

country under the sun such a proposal as to hand over an immense block of mineral lands in the way these hon. gentlemen are proposing to hand over these lands. There are only two cases in the legislation of British Columbia where I have been able to find precious metals have passed at all to railway companies. In granting aid to a railway, on the very same route as this from Glenora to Teslin Lake, there is a grant of aid in the British Columbia statute-book of 5,000 acres per mile on each side of the railway in alternate blocks, and precious metals are entirely reserved. There is no right or privilege given with regard to precious metals at all. There is another Act, and this stands out alone of its character in the statute-book of British Columbia, as far as my investigation has gone—and I have gone over the statutes with a good deal of care—there is what is known as the Cassiar Central Railway aid to extend from the head of the Stickine River to the Dease River in the northern part of British Columbia, and there it is proposed to give a lease of land to this company for 35 years, and there is a process by which the lands are to be selected, and precious metals do pass in that contract, but that is the only one in which they pass. But what are the restrictions in connection with it? They are these: that any free miner notwithstanding the grant of these lands to the company, can go in and locate and work and secure a mine upon any of these lands, with a further provision by which the company may go in as a partner with him, and they can buy him out or sell to him, but it is provided that the free miner shall have every right and privilege there subject to the selling out or buying out. He shall have fuel and he shall have water and every other privilege and right to carry on his business under the mining and land laws of British Columbia. In every other Act of grants of land that I can find on the statute-book of British Columbia there is this general provision:

Nothing in this Act contained shall prejudice the rights of free miners to search for, get and win precious metals and to use timber for mining purposes, subject to the mineral and land laws of the province.

There is not to be found in the legislation of British Columbia or any other legislation in Canada any parallel to this extraordinary proposition made to this House on the present occasion to grant away absolutely this

4,000,000 or 5,000,000 acres of land to this company as a consideration for building a tramway. Some of the government organs said it took their breath away when they heard it in the first place and I am not surprised because that is the impression it has upon me when I consider it at the present moment. The government say there are 80,000,000 acres of mineral lands there and what signifies 4,000,000? If it were 4,000,000 taken in one slice at the side or any part of that 80,000,000 there might be something in that excuse but even then it would be extraordinary. It is a most extraordinary contract in every way you look at it. Then there is another provision, or lack of provision, in it that is remarkable. In the Acts of the province of British Columbia, I find reservations with regard to town sites. There is here a reservation with regard to arable land. They might safely put that in. I fear there is not much arable land up there and the amount of advantage to the public from reserving the arable lands I do not think is great. But why has there been no reservation regarding town sites? In many of the Acts of British Columbia—I think in most of them—there is a provision of this kind that wherever town sites are laid out the company has to pay the government \$5 an acre for the land so laid out and the government reserve one-fourth of all these lands used for town sites. So that the government benefits by the development of the country and the laying out of towns, but there is no such provision here. The company are going to have the town sites, the minerals, the timber, everything in sight, going to have it all and there is no restriction of any kind placed upon them. My hon. friend the Secretary of State said: "oh, but 100,000 acres, if they were free to select it just wherever they liked, might pay for the whole thing." When my hon. friend made that statement he gave away the whole case, because he knows very well that while they will have to take some land which may or may not contain quartz along with the river beds which contain placer mines, they would take very good care they will run no base lines except where they find there are good tracts. They need not be in any great hurry. They can wait and watch. They will spread all the country over with their agents and officers, and they can which their time as I said before when