

been the true system, and that speculative sales, whether to colonization companies or to great farming companies, or to individuals, otherwise than on conditions of settlement, are injurious instead of advantageous. The hon. gentleman projected—I will not say in anticipation of, but I will say shortly and conveniently before the late elections—a great system of colonization companies—a system, which, acting on what he himself described, standing where he now sits, as the “land craze of the North-West,” extended the area of that land craze. Almost everybody thought they were going to get rich at no cost to themselves, at no risk to themselves, at little investment of their own, and at somebody else’s expense; and it is said that some 314 applications for colonization companies or parties, were favorably received by the Administration. How many of them have succeeded? How many came to a head? How many of them have paid the instalments which have been called for? How large a settlement have they actually accomplished or promoted? What sort of demands have been made upon the Administration with reference to these companies, and what is the present attitude, view and opinion of the Administration as to the colonization company scheme? Sir, I can give you upon this subject a little authentic information. I hold in my hand the report of the directors of one of the colonization companies made to their shareholders on the 10th of September, 1882, and it contains these words:

“On the 15th inst., an interview was had with Sir John A. Macdonald by the President and Secretary, and Messrs. Johnson, Kingsmill and McNee, on the question of when the survey of the tract would be prosecuted, so that the operations of the Company might be proceeded with. The Minister declared that no promise of survey could be made until the first instalment was paid, and a contract entered into by the Company; that even after the instalment was paid, the time at which a surveyor would be appointed was entirely uncertain—it might be a year, or it might be more; that there was an insufficient number of surveyors available for the requirements of the Government, and they preferred employing them along the lines of railway; that, in short, we must pay the money and take the chances of a survey, as Sir John expressed it, “within the next 25 years.” Being asked if the Company would be afforded an opportunity of enquiring further into the quality of the lands before paying for them, Sir John replied that the Government could make no concessions in that direction. On the question of an extension of time for the payment of the first instalment, the Minister declared that he could hold out no hope either to our Company or to others similarly situated, as he found that these enterprises had been entered into in a merely speculative spirit, and that their effect had been to retard rather than promote the settlement of the country. He stated that he could not, of course, say in advance what would be done at the meeting of Council, which was shortly to be held, but that he intended to oppose making concessions to any Colonization Company.”

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. What company is that?

Mr. BLAKE. The Saskatchewan Forks Colonization Company.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The Saskatchewan Forks!

Mr. BLAKE. I believe that was the company in which the hon. gentleman roped in the press; for he had companies for everybody, for every class, for every creed, I believe for every denomination. There was one company for the licensed victuallers, another for the temperance people, one company for one denomination, and another for another, and the hon. gentleman gave to the press this interesting statement that I have read—but that was not before the 20th of June; that was on the 15th of September, when it was all over. I observe that a gentleman whose voice we miss in this Chamber, but whose name we shall have the opportunity of greeting yearly in the Public Accounts—I mean the new Inspector of Colonization Companies—stated the other day at a meeting, I believe, of the Canadian Pacific Railway Directors, that the only company in the North-West which had performed its obligations, was the Qu’Appelle Farming Company; and I was a little surprised at this statement, because you will recollect that the principal operations of the Qu’Appelle Farming Com-

pany of which the public have been informed, have been not the settlement of immigrants in the North-West, but the expulsion of actual settlers from its lands; and, therefore, if this be the only company of the hon. gentleman’s lot which has performed its obligations, and if the company, which was performing its obligations, was expelling, I wonder what the settling companies were doing. The truth is, that that which alone could justify the formation—I do not say of all, for some may have been formed on business principles; but any large number of the colonization companies at all, viz.: that they were about to introduce into the country immigrants from across the water who otherwise would not be got here, was not asked of them; that it was not on that basis that the scheme was carried out, and that the men who went into them—I do not say all, but the great bulk of them—expected to take advantage of the wave of settlement over the country, produced by other causes, to become middlemen, not giving any valuable consideration, but reaping a profit between the settler and the Government. Now, Sir, I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has held rigidly to his statement, which I have just read. I observe that there has been an extension of time. I observe an announcement in the papers that the last day of grace is to expire on the 28th of this month, and after that date there is to be a cancellation of those in default. But it would be interesting to know, after the roll is made up and arrangements are completed, what the actual results have been, not in the sale of lands to the speculators, but what the practical, tangible results have been in the way of placing permanent settlers on the lands of the North-West. The administration of the Land Department certainly does not possess the merit of constancy. There have been continual changes. Lands are offered for sale; the order is suspended; once again they are opened; and so forth. I have seen, and read, and heard constant complaints of the difficulty of knowing what the regulations are for the guidance of settlers at any particular time. Great difficulties have arisen—and I think it is important that later on these questions should be very fully discussed, because I presume we are only on the threshold of these difficulties—as between the Government, the companies and the settlers. You have the speculator and the homesteader; you have the *bona fide* squatter and the speculative squatter; you have those who jump claims, some for themselves, and some for speculators, companies and others; and circumstances have been stated to me of the very greatest injustice in this regard. On the whole I believe it will be found that the administration of the lands of the North-West does not redound to the credit of the Administration. These regulations and laws do require amendment, and I trust the amendments promised us in the Speech from the Throne will be improvements. I observe that the regulations regarding public lands have been changed—that a portion of the difficulties which I suggested are now recognized by the hon. gentleman, although I confess he does not seem to me by his change to remove those difficulties. I hope we shall know to what extent under the old regulations public land leases have been made and on what terms the hon. gentleman proposes to convert those leases of some of the most valuable portions of the North-West into freeholds. So with reference to timber limits, it was said that a very large proportion have up to this time been parted with, and on terms which have afforded a very fair profit to the fortunate individuals who have from time to time received the favor of grants from the Government. I will not trespass on the time of the House by touching upon the other topics of the Speech because I believe they can be more effectually dealt with when the measures come down, before passing to a point or two which I think deserve notice. I wish to say that I do not agree with the statement of the hon. member for Pictou