

that of this amount the sum of \$9,000,000 has been received on account of sales of these lands and there is a balance outstanding of \$9,000,000 more, this makes a total of \$18,000,000, of which fifty per cent. is received in cash, this would average \$3.60 per acre for every acre sold during this period, and much of this was sold when the Government's price was only \$1 per acre during the first three years.

"I think this policy requires no apology whatever, and while the speculator has been filching land from the Crown at the rate of \$3.60 per acre, we have succeeded in buying back from the Columbia and Western Railway subsidy large areas amounting to millions of acres at 40 cents per acre.

"Then the Government has been criticized with reference to staking lands by means of agents. Most of these comments have been made by a gentleman who formerly occupied a position on the floor of this House as Member for the Delta, Mr. John Oliver. You may read his effusions and you will notice that he has repeatedly made the statement, confirmed by Mr. Brewster, also formerly a Member of this body, that the practice in the Act of staking lands through the medium of agents was established in 1907 by the Government. If not put in so many words, it was their desire to give the public the impression that such is the case.

STAKING OF LANDS

"Now I have looked carefully into the matter of the law governing the staking of lands through the medium of agents in the departmental records and on the Statutes, and I find that the practice of staking land through the medium of agents is as old as the administration of land itself in this Province. The practice of staking timber concessions has always been followed. Although there was no statutory provision for it, there was no prohibition against it, and the practice has always been to allow the securing of these concessions through the medium of an agent. If you look up the Location Clauses of the Mineral Act, the Placer Mining Act and the Coal and Petroleum Act, you will see they are the same as those in the Land Act. The procedure to secure mineral claims is the same now as it was in the first instance, and the same with regard to coal areas and placer mines, and if it is wrong in one instance, surely it is wrong in all. Yet we find it has been satisfactory, and I think any criticism in this matter was first mooted with reference to the purchase of land, and I find on referring back to the debate of 1907 that it is summarized in the newspapers of that date. Out of curiosity I examined these reports to find out what