

greater progress in the last five years than in any other like period of time in its history.

LAND ADMINISTRATION

"It is not true, as critics say, that there has been a certain amount of laxity in the administration of the law with reference to the sale of land through agents, by which the amount of these sales has been augmented. This is a matter I propose to deal with a little later. In the meantime, I would ask the House for a few minutes to direct their attention to our general land administration, and more particularly to land sales.

"I may say that during the ten years beginning in 1905 and ending at the close of 1914, the Governments of the day have consented to the sale of 5,222,508 acres; that the amount received under the general heading of land sales in cash during this period has amounted to over \$12,301,426, and as I have already stated, the receipt and expenditure of this money has enabled us to give a greater impetus to the progress of the country than in any other equal period of time.

"If we would deal for a moment with the history of the land boom, it makes very interesting reading, and I think that your conclusion will be that in this land boom the number of parcels of land purchased in this way has been dependent upon the caprice of the public rather than any statutes that have been enacted. And I may say that the whole history of our land administration during the time this Government has held office has been marked by one restriction after another, both in the enactments on the statute book and in the administration of the land in a departmental way.

"In the early stages when times were good, and it was possible for speculators to purchase land from the Government and re-sell at a profit, the amount of money which stood on the books by way of arrears of payments was not sufficient to attract the attention of anybody. Later on, when, following a policy of placing reserves upon desirable land in the interests of homesteaders and pre-emptors, the man who wished to purchase land was forced away from the more accessible land and had to take less desirable portions, naturally the arrears began to mount up, until they attracted a very considerable amount of attention. I would direct your attention to a few figures in connection with this matter, and you will realize what the amount was. In 1905 the sales amounted to 50,000 acres; in 1906 they rose to 225,000 acres. During these years our lands were classified into three classes, bringing prices from \$5 an acre for the first class, \$2.50 an acre for the second class, to \$1 an acre for the third class. This would properly be said