

lands in the North-West. It has always been contended by me since I have had a seat in this House, that the lands of the Dominion should be administered in the interests of the Dominion at large. It is to be regretted that we have not a larger population in the North-West and Manitoba to-day, and I hold that the land regulations of the Government have had much to do with the lack of population there. The system pursued by the Government of granting large tracts to colonisation companies, and of making large reservations that were held exclusively for sale, has had a great deal to do with the sparse settlement that exists in the North-West to-day. I am pleased to be able to state that the land regulations of to-day are better than the regulations that prevailed a few years ago, and I was also glad to learn from the Minister of Interior, in an interview I had with him this morning, that some changes will be introduced during the present Session which will considerably improve the land regulations of the North-West. In regard to the price of land referred to by the member for Saskatchewan (Mr. Macdowall), I entirely differ with him in regard to that matter. It is a bad policy to place the land at such prices that actual settlers cannot afford to buy them and enter into the actual work of farming. The price of \$250 per acre to the actual settler is too high for any man to pay for land in the North-West, to be devoted exclusively to farming purposes. As I have always contended, having some knowledge of the early settlement of that country, I hold that all the lands, odd and even sections, in the interest of Canada, should have been administered for the actual settlers instead of holding them for sale. I know that as regards a considerable portion of the country I represent, the land sales of 1880-81 proved a curse to the settlers. The odd sections were sold by public competition, and the average price realised was about \$2.60 per acre, the upset price being \$2.50 per acre. Speculators entered into a combination to pay as little as possible over the upset price, and the lands were sold at that figure. I know they have been held by the speculators who purchased them and who hold them to-day, and they are waiting in order to try and realise the amount they paid at that sale.

Mr. WILSON. They cannot do it.

Mr. WATSON. The hon. gentleman owns some of the land himself. He purchased it at \$2.60 per acre and has never had an opportunity of realising that price for it since. This has prevented settlement. In regard to land grants for railway companies, I believe it is necessary for the Government to give large tracts to encourage railway building, for the country can only be opened up by the construction of railways, and it is necessary to give a portion of the public domain for their assistance; but instead of giving land grants as in the past, I would suggest to the House and the Government that a different policy should be pursued, and that instead of giving alternate sections the Government should give alternate townships. This would be in the interest of settlement. Out of a township of thirty-six sections there are only sixteen sections available for homesteading; two sections belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, two sections are public school lands, and all the remaining odd sections are reserved for sale or for railway grants. That being the case, there are only sixteen sections in a township of six miles square that are available for homesteaders. I submit, from what knowledge I have in regard to settlement in that country, that it would be much better, in the interests of the settler and of settlement, to reserve for railway purposes, or for sale, alternate townships instead of alternate sections. I have stated that I had been informed that some amendments were to be introduced to improve the land regulations of the North-West, and I will reserve anything further I have

Mr. WATSON,

to say until those amendments are before the House, and until they have been acted on by the Minister of Interior. I must say, however, that I approve of the principle that has been adopted by the Minister of Interior in consulting the members for Manitoba and the North-West with respect to the regulations in force in that part of the country, and I am glad to know that some matters which I have brought before this House and the department for years are now being acted upon, particularly with respect to settlers being allowed to procure dead timber for fuel, and some other matters which I suppose will be explained by the Minister of Interior.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

Mr. DALY. Mr. Speaker, I must say that I speak under very unusual circumstances to-night. It is not often that we have such a beggarly array on the other side of the House. I do not know whether or not the announcement that I was about to address the House after recess is the occasion for my hon. friends of the opposite side of the House staying away.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) They are more pleasantly engaged elsewhere.

Mr. DALY. Be that as it may, I am glad to see that they have left the warhorse of Prince Edward Island here, and he will probably know how to take care of me. I regret, however, that the member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) is not here, because I would not have spoken on this occasion had it not been that that hon. gentleman got on his feet and made some remarks which I did not think it right to pass without making some reference to, and correcting his statements. During the three Sessions that I have been in Parliament that hon. gentleman has taken occasion upon every opportunity to discuss the affairs of the North-West and Manitoba, and to make attacks upon the land laws in force there. He has reiterated here this afternoon what he stated last year and the year previous, and I learn from gentlemen who sat in this House before I did, that he repeated this afternoon what he stated during Sessions before this present Parliament opened. I do not see what is to be gained by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Charlton) standing in this House and continually reiterating and making statements which have been refuted, time and time again, from the floor of Parliament. I have had occasion during the past two years, as I have the occasion now, to refute the statements made by the hon. gentleman, and particularly the allegation which he made this afternoon that the land laws of the United States were far more liberal to the settlers than the land laws of Canada at present in operation in Manitoba and the North-West. I showed the hon. gentleman last year that this was not so. I proved to him the year previous that it was not the fact, and my hon. friend the member for Lisgar (Mr. Ross) did the same, but, notwithstanding that, he gets up and makes a general statement against the land laws without giving us any particulars to support it. If, in the opinion of the hon. gentleman, the land laws of the United States are more liberal than the land laws of Canada, why does he not make some specific statement to bear out the allegations he makes? Are the land laws of the United States more liberal than the same laws of Canada? I say that they are not as liberal as our laws, and I will prove it. All that we require is that if a young man comes to Manitoba he should be 18 years of age, and that he should have not homesteaded previously. That young man goes to the land office, he says that he is eighteen years of age, that he had not homesteaded previously, and he is given his entry. He goes out to the land, performs six months duty in each year for three years,