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y of aiding rail- ants was brought the great grant regard to which ere added, I was eminently necessary, that e North-West; able that that we were pro- he burdens in- terprises; yet, e consequence s to avoid the ul, and parti- of land along' d be the first pecially when grant sections, e by payment. od in which n and an ex- of land in the vantage would of their power ow that their d not complain ough that their hat they raised l a legal right on condition est point that rket would, it had been sale- were raised and sale and untry was in-

jured. The settlement of the country is effected very satisfactorily indeed under those conditions which allow two or three members of a family or two or three close and intimate friends to go together. One of the great difficulties in a new country like the North-West is the separation of the settlers, at the best, from the aggregates of population. That difficulty they must encounter until towns grow; that difficulty is made greater in the North-West by reason of the large areas which we allow for the individual settler, and which make him in a sense remote even from his immediate neighbor. But that difficulty is intensified when under our principles of settlement there is going to be settlement in the first instance only in alternate sections; when you have a set of sections for sale along the railway, and a free grant set of sections, alternating with each other. It is obvious, except in the case of an immigrant who has considerable capital, that a settler will be almost driven to say "the capital I have must be put into fencing and buildings and into implements and breaking the land, and I cannot afford to pay a price for the land;" and, therefore, you have these inevitable difficulties to some extent intensified, even by any system under which there will be a check on free settlement. We cannot avoid that, we cannot eat our cake and have our cake. If it is necessary to make these railway grants to secure the construction of roads, we must do so on the least disadvantageous terms to the public consistent with reasonable advantage to the railways. When these grants were proposed and submitted to the House, I submitted a motion, which will be found recorded in the Journals of the House, for a vote was taken upon it, that the grants should be made only on condition that the areas granted of agricultural lands (I did not speak of land with mill privileges or station grounds or town sites, or other special values, but only of ordinary agricultural lands) should be open for sale on reasonable conditions for actual settlement and in reasonable areas, at a price not exceeding a maximum to be fixed. My object was to ensure that a man who goes out to that country to hunt for land, and takes a map on which he finds the alternate sections indicated, would know that if he has found a choice section on railway lands, he would be as certain to get that section if it had not been entered before, on coming back to the railway office and paying the stipulated price, as he would be certain on coming back to the Government office of getting the free grant which is adjoining it. He could thus choose his free grant, and for his neighbor or friend with whom he wished to live in proximity he could choose the railway land. By this means you would provide against the lock up of land which the hon. member for Muskoka (Mr. O'Brien) has referred to, and which may be a very serious evil. You would make this land as freely open for settlement as the Government lands, except on the addition of having to pay a certain sum. In the old times when I had an opportunity of taking an interest in these matters—an interest which the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) doubts a little sometimes, but which I can assure him, however misdirected was, at any rate, very sincere—I received complaints from persons who had been in that country and who said: "We went here and there and everywhere, and on coming back, having made one or

more selections, we found either that the land was a railway grant and we could not get it, or it was held by the Canadian Pacific Railway under that blanket grant of theirs, or it was in the hands of speculators, and we came back disheartened." Your system ought to be one which would leave open on plain terms to actual settlement, irrespective of the will of the railway company, the agricultural lands, out of which, notwithstanding your arrangement, the railway company shall derive a reasonable price. Name a maximum price, and let the lands, subject to the payment of that maximum by reasonable instalments, be open to settlement in reasonable areas. If you do that you diminish the difficulties inseparable from this question, to the greatest possible extent, and, if so minimised, the advantages of securing the construction of a railway are greater than the disadvantages of causing the partial lock up of lands necessary for its construction. I do fear, that if there comes again a time of considerable immigration to the North-West, and of considerable hunting for land, the reckless manner in which we have given, and are giving, these grants will prove in the future, as it has proved in the past, to be a greater obstacle to the settlement of that country than might exist if a different system were adopted. It is all very well to repeat the arguments with which I was met in former years, namely, that it is in the interest of the railway company to sell, and that we may be quite sure they will be glad to set a low price on the land. We have heard that before, and we have had an example of the short-sighted policy in the period of inflation to which I have referred, which prevented settlement just because it was thought a little more money might be obtained later on. I do not want these lands to be used for speculation, either by the individual buyers or by the railway company itself. I want them to be charged, in favor of the railway company, with a reasonably fair price for the settlers to pay; and while subject to that charge, that they shall be as free and open to the settlers as if they were Government free grants of lands.

On resolution 1,

Mr. BLAKE. To the difficulties that beset the consideration of this question, the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Ross) has added other alleged difficulties which do not in fact exist. He has spoken about coal lands, timber lands, and lands in the immediate vicinity of stations and town sites being included. What is the suggestion I made to the House? I excluded lands of this character; I limited my suggestion to ordinary agricultural lands. Lands which the company might have a right to hold as having special values, which did not come within this denomination—lands having a special value, such as coal lands, timber lands, town sites or expected town sites, could, by a very easy arrangement, be withdrawn from the operation of the regulation which would apply, by arrangements to be prescribed by the Government, under the general direction of Parliament, a maximum to ordinary agricultural lands alone. I admit that there are some real difficulties to which the hon. gentleman has alluded, but which also he has exaggerated. He has supposed that my suggestion necessarily applied one maximum to all rail-