

into private hands merely because a few hundred dollars have been spent in surveys. It would be infinitely better in such cases to compensate these parties at the public expense and keep for the public the coal lands of the North-West. If the areas are small, and there are other large areas of course, these remarks would not apply; but large sections of coal lands should not get into the hands of private individuals without the utmost care and consideration for the future of this country.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I am only aware of three claims: one is that of Mr. Sutherland upon coal lands; another by a Mr. Osborne, who contests Mr. Sutherland's claim, and another by a person who claims to have discovered gold and silver on a small island in the Lake of the Woods.

Mr. BLAKE. Are the areas large?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; very small. The whole coal area, I am informed, is 320 acres at Souris. The island is the same.

Mr. MILLS. Does not this island fall within the limits of Ontario according to the award?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. JONES. I see that in the United States an individual is allowed to take 160 acres, and an association of persons is allowed to take 320 acres, provided they go on and do *bona fide* work upon it. If they are within fifteen miles of the railway they pay \$25 an acre, and if more than fifteen miles from a railway, they pay \$10 an acre.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. I would call the attention of the First Minister to the affidavit in support of the claim for a homestead right. I am inclined to think that this is dealing a little hardly with a class of men who deserve some consideration at our hands, that is, the class of pioneers who take up homesteads, do a good deal of work upon them, put up houses, break land, and then sell out to move further west. Such a party would be entirely debarred under all circumstances from taking up a homestead grant twice. I have no doubt that *prima facie* a great deal may be said of the mode in which this affidavit is drawn, but I am inclined to think that, having regard to the circumstances of the North-West, some modification might be made so that a man who had actually done work on the homestead and afterwards sold out, should not be precluded from taking another homestead, as these are usually persons who have quite a little capital.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I hope there will be no difficulty in *bona fide* parties getting round that difficulty.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. The way the affidavit is drawn it looks as if they could not. "I, A. B., do swear that I have not previously obtained a homestead under the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act." It seems to me that would cut out all such parties.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There is a practical evil, as the hon. gentleman is aware, which has arisen to a great extent. There are a number of persons up there who make it their business, being on the spot and knowing the country, to pick out the very best lot in the township. They squat on it and make a little improvement, and then look round for a purchaser and sell out and move on to another. It is found to be a good means of extracting money from a *bona fide* settler who sees a beautiful lot and wants to get it; and in this way the first party becomes a middleman.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. The latter class of whom the hon. gentleman speaks does not deserve consideration, but this would exclude that class of men who have *bona fide* improved their homestead, and, after three or four years, have sold it and moved further.

Mr. BLAKE.

Mr. TROW. I think the suggestion of the hon. gentleman for Centre Huron (Sir Richard J. Cartwright) is worthy of consideration. I have noticed that in some parts of the North-West a large number of parties have left Manitoba for the reason that they could not get a second homestead, having disposed of the first one, and they have gone to the other side of the line to procure homesteads. In all countries the first pioneers are generally single young men. They rough it for a while and make some improvements and then sell out to a man with a family who is anxious to get a home, and who is prepared to give some consideration for the improvements, and the young man sells out and goes further west. I do not think we should debar him from taking another homestead.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There is no alteration in the law, it has always been so. These affidavits have been merely altered to suit the several clauses of this Act. I am told it has been found that this promotes gambling and speculation in homesteads, and that that has been the result of the experience of the last few years. I am told that there are parties up there who go on to the best lots and try to find purchasers, thus becoming middlemen after having merely squatted on the land.

Mr. MILLS. I discussed this matter last year and made a proposition similar to that now made by the hon. member for Centre Huron. My impression was when I was managing the department that it would be better, instead of requiring occupation for a fixed period of time to require a certain amount of improvement upon these homesteads, and after these were made the party should be at liberty to sell his improvement. I believe there are cases such as the hon. gentleman speaks of, but the mischief done is less than would be done by refusing a sale altogether. Although the party has resided on the land, if he has not a certain amount of improvement the patent ought not to issue when the period expires. He ought to have the privilege of sale, so that some one else coming in and wanting an improved lot of land may have the opportunity of purchasing it. If he has the means he will do that, and the man who sells will have a capital with which to purchase again or to purchase agricultural appliances with which to begin anew. In doing this the hon. gentleman will be providing for those who go from the older Provinces into that territory, who will be able to advance money to the original immigrant for his improvement. I think on the whole, the country would gain more by an arrangement of that sort than it would lose by any speculations in which these people might engage. The experience of all new countries is that there are certain men who may be designated border men. They do not care for the comforts of an advanced civilization, but they make certain improvements, and whenever they find the people around them reaching a certain point of civilization, they want to go somewhere else and begin anew. They contribute to the advancement of the country, and they ought to be allowed, within proper restrictions, to follow their instincts.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is almost impossible to make a provision of this kind without some countervailing disadvantages. The hon. gentleman thinks we should allow settlers to sell their claims if there be a certain minimum amount of improvements. In the first place, you would have to have a special staff of officers to go over the country and settle the value of the improvements. In the next place, you would be very apt to cause great dissatisfaction if you fixed a high minimum. What we want is the people to settle on the land, to keep it for three years, to build some kind of a house, and to cultivate the land. With some races the standard of improvement and comfort is higher than with others. Men from the West of Scotland or the West of Ireland would put up with a much smaller house and with fewer improvements, perhaps, than men from Ontario. So