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such an air of mystery over some of our statements. On page 18 of his speech, Mr. Bowser makes an apparently successful attempt to rebut our statement that "about 90 per cent of the available agricultural lands of this province have been alienated from the people." He asserts that "over 50 per cent of the estimated agricultural land in this province still belongs to the Crown." But what on earth has the "estimated" agricultural land got to do with the question? We are talking about land suitable and "available" for agriculture. The Dominion census returns give 22,618,000 acres as the total area possible of cultivation in the province (laughter), but how much of that is "available" or "accessible" today is a very different question. (Applause.) And we must not forget that Mr. Bowser repeatedly claims that lands not yet Crown-granted, even though they are sold, are still in possession of the Crown. Therefore his talk about 50 per cent of the "estimated" agricultural land still being held by the Crown is simply evading and beclouding the whole issue. Throughout the whole speech this practice of dodging from one set of figures or ideas to another is constantly in evidence. (Applause.) It may deceive the general public but not the man who knows the facts. Our statement that 90 per cent. of the "available agricultural land" has been alienated from the people still holds good, for Mr. Bowser has deliberately avoided the issue. (Loud applause.)

Tremendous Land-Grabbing.

Then he speaks of the Land Act Amendment of 1907 which we maintain opened the door to the tremendous land-grabbing of the following years. Does he deny it? No. He immediately switches off by declaring that staking by agent had gone on for years before, and always had been the law, also that the Liberals said nothing about it at the time. If this had always been lawful in previous years, will Mr. Bowser kindly produce the statute permitting it? ("Hear, hear!" and applause.) If it was lawful before, why enact a special amendment in 1907 to make it legal? As to what the Liberals did or did not do at that time, Mr. Bowser and they can thresh the question out between them, but I find here in the "Journals of the Legislative Assembly" for 1907, pages 6 to 120, that this very bill was debated for three days on the second reading, two days in committee and again two days in the house. There were no less than four divisions before the bill was passed, and Mr. John Oliver has publicly stated that,

when he opposed this very amendment because it would lead to wild speculation in Crown lands, Mr. Bowser replied, "The speculator must have a chance." (Applause.)

Wholesale Speculation.

Now, I have lately discovered a rather interesting point in this very connection. I have here an extract from the "Victoria Times" of January 25th, 1912, which states that the revising commissioners of the statutes in 1911 did their work during the absence of Mr. Bowser in England, and in revising section 159 of the Land Act they so framed it that it would have effectively stopped the wholesale speculation in lands by means of these powers of attorney. But when Mr. Bowser returned he announced that "this would have to be cut out of the statutes," and later he introduced a new section, which by skilful wording allows the speculator to sell and transfer lands before he has acquired a title. Now, here is the copy of the Land Act as revised in 1911, which I obtained from the Land Office, and the new wording as changed by Mr. Bowser is pasted over the section as printed by the revising commissioners in his absence. (Laughter and applause.) I have taken the opinion of three well-known lawyers upon this point and they sustain the argument of the "Victoria Times." Mr. Bowser defends his action regarding this amendment by stating on page 20 that there was no demand for land in 1907, and it was not until some time after that the movement in land became active, also attributing to us the false statement that "the old method of securing land has been done away with." We never said so, but we do maintain that this "one-line amendment" gave full swing to a tremendous increase in staking of lands, and urged on a land-grabbing boom that had begun a year before and grew to the proportions of a wild raid on the lands of this province in the next three years. (Applause.) Mr. Ross, Minister of Lands, gives in the "Journals" of 1912, page 21, the areas of land sold in each year from 1905 to 1911 inclusive. Here it is, and this proves that the applications to purchase land in 1906 were 450 per cent. more than in 1905. But after the amendment of 1907 the real exploitation began. We have shown in our pamphlet how 2,274,560 acres were staked in the next three years by 117 men. But Mr. Bowser denounces us because, according to him (on page 27) "there was only 929,000 acres for which records were issued." He does not say what he