

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I make use of the expression advisedly. These men at Saskatoon had horses and oxen loaded upon them at exorbitant prices. I took the precaution to warn the government to send their agents among these people so as to protect them, but instead these agents stood in and got a rake off and allowed these extortionate practices to be done.

Mr. LAMONT. One of the chief men at Saskatoon who unloaded horses and oxen on the settlers was John Barr, a brother of J. M. Barr, the leader of the colonists.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. I have not the least doubt of it.

Mr. W. J. ROCHE. I think that the question asked by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle was very a-propos, and that was as to the division of the district of Keewatin. The First Minister, with his usual agility, has talked all around that question without attempting to give a satisfactory reply. He saw the rather embarrassing position in which he was placed when he declared his intention of dividing that territory in the manner indicated by his speech in introducing the Bill. Then he claimed that the province of Ontario, and even the province of Quebec, and also the new province of Saskatchewan, had equal rights to the extension of their territory to the shore of Hudson bay with the province of Manitoba. So, if he means to have a division of the district of Keewatin, he will have to hand over the lands to these various provinces, or he will have to refuse them their lands. If he hands over to Ontario the portion of Keewatin that he thinks Ontario is entitled to, and vests that domain in the province of Ontario, he must adopt a similar policy in regard to that portion to be given to Manitoba also that portion to be added to Saskatchewan. If he refuses to hand over the domain to Ontario, that province will be claiming financial compensation for these lands. Moreover, you will have the unique spectacle of Ontario owning all its public domain save the portion of Keewatin reserved by the Dominion government. If you hand over to Manitoba the domain in that portion of the territory given to that province, you will have Manitoba not owning the 73,000 miles comprised within its present boundaries, but owning that portion of Keewatin over which the province will extend to Hudson bay. And you will have a similar state of affairs in Saskatchewan. So, I do not wonder that the right hon. gentleman was not able to make a satisfactory reply. He attempted a little jocularity at the expense of the hon. member for South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) and accused that hon. gentleman of exhibiting the new found zeal of the convert, quoting expressions of that hon. gentleman of a year ago on which he put a different construction from the view expressed to-day. We are not obliged to go back a year to show how inconsistent the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier)

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

has been on this question of refusing to hand over the public domain to the new provinces. My mind reverted to the speech made by the right hon. gentleman on the 21st of February introducing this Bill. At page 1518 of 'Hansard' he argued that the lands should be retained by the Dominion government. He said:

It is conceivable that if these lands were given to the new provinces, the policy of either one of them might differ from ours and clash with our efforts to increase immigration.

That was the principal cause he assigned. Then he goes on:

It might possibly render these efforts nugatory. For instance, if either of the new provinces, under the strain of financial difficulty, were to abolish the free homesteads, which have proved so beneficial and so great an inducement to immigration, one can readily understand what a great blow that would be to our immigration policy. Or if the price of government lands for sale were to be increased over the present very moderate rate, that would also be another blow to that policy.

To-night he tells us that the provincial government, in order to get ready money, might sell the lands at an inferior price—quite a contrary argument to the one he used on introducing the Bill. At that time he told us that, under the pressure of financial stringency, the provinces might increase the price of the land so much as to discourage immigration; to-night he states they might give the land away practically for nothing. The leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) asked the Prime Minister if he could not give us some estimate of the value of the lands within the area of the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the right hon. gentleman stated that he was not in a position to give that estimate. I have here a book which was circulated among the people of the Northwest and to which the right hon. gentleman must have given his consent. This was the hand-book of the Liberal party circulated among the people of the Northwest with a view to securing their votes in the last election. It is called 'Hand-book of Canadian politics illustrative of the progressive administration of the Liberal government.' 'The story of a government that does things.' Chapter 18 is headed, 'What the Hon. Clifford Sifton has accomplished.' In the course of this chapter it is stated:

Manitoba, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta possess an area of 238,000,000 acres of land. . . . About 18,000,000 acres have been given in free homesteads, but after deducting this and an additional 50,000,000 for lakes, rivers, bad lands, &c., there remains of government lands enough to provide 160-acre farms for at least 800,000 farmers.

That would make a total of 128,000,000 acres. And we know that the total area of Manitoba is so little that the Manitoba land included in this estimate cannot make a very large figure. The hand-book goes on: