

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—We know unfortunately how that discretion has been exercised in the past.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—Does the hon. gentleman say that in connection with small fractional pieces of land an improper discretion has been exercised?

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I would not say as to the area.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—There may be a very large number of these small pieces, and really it is not the English practice, and it is questionable whether it is a good practice to place these before the Governor in Council. They must accept the ipse dixit of the Minister of the Interior for these small matters.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I suppose there will be hundreds of town sites in the Northwest owing to the construction of railways in the near future.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—With respect to these, there are special provisions.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Adjoining a town site there may be a fraction of a section, and that fraction may be 150 acres. The minister may not be seized with a full knowledge of it, and I think the public would have more confidence if that land could only be alienated by the Governor in Council. This would not be a town site but would be land adjoining a town site.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—You have gone ahead so fast in the Northwest that it is difficult to lay down general rules.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Therefore we should be cautious.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—I think the precautions taken by the department will ensure the public any profits to be made out of the town sites. I know the question has been carefully considered by the minister.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—This gives the minister power to dispose of frac-

Hon. Mr. SCOTT.

tional lots as he may think proper. That ought to be left to the Governor in Council.

Hon. Mr. TALBOT—I think what the minister had in view in preparing this, was to meet thousands of cases where there are small fractions of land on a river front or a lake shore that would not be sufficient for a homestead, but which could be sold to the owner of adjoining land. I know of hundreds of instances of the kind, but I do not know of any where a town site is affected.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Under section 100 of the old law, the matter is left to the Governor in Council.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—But under that provision, the value was fixed at one dollar per acre; whereas in this Bill it is increased to three dollars.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I do not know of any other department where the minister is allowed of his own motion to divest the country of public property.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—I admit the possibility of some such cases occurring as my hon. friend speaks of, but I am inclined to think that the public will be better safeguarded on the whole by placing the responsibility where it must ultimately go, with the Minister of the Interior. My hon. friend's experience, and still more the experience of my hon. friend from Hastings, will tell him that in a case of this kind the council are in the hands of the head of the department, and placing the responsibility on the council would rather divest him of a proper sense of responsibility in dealing with such cases as we have been referring to.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I have confidence in the present minister not abusing the power. However, I have stated my objection and am prepared to let it go.

The clause was adopted.

On clause 34,

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—A very pernicious principle has been introduced by this government of leasing lands for 21 years.