

FACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

Timber and Mining Policy of the Government.

HOW COAL HAS BEEN CHEAPENED

In the Northwest by the Government's Course—An Insight into the Timber Regulations.

No subject has been more persistently misrepresented by the Opposition than the policy of the Government in respect to the timber, grazing and mineral resources of Manitoba and the Northwest. A few facts may, therefore, be stated with respect to that policy. Take first the question of

THE DISPOSAL OF TIMBER LANDS.

Up to 1874 the Dominion Lands act provided that licenses to cut timber on Dominion lands should be put up to competition either by tender or auction and granted to the highest bidder. The lease to be for a period of twenty-one years. Ground rent, \$2 per square mile. Royalty, 5 per cent. on sales. Saw mill to be erected. In 1874, the first session under Mr. Mackenzie's Government, provision was made so that twenty-one years' leases to cut timber in unsurveyed territory could be granted without public competition, and the erection of a mill in connection with timber berths in unsurveyed territory might be dispensed with if considered expedient by the minister. The act of 1878, introduced by Sir John Macdonald, when he resumed office, was practically the same, except that it provided for yearly licenses to cut timber on surveyed or unsurveyed lands. By regulation the ground rent was increased to \$5. Royalty, 5 per cent. on sales, as before; and not to exceed fifty square miles. The act of 1883 did away with twenty-one years' leases, and provided that a yearly license might be granted to any person who was the sole applicant for it, but that in cases where there was more than one applicant competition should be invited amongst the several applicants, or the public invited to compete, as the Governor-in-Council might decide. This act also provided for the erection of a mill in connection with all berths, whether in surveyed or unsurveyed territory. An order-in-council, passed in 1885, provided that all timber berths in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories should be disposed of by public competition; and by the regulations governing the disposal of timber lands within the railway belt in British Columbia all licenses east of the 120th meridian are disposed of by public competition, and west of that meridian on certain other conditions which are similar in most respects to those enforced by the provincial Government. In every case the persons to whom licenses were authorized to be issued were required to survey the limit at their own cost before getting the license, and to erect a mill capable of cutting ten thousand feet, board measure, of lumber in twelve hours. It will thus be seen that

THE REGULATIONS WERE MUCH MORE STRINGENT under the Conservative than under the Liberal Government. The action of the Government in respect of timber within what is known as the disputed territory has been dealt with in another paper. The following information has relation to timber berths outside of the "disputed territory," and covers the period from the 18th October, 1878, to the 31st December, 1886: There were 481 orders-in-council passed authorizing the issue of yearly licenses, forty-seven of them after competition. Under these

orders, however, only sixty-nine licenses were issued, the other 392 applicants not having complied with the prescribed conditions. Of the sixty-nine persons to whom licenses were issued, only thirty-nine ever cut any timber, the others not having erected mills as required by the regulations. The Government has received by way of rental paid under licenses \$58,240.88. There has been received under orders-in-council by way of advanced rental and where no licenses were ever issued, \$21,023.42; this sum having been paid by persons who, not having complied with the regulations, were never in a position to cut a stick of timber. There was received on account of dues on these yearly licenses the sum of \$69,950.44. In addition to these licenses, three twenty-one year leases were issued under orders-in-council and five twenty-one year leases for berths sold at public auction. There was received by way of rental for these \$5,204.77 and for dues \$18,780.93. It was the policy that where two or more persons applied for a limit to offer it to competition, the person offering the highest sum by way of bonus getting the limit. In many cases persons competed, paid the bonus, and then, having failed in the conditions, never received the license, thus forfeiting the money they had paid. So in some cases persons paid the bonus, made the survey, obtained the license, but, failing to erect a mill, never cut any timber. In that case, also, the amount paid was "writ" to the Crown. The following is:

A STATEMENT OF THE BONUSES RECEIVED:

On yearly licenses.....	\$46,735.75
On twenty-one year leases.....	\$7,373.75
On orders in council, no license having been issued.....	28,773.75
Total.....	\$82,883.25

