

umbia in this House, and six of those representatives are attending to their duty in this House to-day, although an election is going on in that province at the present time.

Mr. BENNETT. They know what is coming out there.

Mr. RALPH SMITH. Of course they do, and that is the reason they do not think it necessary to go there. Reference has been made to Mr. McInnes, the late governor of the Yukon, coming to take part in British Columbia affairs, the insinuation being that he is commanded by the Dominion government to come to British Columbia to the rescue of the Liberal party. I do not think after the statement made by the member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster), which I considered at the time reasonable and fair, that the hon. member for Belleville has said anything which is pertinent to the subject under discussion. Reference was made to Judge Henderson. Why, the fact of Judge Henderson leaving the county court bench of British Columbia to enter the electoral campaign, was due solely to the demand of public sentiment for a man of high character and ability to enter political life. I submit that when gentlemen are drawn from honourable positions at the request of an intelligent public opinion in order that they may devote their talents to public business, it shows a very commendable spirit on the part of the public.

On the question at issue, there are simply two principles. Some time ago, as has been explained by my hon. friend the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Templeman), a bargain was made with the British Columbia government, not by the Grand Trunk Pacific, but by private individuals having access to the offices of the British Columbia government and who thus became possessed of certain important, special information. These individuals, having made a bargain with the provincial government, began to negotiate for the sale and transfer of these public lands to the Grand Trunk Pacific, as the result of which negotiations we have been told they profited to the extent of \$40,000 in cash—\$10,000 going to the province and \$30,000 to themselves. They sold to the Grand Trunk Pacific, 1,000 acres of provincial land, thus acquired, adjacent to the Crown lands of which the province is the possessor to-day. Personally, I have never considered that a provincial bargain for the sale of lands at \$1 an acre for railway purposes, to assist a national enterprise,—the price always paid for Crown lands under the system of land improvements—was an unreasonable proposition. But the complaint I have to make is that instead of the provincial government handling its own property, in the interest of its own people, and negotiating itself with the company in the public interest, it placed these lands in the hands of private individuals

for their benefit. I do not know that that is a subject for debate in this House, and I had no disposition to say a word about it, but we are compelled, since this discussion has come up, to make a contrast between the transaction entered into by the Dominion government with regard to the Indian lands now in question and that entered into by the provincial authorities with regard to its public lands. The principle in each case is exactly the same. The lands were situated in exactly the same position, and it seems to me that this government, from a simple business standpoint, when considering the importance of helping the Grand Trunk Pacific to acquire terminals on the Pacific coast, could not fail to take into consideration the manner in which the provincial government had, for the very same purpose, administered its lands. And if, as business men, this government knew that the government of British Columbia sold at \$1 an acre its Crown lands—lands just as important, lands adjacent to and connected with the Indian reserve—it would be very difficult for them to conceive that the public would not be content to get \$7.50 per acre for Indian lands, sold for the very same purpose, and at the same time reserving whatever reversionary right the province has in them. That is the business proposition we are discussing, and it is that which the people of British Columbia will have in mind when discussing the matter. If the Dominion government could get \$7.50 per acre for Indian lands, why did not the McBride government get the same price for its Crown lands for the very same purpose? I do not think that the provincial political issue is in question in this matter. But I think that the precedent set by that province in the sale of its lands—lands in the very same position—at \$1 an acre, is a good reason why this government should, in order to help the same enterprise, sell at \$7.50 Indian lands and reserve at the same time all the rights of the province.

Hon. A. B. AYLESWORTH (Minister of Justice). I should not have taken any part in this debate if it had not, in my opinion, departed altogether from the lines of argument which one might have expected would be followed in a discussion of this character. This matter is one that has been introduced at a very particular time in the political history of the country. It is a matter in regard to which the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster), after complimenting my hon. friend for Kootenay (Mr. Gallher) on the manner in which he had kept strictly to the subject under debate, proceeded immediately to make a political harangue, and, in the effort to produce a little political capital, made a speech that would do credit to one of the stumps in British Columbia. I shall not attempt to follow him in that line, but shall limit myself to a few remarks regarding what seem to me the absurd propositions