

*Mr. O'Meara:* One hundred and eighty acres as against twenty acres. These figures are based upon official records. It is, however, only fair to concede that many of the reserves set apart in British Columbia are of considerably greater value per acre than are those set apart in the other Provinces mentioned. Our fifth reason is that while Article 13 makes reference to the old Colonial policy under which tracts of land were set apart, that policy must be taken to have been abandoned, and now the only test that can be applied is what is the practice in Canada, a part of which British Columbia has become. Our sixth reason is that the adoption of our proposal would very greatly simplify the reserve situation from a public point of view. This matter was, in February, 1909, discussed in the House of Commons. Upon that occasion honourable members representing British Columbia pointed out the great importance of opening up many of these reserves to settlement. In reply the then Minister of Indian Affairs made a statement which I quote from Hansard:

"Mr. Oliver: The question my honourable friend mentions has been under consideration. But preliminary to any action being taken upon that question it was felt by this Government that it was necessary, first, to know what the rights of the Indians were, which rights were the subject of dispute between this Government and the Government of British Columbia. The Provincial Government took the position that the Indians had no right except the right of occupation. The Government which is the trustee and guardian of the Indians could not admit that proposition and could not go into any discussion as to whether the Indians had too much or too little land until it was decided whether they had any rights or not. That is the question that it is the desire of this Government to have settled by a higher authority. It is something more than a year ago that the proposition was made by this Government to British Columbia that there should be a submission of this question as to what right or title the Indians had. Up to the present time the Government of the Province has not agreed to that and therefore no progress has been made."