

A Liberal government in Ontario gave away three great franchises in connection with the development of power, and two days before the election they doubled the capacity of water that one of these companies was allowed to take, and in that reckless way the property of the people was handed out to exploiters. The Conservative government in Ontario is trying to remedy this. I believe, with the member for Qu'Appelle, that there would be a more satisfactory administration of the public lands by the local authorities than by the central authority at Ottawa. The new Minister of the Interior has come into the House fresh from the west, and I would like him to tell us whether the opinion of the west is, as it was formerly, that the public domain shall be handed over to the new provinces. We are told here by one or two members from the west that their views have changed, but I am quite certain that the views of the people of the west in this respect have not changed.

Mr. OLIVER. All of us who come from the west are anxious to have this Bill passed, and if we do not reply to every assertion that is made from the other side, it is rather because we wish to forward business than that we are particular about how gentlemen on the other side care to represent or misrepresent the position. By this time we have fairly well arrived at a conclusion as to what is the position of the opposition in regard to this question. They appear to be unanimous in the view that the lands of the west shall be treated as a source of revenue, and that the west should depend upon its lands for its revenue. That is the view that prevailed when the Conservatives were in power, and every member on the other side has reiterated that principle today. I need not remind the House or the country that under that policy, not only was the land not a source of revenue, but it was a source of direct loss; it did not pay the cost of administration. It was not until the principle of the land for the people, the principle of free land to the settler, was adopted that the price of land in the Northwest increased. It is because of the policy of the land for the settler that land in the west has attained its present value. Just so sure as the policy of the land for revenue is adopted again, just so sure the result will be as before. With the experience we have had, it is late in the day for us to make the mistake of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. It is the free settlement of land that makes the balance of it valuable, and just so soon as you place the burden of support of provincial government upon the revenue derived from the sale of the land, just so soon you will depreciate the value of the land and injure the province and injure the country. I am fresh from the west, and I can tell my hon. friend (Mr. W. F. Maclean) that I discussed this question with

the people I have the honour to represent. He knows the result. This subject was persistently placed before the people, and the provisions of the Bill in this regard were, so far as I could learn, unanimously endorsed by the people. We do not want a policy of the land for revenue; we want a policy of the land for the people, and the members who parade the fact that certain lands in the Northwest are to-day worth certain money are only giving evidence of the desirability, of the necessity for, and of the success of, the policy of giving away the land to anybody who will take it and use it. The idea that you could derive from the whole land of the country the same value that you can for a small part of it when you are using the greater part of it for the purpose of attracting settlers, is an idea that is absolutely absurd, and one which I think will not be approved of by even our western friends on the other side of the House.

As to the ability of the people of the Northwest to manage their own affairs their land or other matters, no question is raised by any person, but there is a difference in point of view as I had occasion to remark at another time. The provincial government, which circumstances compel to derive ultimately the larger part of its revenue from the disposal of its lands, is under necessity and stress of an absolutely different administration of its lands from the Dominion government which makes its money out of those lands by their settlement. As I said on a previous occasion, the Dominion government can afford, and well afford, not only to give the lands away, but to spend a million dollars a year in attracting settlement to those lands and still make lots of money for that country and for every province in the Dominion by doing so. It need scarcely be stated to the members of this House that the provincial government whose interest in those lands is from their sale and rental is not in a position to give them away, is not in a position to spend money in order to attract settlers to them, and give them the lands for nothing; as is the Dominion government which derives its revenues from the customs duties on the increased trade due to the presence of these settlers in Canada. There is no question about the ability of the provincial government or the Dominion government; it is a question of the circumstances under which each government carries on its affairs, and again I say in answer to the hon. gentleman's question, we in the west appreciate thoroughly the necessity from every point of view of those lands being administered as far as possible in the interests of settlement and not in the interests of revenue; it is for that reason that we want those lands to remain under the administration of the Dominion which is able to administer them and still make a profit, and we are glad to receive a cash allowance in