

the Secretary of the Interior, in response to a request for information on the part of the Senate Committee, condemns these three laws which the Quarle's Power's Bill proposes to repeal, and thoroughly demonstrates by statistics the remarkable fact that no adequate measures are now being employed by the Government to discover frauds in acquiring public lands.

This is illustrated by the fact that of 33,268 homesteads commuted in the ten years prior to 1902; only 210 were investigated. Of the 24,895 desert land proofs made during the same term of ten years, only 148 were investigated. The percentage of fraud found in the course of these limited investigations was such as to lead to the conclusion that a thorough examination of all land transactions between the Government and alleged settlers would lead to startling disclosures. In Wyoming alone eighty-five per cent. of the desert land claims investigated were found to be fraudulent.

SMALL NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS.

An official statement made by Secretary Lamar stands out in sharp contrast, for it appears that fraudulent land entries covering four hundred thousand acres were cancelled in the two years prior to 1887. It is not necessary to state that fraudulent land entries are being made as frequently now as at any previous time, for there never has been in the life of this nation a time when public lands have been taken as rapidly as now with such a small corresponding increase in the population.

Intimately connected with this public land question is the fight for a leasing bill, which has been carried on intermittently in Washington for several years. The cattlemen find it expensive to hire persons to take up homesteads for them even at the apparently low price for which these services can be obtained, as shewn by the investigations