

government, when the right of the Indians was surrendered, was not able to turn that right over to the Grand Trunk Pacific at as good a price, or at anything like as good a price, in the interest of the Indians, as it would have been able to secure had the British Columbia government, at the request of the Dominion, waived its reversionary interest. The Indians are out, I suppose, many thousands of dollars, and the British Columbia government is not advantaged to the extent of one cent, because, until the last of these Indians is dead, the reversionary interest of the province of British Columbia does not take effect.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Does the minister happen to know how many Indians there are on the reserve?

Mr. OLIVER. Six hundred or seven hundred, I think? I am at a loss to see how my hon. friend attaches the transaction of the British Columbia government in regard to the land which was unquestionably its property, to this transaction between the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Indians. The Grand Trunk Pacific approached the British Columbia government; it dealt with the British Columbia government. We have no knowledge of that transaction and no interest in it in any way, shape or manner. But when the Grand Trunk Pacific approached the Indians, or approached this government as the guardian of the Indians, with a view to acquiring the portion of the reserve mentioned, the government was acting in a manner entirely becoming, as the guardian of the Indians, and without in any degree trespassing on the rights of the province of British Columbia or in any way making to the Grand Trunk Pacific any concession whatever. My hon. friend laid some stress on the idea—or has attempted to bring out the idea—that these transactions had some relations to a gift by the government to the Grand Trunk Pacific. The Grand Trunk Pacific acquires that land—if it does acquire it—by paying the price for which the Indians asked, being, I think, some seven or eight times as much as the British Columbia government got for the land it sold to the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Grand Trunk Pacific has not received any concession in this matter; it pays for all it gets. It is true that, in years to come, as the terminus of a great transcontinental railway system, as a magnificent port on the Pacific ocean, the proposed city of Prince Rupert, will, no doubt, have land values extremely high. My hon. friends may say that we sacrificed the interests of the Indians by selling the land at its present prices, when, a few years hence, it will be worth hundreds or thousands of dollars an acre. But it is because the Grand Trunk Pacific will be built that the increase will take place, as we hope indeed that it will take place; and we do not consider that we are injuring the interests of the country or of the Indians by

facilitating the establishment of the terminus of this great transcontinental railway system on the Pacific, at a point at which, in the opinion of the promoters of the scheme, is the best.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The hon. minister will remember that he promised on Friday last, to give me some information, which he has omitted to do.

Mr. OLIVER. Yes, I have it here. The hon. gentleman (Mr. R. L. Borden) asked three questions. The first was:

Is the land which is referred to immediately adjacent to the land comprised in the grant of the province of British Columbia?

The answer to this question is: The Indian Department has no official information as to the location of the land sold by the province of British Columbia, but it is believed to adjoin the Metlakatla reserve. The second question is:

Has the consent of the Indians to this surrender been given?

The consent of the Indians to the surrender of some 13,000 acres of land has been given. And the third question is:

What is the actual position of these negotiations at the present time?

The Indians have signed the surrender of this land to the government, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company has expressed its willingness to purchase at the price, but the transfer to the railway company has not been issued.

Mr. FOSTER. What is the price?

Mr. OLIVER. The price is \$7.50 an acre.

Mr. A. A. STOCKTON (St. John City and County). My hon. friend the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) appears to think that great credit is due to the government of which he is a member on account of its generosity in this matter. Well, it is very easy for an individual to be generous at the expense of somebody else; and it appears to me, that, in this case, the generosity of the Dominion government will be at the expense of the province of British Columbia.

The Minister of the Interior leaves it to be inferred rather than makes the direct statement, that British Columbia has probably not been so careful about its interests as the Dominion government has been of the interests committed to its charge in the disposal of these lands. Now, the province of British Columbia seeks to have the terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway within its territory. It negotiates with the railway company and disposes of 10,000 acres of its lands, as has been pointed out by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), for \$1 an acre and one-quarter of the lots that may be set apart after the land has been given. The government of the province was looking after the interest of British Columbia. In consequence of the terminus