Of these bonuses, no less than \$46,144.68 was paid for licenses issued, but under which no timber was cut, mills not having been erected; and \$26,523.79 was paid as bonuses for leases under which no timber has been cut, besides the \$22,773.75 paid where only orders in council passed and where in consequence of failure to fulfil conditions no licenses were issued. So THAT, AS WELL AS ORDERS, NO LESS THAN \$94,442.22 WAS PAID BY WAY OF BONUS BY PERSONS WHO HAVE NEVER CUT A STICK OF TIMBER UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE ADMITTED THAT THE ACQUISITION OF SO LARGE A SUM, BECAUSE OF THE NON-FULFILLMENT OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT WAS A STRANGE WAY OF "GETTING THE FRIENDS OF THE GOVERNMENT!"

A large number of permits were issued. Settlers in the Northwest are entitled to cut from Crown lands a certain quantity of timber for purposes of settlement, and for this they must obtain a free permit. If they require more timber than is fixed by the regulations, they get a permit under which they have to pay dues. Then a number of permits were issued during the construction of the Canadian Pacific and other railways, for ties, etc. The following is a statement of the permits issued and the dues collected under them:—

Settlers' free permits issued, about.....	5,181
Permits subject to dues, about.....	2,392
Permits for which a bonus had been received.....	61
Permits issued for cutting lumber, shingles & timber up to 1st March, 1886, about.....	79
Permits for cutting railway ties, telegraph poles and fence posts up to 1st March, 1886, about.....	219
Permits issued for cutting cordwood, fence rails, etc., up to 1st March, 1886, about.....	1,742
Permits issued for cutting house timber up to 1st March, 1886, about.....	349
Dues paid under permit, about.....	\$86,400

The total amount received by the Govern-

ment up to the 31st October, 1886, on account of timber rents, bonuses and dues, was \$541,655.25, of which only the small sum of \$7,020 was collected during the five years that Mr. Mackenzie was in office, during which time important timber limits were granted without competition to friends of the Government. The policy pursued by the present Government has, therefore, resulted in a large amount being received by the Government; it has been carried out impartially, no one having ventured to charge that a friend of the Government ever received any consideration not open to its bitterest opponent, nor that the regulations have ever been departed from in the interest of party friends of the Government. The policy has, moreover, resulted in a large reduction in the price of timber to the settlers in Manitoba and the Northwest.

GRAZING LANDS.

The policy of the Government in respect of grazing leases has also been challenged, but it is not open to successful attack. The district of Alberta comprises some of the finest grazing lands on the continent. These the Government have utilised by granting leases to persons desiring to stock them. The terms of the leases for more than a year past have been that the lessee shall pay a rental of two cents an acre, that he shall within three years put one head of cattle to each ten acres within his lease, and that the area leased shall be open to homestead and pre-emption entry, the land thus entered upon being *ipse facto* withdrawn from the lease. The result has been as follows:—The Government has received by way of rental up to 31st October, 1886, \$107,248.88; there are at this moment about 100,000 head of cattle, besides large numbers of horses and sheep, in the district of Alberta. As a result of having this large number of cattle in the country, the recent contracts for beef supply for the Indians and Mounted Police will show a saving in the three years of \$125,000 as compared with the sums paid under the last three years' contracts. It is estimated that the cost of looking after these cattle will reach \$2 a head, involving an expenditure within the territory for this purpose alone of \$200,000 a year. No sensible man can doubt that this policy is a wise one, eminently in the interests of the country.

COAL LANDS.

The policy formerly was to lease coal lands and charge a royalty upon the output of the mines. This has been changed, and for some time past the policy has been to sell the coal lands right out, bituminous coal land at \$10 an acre and the anthracite lands, situated in the mountains, at \$12.50. The amount received for coal lands is \$42,538.82, but the advantage to the people far exceeds this, the price of coal, by the development of these coal mines, having been reduced to a little more than one-third of its former price. Having regard to the importance of a good supply of comparatively cheap fuel in that country, the importance of this cannot be denied. In connection with all these resources of our great Northwest, the Government is in a position to court the fullest investigation, and it has challenged, and the challenge remains unaccepted, any one to name a case where favor was shown to any one on the ground of his political opinions, in connection with either the timber, the grazing leases, or the coal land policy of the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald.