

We ought to assimilate them as much as possible to, or in some other way, make them quite as favourable as those of our neighbours in the United States. We have a country fully as good as their's, and in many respects better. Our land, taken as a whole, is superior, but still we must give as much encouragement to emigrants to settle on it as the Americans do for the filling up of their territory. So far, we have certainly not done so. Indeed, I think that our land policy, from the very commencement, has been a mistake. We commenced by allowing settlers to go in upon our lands, in the first instance, before any surveys were made, entirely overlooking that one-twentieth of the Fertile Belt belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, and so complicated matters very greatly, instead of having surveys made as fast as possible for the comparatively small number of settlers of the first few years. In short, there has been a lack of knowledge on the part of the Government and in the House generally, with regard to the North-West, and it is only very lately that our people have woken up and found that we do possess a very fine country in the North-West. The hon. member for South Perth (Mr. Trow) has stated that, while there is a great deal of good land in that region, it is not all good. It certainly is not all good; but still I think it is saying a great deal when we assert, and this we can safely do, that, as a whole it is not only equal to, but better than the land of the great Province of Ontario. But while we locked up great portions of the land along the railway line, by asking for it \$6 an acre, and until the recent change in the regulations permitting no settlement by homesteads in the first belt, on the other side of the Line settlers could get good lands in any portion of their railway reserves for—as the Premier admitted, \$2.50 an acre—that is, after having taken a free homestead of 160 acres they could preempt another quarter-section at \$2.50 per acre, and also get the lands of the railway companies on very favourable terms. In the United States they really favour actual settlement, while we, by our present policy, would be very apt to lock up a great portion of the country and place it in the hands of speculators. It certainly is not wise to allow the land to go into the hands of large companies and speculators. It has been said

the Hudson's Bay Company have a large portion of good land. True, but that is no reason for multiplying such companies. The Hudson's Bay Company's acquisition or retention of its lands you could not prevent. They owned all the lands at the time of the transfer, and you had to make the best possible terms with that Company. The Hudson's Bay Company may safely be trusted to act with the greatest liberality in disposing of these lands, but I have always thought it would have been infinitely better had the Canadian Government—and I wish this to apply to both Governments—extinguished the landed rights of that Company altogether, and purchased its lands for the public, when it had an opportunity of doing so. It would be quite impossible to get the lands from the Company at present on anything like the terms for which they could have been obtained, under the arrangement I refer to, and no one can question that it would have been a great advantage to have had the lands in the hands of the Government. We know the evil results of locking up lands in other countries, and why should we repeat them in our North-West? There are companies asking for charters to hold lands in that country. They could get Government lands for about \$1 an acre, and under the present regulations would have to pay but 10c. an acre in the first instance, the payments being spread over ten years. I think nothing could be more injudicious, or more hostile to the interest of this country than such transactions. I understand the hon. Premier has stated his belief that, within ten years we shall have half a million people in that country, and that its lands will have returned to the Treasury something like \$75,000,000.

MR. BLAKE: \$40,000,000, actually collected, and \$75,000,000 to be due within the ten years.

MR. SMITH (Selkirk): I sincerely hope and trust, as I am sure every hon. gentleman does, that this may be our experience. But we shall find that even in the favourable sections of the United States, the progress has been nothing like what the right hon. gentleman expects. While we may look forward to a large influx of settlers, we can hardly hope it will be so great as to give us half