immigration policy to the best advantage, then it should not divert from those lands any immigration which is coming out. But I am sure that is a position that would be resented by every other province of Canada. Every immigrant who comes into this country is an asset to the whole Dominion.

I consider that the difficulties which have been raised are entirely visionary. If the new provinces were possessed of their own public lands, they would be the most interested of all in encouraging immigration to come within their bounds. We should have three local governments all hard at work trying to bring in immigration, and all competing with each other for immigration. More than that, the local government, thoroughly understanding the local conditions, would be able to make matters so much more comfortable for the incoming settlers that they would produce a more contented class of settlers; and the old saying still holds good, that the contented settler is the best immigration agent, and the quotation which I have just made from the report of the Minister of the Interior goes to prove it. These people coming in are, a great many of them, coming to their friends, from whom they have heard of their great prosperity and who have encouraged them to come to the country. I contend that the moral if not the legal right of the new provinces to the ownership of their public lands has practically been conceded by the government. I do not think any doubt has been seriously raised upon this subject. This question, as well as the whole question of provincial powers, was very clearly stated by the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) some four years ago. My hon. friend sent me a copy of his speech on that occasion. I concurred then with him in the position he took, and am very glad to put on record the second time some of the opinions which he expressed in that speech, and which are very similar to those I hold myself. On the 25th March, 1901, he said:

I may say that what the people will expect and what I think they have a right to expect—and this is really the point to which I wish to call the attention of parliament—is that they will be dealt with on exactly the same basis as the originally confederated provinces dealt with themselves, and be put in exactly the same position as that occupied by the originally confederated provinces. If the proper principle is adhered to, if the principle of absolute equality is observed, if parliament places the new provinces upon an equitable basis, the local government will be given a proper grant for government, also the per capita grant, and be given anything that may be shown to be due as the debt allowance. And they will