

settlers, but by reason of the land which is given away. The tendency of the provincial government naturally would be to direct settlement so as to increase the value of the land already occupied, just as the tendency of the Dominion government is to secure settlers on the lands which they have to give away. The process of increasing the value of lands can be carried on independently to a limited degree, but as any man who has ever lived in that country must know, it is the spread of settlement over the still vacant areas that is really the main cause of the increase of land values. If for any reason attention is withdrawn from this effort to spread settlers over the yet unoccupied territory, the tendency to increase in the value of land now occupied, would be retarded to the extent to which the effort was relaxed.

I think the experience of the past few years has shown clearly, in the first place, that the results in regard to the settlement of the lands in the Territories have been satisfactory. Those results to the whole Dominion have been so very definite and so very satisfactory, that we cannot afford—it would not be sound public policy—to change a system which has resulted so satisfactorily, in the face of the experience which we have in regard to the provinces which have the ownership of their lands. It may be said, and it is quite true, that a government sitting here in Ottawa might at some future time reverse the present policy of free lands in the Territories. If that were done, it would reverse the argument which I have made here to-day. Certainly the government that was in power until 1896 did not have the policy of the land for the people which has prevailed since; but I believe that the people of this country, through the experience of the past few years, have arrived at a definite understanding that the policy of free lands is the policy for the well-being of this Dominion, and I can scarcely believe that even a change of government would bring about a change of that policy. The people of the Dominion at large have become so well aware of the benefits resulting from the rapid settlement of the Northwest through the giving of its lands free to settlers, that I cannot imagine any Dominion government reversing that policy. But a provincial government cramped for money, as all our provincial governments are, deriving no direct revenue from the influx of settlers, but carrying an increased burden by reason of every ship load of immigrants that arrived would be likely to adopt a policy of administration of the lands for revenue, which would be injurious in the ultimate end of the province itself, and still more to the whole Dominion.

Mr. SPROULE. The experience of the province of Ontario is the very reverse of that. In that province the land is not only

sold at a very small figure, at one time as low as twenty cents an acre, but there are free grants as well.

Mr. OLIVER. That was not the point I raised. The point was that the government of Ontario has not made expenditures for the purpose of promoting immigration in order to settle up those lands.

Mr. INGRAM. Yes, it has an agent at Liverpool now, and has had for years.

Mr. OLIVER. Even if the hon. gentlemen hold that the province of Ontario has an immigration service, the facts show that that service does not produce the results that have been produced by the Dominion service, and I take for granted that there is some reason for that inherent in the case, and not in any lack of desire on the part of the Ontario government to secure the settlement of the lands. It cannot afford to go to the expense that the Dominion government can.

Mr. SPROULE. The great reason why Ontario does not get the bulk of the immigrants whom it otherwise would get is the fact that so much prairie land has been opened up for settlement, on which people prefer to go and get immediate returns rather than go on timber land and clear it up. I want to put myself on record as being in favour of the provinces having their lands. We have only one instance in the Dominion of a province not owning its land, that is, Manitoba, and we have had complaints from that province ever since it has been a province, and applications for the right to control its lands. In view of that experience, it seems to me that we should avoid committing the same blunder in connection with the new provinces which we are establishing. The hon. gentleman says the Dominion has a greater interest in securing settlers than the province has. I do not think it has, and I do not see why it should have. It is said that the province would not have as much interest as the Dominion, because it would not have free grant lands; but all the land in the Northwest is not free grant. While a portion of it is free, as is the case in Ontario, we still reserve a portion that may be sold to recoup the public treasury for the outlay. The Dominion is following very much the same system as is being followed by some of the provinces. We gave the province of Manitoba a portion of the swamp lands; it applied for more, and complained because we withheld what we did. If it is a grievance to the people of Manitoba that the Dominion withheld the public lands, it must be equally so to the people of the Northwest Territories. I see by a return which has been brought down that there are 938,813,210 acres of land in the Territories not yet taken up. A large portion of that is not fit for settlement; but as settlement goes on and improvements take place, and

Mr. OLIVER.