

settlement of our vacant land; and I would propose to test the same by the actual figures and by our experience in that new portion of this Province which is now being opened up by the construction of three new lines of railway—the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Pacific and Great Eastern and the Canadian Northern. These are being constructed through the northern section of the Province, and their total length will be about 1,200 miles. I take it you will agree with me that these areas—that these lands which lie the closest to the lines of the railways in question—will naturally be the first selected, either by a purchaser or under the pre-emption clauses. I think you will agree with me that if you take an area of a distance of three miles on each side of the railway, you will be including land contiguous to these lines of railway. I would ask you to do so in this case. Three miles on each side of the railway line would form an area contiguous to the railway, making a belt 1,200 miles long and six miles wide; that would give us 4,500,000 acres contiguous to the railway. My figures of 1,200 miles may not agree with the time tables of the Grand Trunk Pacific, but allowance must be made for departures from the straight line in railway construction.

“Now, this 4,500,000 acres comprise the lands which our critics say have been sold and tipped off to friends of the Government.

“Our total sales in ten years amount to 5,250,000 acres, but of this total area sold only 847,783 acres lie within the railway belt I have spoken to you about just now, so that the great bulk of the lands sold are not contiguous to the railway lines, and their sale will have little effect on the immediate settlement of the northern land.

RESERVATIONS FOR PRE-EMPTORS

“When I used the figures 847,000 acres I referred to all classes of sales, those under the old administration of the Land Act, as well as the Coal Mines Act and the South African War Land Grant Act, and a large area of this land which was located under the scrip issued in 1903 and 1904 was in this railway belt that I have mentioned. We have surveyed about 2,000,000 acres of the total area of this railway belt, well on to half of that total area; we have issued pre-emptions in it to 2,400 pre-emptors. We have surveyed in addition to the lands already held by pre-emptors 375,000 acres, which are now available for pre-emption, and we have remaining unsurveyed 2,500,000 acres, the greater portion of which is absolutely reserved for pre-emptors and would make homes for 15,000 people. The balance of the land is made up by university land grants and also timber licenses.