

In addition to this, the millions of acres of land disposed of to railways and land companies is, of course, also available for settlement. There is, however, an additional tract of rich grain-growing lands yet untouched—

Where?

—in the unorganized district of Athabaska, containing over 160,000,000 acres. After making allowance for water and lands unsuited for agriculture, Athabaska will give fully 100,000,000 acres as the future homes of practically another 800,000 settlers.

So, we have this district of Athabaska which is divided between the two new provinces almost equally, containing at least 100,000,000 acres of rich grain-growing land. Yet, in the measure now before us the government are only allowing 50,000,000 acres to the two provinces at \$1.50 per acre. This hand-book also refers to an article by Dr. Wm. Saunders, of the Experimental Farm, published in the April, 1900, number of the 'Canadian Magazine.' Speaking of Dr. Saunders, the hand-book says that 'he has given some estimate of the available land in the Northwest Territories for that branch of farming' that is, grain-growing. And he shows that Manitoba, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta contain 171,000,000 acres, and he estimates:

That there are within the limits referred to, after making allowance for land unfit for agriculture, about 171,000,000 acres suitable for cultivation, by which is meant land of such degree of fertility as to admit of profitable farming.

The right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) and his friends, last fall had sufficient information to enable them to issue this hand-book showing the enormous tract of land available for settlement. But to-day they plead ignorance of the quantity of land in that country. To serve their own ends the government were willing to tell of 'what the hon. Clifford Sifton has accomplished,' to speak as though he had discovered this land and had made it profitable for agriculture. Yet, now that it suits their purposes they are minimizing the extent as well as the value of that land. Otherwise, we would not have this mere pittance—for so it is by comparison,—of \$37,500,000 allowed to each province for its domain. I am not surprised that the right hon. gentleman Sir Wilfrid Laurier is asking for time to bring down figures that will meet the objections of this side of the House. But, considering the figures he and his friends gave in this hand-book issued last fall, it seems clear that they are giving the new provinces too little in lieu of their public domain. But we have been told: What is the use of discussing the quantity of land and the value per acre in view of the new resolution which wipes that out of consideration and gives a lump sum?

But we know that it is on this basis that they are arriving at a lump sum. And why have they wiped out that \$1.50 an acre and the 25,000,000 acres for each province? What object have they in doing so? That

has not been explained. But if you look up the speech of the ex-Minister of the Interior, you will find the secret. He pointed out that if we placed the land at \$1.50 an acre and the quantity at 25,000,000 acres, in the future these provinces might be coming back and demanding greater assistance from this parliament, because they might say that the lands were more valuable than the \$1.50 they had been allowed and that there was a greater number of acres. So in accordance with the views of the ex-Minister of the Interior, and in order to provide against this contingency, they have simply excluded the \$1.50 and the total number of acres from this Bill. And we see the hon. gentlemen from the Northwest Territories on the other side of the House assenting to a proposition that will prevent the other provinces from coming back to ask for an increase in the future, and at the same time not providing for sufficient money to run their government for all time to come so as to avoid the necessity for them to appeal to this Dominion for more assistance.

Now, the member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Scott) has shown himself to be an expert as a political acrobat. In fact all the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House from the west have taken a position unfavourable to the new provinces being given the ownership of these lands. The member for West-Assiniboia made one of the strongest speeches against that view when he first came into the House, and to-day he has changed his view, and, with all the zeal of a new convert, he is one of the strongest opponents of handing over the lands to the provinces and is making argument after argument to show with how much greater advantage this Dominion government can manage those lands than they could be managed by the new provinces. If I desired to take up the time of the committee, I could read excerpts from his speeches that would show how different his attitude upon this question used to be from what it is to-day. The present Minister of the Interior, or rather the would-be Minister of the Interior, the member for West Assiniboia, has boldly asked: Why didn't you go up to Edmonton and challenge the opinion of the people during the recent election if you believed the people of the west are opposed to the Dominion retaining those lands? The hon. gentleman was very brave; he was not nearly so satisfied as he tried to make us believe. The hon. gentleman was quite willing himself to swallow the original clause 16 in the Autonomy Bill for the sake of getting the plum of the portfolio of the Interior. But to-day he says that we were afraid to go up to the constituency of Edmonton and challenge public opinion. Why did not the government select himself for the portfolio, the man they had marked out for it? Because they were afraid to open up a constituency where the average Canadian elector resides, and to take an expression of opinion from men who under-