

mined upon a policy of graduating the prices—a higher price near the railway and a lower price where land was remote. They took the responsibility of making regulations of that description; but inasmuch as that policy involved the selling of large tracts of land at much less than \$2 per acre, it was therefore in conflict with the letter, though not perhaps with the spirit, seeing the average price exceeded \$2 per acre. It being wholly in conflict with the letter of the resolution, they brought down, last session, a resolution amending the prior one, and placing the minimum rate at \$1 instead of \$2. But it was declared that this was in order to make the resolution harmonize with the land policy formulated by the Order-in-Council and laid on the Table. The purpose for which those sales were to be made, was to aid in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It is said in so many quarters that I must consider it to be true that that authority has been used for the granting of a very large tract, some hundreds of thousands of acres of land, at the minimum price, and with the real design not of aiding in the construction of the Pacific Railway, but that the price had been lessened with the design of giving a bonus towards the construction of another railway; that the purpose is to alienate those lands at \$1, they being well known to be worth far more, in order that the extra profit may inure to assisting in the construction of another railway. Now, I am not saying one word in condemnation of the policy of aiding railways in the North-West where necessary by land grants. Far from it. I am in favor of such a policy; but I am saying that a policy of that description is a policy to be decided, not by the Executive, but by Parliament; that it is for Parliament to decide whether large areas of these lands shall be alienated as a bonus to such companies. It is for Parliament to decide what railways shall be so aided. It was never contemplated by any member of this House. No suggestion was ever made that such a use should be made of the power then given as to enable large land grants practically to be given for any particular railway. I think it should be the duty of Parliament to lay down the proposition that the alienation of these lands, whether as the quantity or as to the object of the alienations, is a matter of policy, that the alienation which aids other roads, which would not have been accomplished in that particular way, except for that purpose, are things beyond the power of the Executive, and fall within our domain, at their instance, at their guidance, it may be, but still to be decided upon by us before they are acted upon by them. There is no doubt whatever, Mr. Speaker, many railways will be wanted in the North West, if the area, or anything like the area, of fertile land which is said to exist there, does exist. No doubt you might as well talk of settling up that vast area with one cart road as with one railway, although one may be sufficient for the demands of colonization at present. Therefore, I would be sorry for an instant to be supposed to be throwing out any proposal at all hostile to the building of other railways in proper directions, upon proper terms, and giving them proper grants of land in aid; but what I do maintain is, that these are questions of high policy for the decision of Parliament, and that we have not yet entrusted the Executive with the power of disposing of them. We had a nice little paragraph in the Speech last year informing us that a very large immigration was expected during the approaching session, as follows:—

The visit of two Members of the Royal Commission on the agricultural distress in the Mother Country and the favorable report of the tenant farmers . . . will, it is believed, largely increase the number of immigrants during the present year. Preparations must be made for their reception, and your attention will be speedily called to this subject.

The hon. Minister told us, not merely in general terms, but he gave the figures, and told us that 25,000 was the most moderate estimate of the number of immigrants who would be settled in the North-West during the year now closed. There is a reference to immigration this year, too, but I do not observe that congratulatory information which we might

naturally have expected, in view of the remarkable verification of these prophecies made in the Speech last year, and, during the debates in this House, as to the settlement of the North-West. There is a reference to further efforts to be made to promote, to create, that immigration which, we were told, had been already arranged for last year, and which was almost to embarrass us with the number of immigrants that were to come amongst us. The information I have received is, of course, not from official sources, and I should be very glad to be corrected at the earliest moment if it is erroneous; but I am told that if the hon. gentleman had divided his figures by three, he would have been found to be an extravagant prophet. I am told that a very small number have settled in the North-West, and that a considerable number that went in have gone out again; and I am told that the departure of several of these is due to the consummation of this same policy of utilizing the powers which we gave for the sale of lands for the construction of the Pacific Railway to the other and incidental purpose of aiding another railway. If my information is correct, at an early period of the year, shortly after the Session, settlers intending to go to one of the best sections of the North-West, the Turtle Mountain district, were warned that they could not be at all assured of the prices which would be charged for the lands. Well, that was not a very encouraging intimation. I remember some ardent speeches upon the subject of a similar intimation made last Session. I remember some hon. gentlemen denouncing an intimation of that description as calculated wholly to destroy immigration to the particular section to which it applied; but so great were the supposed advantages of this particular promised land, that, although that notice was partly effective, although it did a good deal of the good work which it was destined to do, although it did turn away a good many men from the Turtle Mountain, yet some went on despite it and took their chance of getting lands. I am told that that notice, being found not to be sufficiently effective, was followed up by another which declared, as before, that the immigrants could not be assured what prices they would have to pay, but that they could have no security, that they would be allowed to remain on the lands on any terms; and that that last notice had the desired effect, that it turned off the most of those few who had gone on in spite of the first order. I am told that, of these, considerable numbers went straight across the line, Turtle Mountain being not far from the boundary, and adjoining the State of Dakota; that they found there circumstances which enabled them to settle in that State, and that thus we lost a very considerable number of persons who might otherwise have been added to the population of the North West. It is also alleged that these notices and arrangements designed to prevent, and which resulted in preventing, the settlement of a large extent of Turtle Mountain territory, were made in order that the policy which the Executive intended to pursue, if letting these lands be sold at a large profit by some railway company or other—I do not know the name of the company—might be carried out. I think that very circumstance is a sufficient proof to us that it will be well we should thoroughly here consider what should be the principle of our land regulations, what powers we will accord to the Executive upon these subjects. We learn, from the Speech, that one Royal Commission has issued, a Commission on the subject of the Civil Service. I am afraid we are not to see this Session the Bill which was ready last Session, according to the hon. gentleman who told us towards the close of that Session, that his Civil Service Bill was ready and in print, but it being impossible to get through with it, then had reserved it with a view to its introduction this Session. The language of the Speech is no doubt slightly mixed, but mixed as it is I am afraid it means there will be no Civil Service Bill this Session. However, it is satisfactory so far, that we should be informed from the Throne of the issuance