

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) whether, having given further consideration to my inquiry of yesterday, he is able to make any more definite statement as to what further legislation may be expected this session?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No, I am sorry I cannot. I will give a statement to my hon. friend on Monday morning.

SUPPLY—PEACE RIVER COLONIZATION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY.

Mr. FIELDING moved that the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES (Victoria and Haliburton). There is a matter which I wish to bring under the notice of the House and especially under the notice of the Minister of the Interior. Early in the session I moved for two returns in connection with the handing over to a certain company of some lands in the Peace River district. The first return was brought down on the 15th of January and the second on the 22nd of February of this year. From these returns it transpires that there was given to this company sixteen townships (odd and even-numbered sections) containing 576 square miles of land, or an area twenty-four miles by twenty-four miles—an area as large as that of an ordinary county in the provinces of Ontario or Quebec—and containing 368,640 acres, or more than three times the quantity of land that was handed over to the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company. The Saskatchewan Land Company received its lands in alternate sections, had to do certain settlement duties upon them, had to pay a certain price, and somewhat similar conditions were imposed on this colonization scheme to which I refer, but these conditions have not been complied with. Now, I understand that negotiations are being carried on by this company to float these lands in the United States, in England, France, Belgium, and other countries of Europe where they think they can get capital. This company is asking \$11 per acre for these lands retail and they are endeavouring to float them into a company at \$7 an acre wholesale. The parent company has handed the lands over under agreement for \$4 per acre to the company which now has an option upon them. The title of the first company is the Peace River Land and Colonization Development Company, and the terms of agreement respecting these lands were:

First. That fifty settlers be located within three years from October 20, 1904; one hundred settlers within five years thereafter, and a

total of 1,200 within twenty years from the commencement of the survey.

The order in council granting these lands to this company is dated the 27th of July, 1900. It does not say that there must be one hundred settlers additional within five years, leaving it in doubt whether it means one hundred settlers or fifty settlers more. It says that they are to locate 1,200 settlers within twenty years from the commencement of the survey, but it does not say when the survey is to commence.

Second. That the company may be given the privilege of purchasing at any time within five years from October 20, 1903, and after the first fifty settlers are placed a portion not exceeding one-third of the total tract at \$1 per acre; one-fourth in cash; and after each succeeding five years one-fifth of the lands remaining available.

Third. That the settlers located within the tract be given free homesteads.

On the 4th of January, 1908, some weeks after I had given notice for this return, the president of the company was notified to file within thirty days satisfactory evidence of the action taken by the company to fulfil the terms of the agreement under the two orders in council mentioned, or to show cause why such agreement should not be cancelled. No lands were sold and therefore no price per acre was realized from these transactions. Negotiations were conducted with the following firms and individuals: Rainville, Archambault, & Gervais, advocates; Beique, Turgeon & Beique, advocates; L. P. Brodeur, Rev. J. A. Lemieux, A. H. Kent, and A. T. Thompson. It says:

The regulations governing the securing of lands in the Peace River valley are like all similar regulations based upon the Dominion Lands Act, a copy of which is attached hereto.

I may point out that the concession granted to this company is much larger than some of the principalities of Europe, and it has been handed over by the government on most favourable terms to the company. The first order in council was renewed on the 8th of July, 1904, and although I moved for copies of these orders in council they have not yet been brought down. Now, every one knows that since the year 1900 there has been a great influx of settlers into the Northwest, and we have heard portrayed in eloquent terms the fertility of the soil and the beauty of the climate, but notwithstanding all that, in 1906 nothing had been done by this company to fulfil the terms of the agreement and in place of putting settlers upon the land they were endeavouring to hawk this land around and to secure American and European capital to float a company at no doubt a profit to themselves. On June 26, 1906, I find the first communication in relation to the

Mr. OLIVER.