

Mr. FOSTER. Are you putting it out at interest ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I suppose the Minister of Finance should have introduced this Bill, so that he could have answered that particular question as well. Now, Mr. Speaker, what do the contractors get from the Yukon country, or, if you will, from the Government, in consideration of these covenants and these undertakings on their part—five substantial and important covenants and undertakings ? They are to get 25,000 acres of land per mile, selected in blocks at least six miles by twenty-four miles in area. No block can be selected less than six miles in width by twenty-four miles in length. Of these blocks four portions will be taken and become the property of the company, and alongside of them will be an equal number of alternate lots which remain the property of the Crown.

Mr. HAGGART. If the hon. gentleman will excuse me, I do not clearly understand. Every block the contractors get must consist of a block six miles by twenty-four miles, which they own themselves ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Of which they own one-half. There must be eight sections in each block selected. The moment a stake is put down, a base line is started and a selection is made. The company cannot get from the area they select more than four blocks of three miles by six for themselves, alongside of which and located alternately between which are blocks of the same size which remain the property of the Government ; so that each area selected consists of a block not less than six miles one way by twenty-four miles another way. Now, the selections are to be made subject to conditions and reservations to which I will refer later, and which go to show that the utmost care and caution has been exercised by the Government ; so that if the company should happen, as the result of the efforts they may make in prospecting those lands, to strike upon a valuable gold area, they cannot absorb or monopolize it all, because the Government blocks lie immediately alongside of those of their own which may contain these valuable mineral deposits. There is another important reservation, that if it happens that the company asks to have an area staked out which covers or includes a mining claim or claims which have been already located and recorded by any free miner, such a claim is at once excluded from the selection. It does not pass with the grant, but continues to be the property of the free miner and remains outside of the title which passes ultimately to the company.

Mr. FOSTER. Who selects the base line ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. The base line, as will be seen

Mr. BLAIR.

when I come to discuss the clauses of the contract, works almost automatically, except that the starting point is to be made at the request or selection of the company. The company may send out their prospectors, and they may conclude that they have struck an area which is likely to be profitable. Then they indicate to the proper officer of the department the place where they want the stake put down. The stake is there put down, if it does not include a watercourse or is outside of the provision of the contract which refers to watercourses. The stake being placed, the line called the base line must be run from it in a direct course either due north and south or due east and west, and that base line runs down the centre of the tract with three miles on each side of it, together making the six miles which constitutes the length, as it were, of the blocks, and the next three miles constitute the width of the block which the Government owns, and so on along this base line until at least eight blocks have been run off. There may be more ; there is no limitation on the number. The company may ask that there may be two or any multiple of two added to the eight blocks, and they may add blocks on each side annexed to their own area up to a limited number. But there cannot be less than twenty-four miles by six miles laid out in any one selection. In addition to the reservation which I have spoken of with regard to the free miners' claims, we reserve from the power of selection the waters of certain important rivers which are mentioned in the contract, and certain important lakes which are also mentioned there. We reserve the beds and the banks up to high water mark, and twenty-five feet beyond it, on each side of all the rivers named in the contract, and the lakes which are also named.

Mr. FOSTER. And the company does not get those ?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. It cannot get those ; it cannot acquire any rights in respect of those ; so that, on all the great lakes and rivers in that important country, which cover and include a very considerable portion of what we believe will be the placer-mining of the country, we have absolutely precluded the company from acquiring any interest whatever.

Mr. FOSTER. Does my hon. friend mean by a watercourse—because this is very essential—a dry bed in most seasons of the year, such as Bonanza Creek and Eldorado Creek, which are now being staked out and worked as placer claims ? Does he mean that those courses which are at some period of the year watercourses, though not navigable, are rivers, so that the company cannot get them ?