

Parliament in 1863 was to be believed, then emigrants were being settled here under false pretences; and now that a new era was being inaugurated, he trusted that policy would be abandoned. The inducements held out to emigrants must be acted up to faithfully. Emigrants must not, as had been well said by the gallant knight from Frontenac, be allowed to come here year after year and settled down on the territory, and after commencing operations, almost break their hearts by finding out that some gentlemen had timber licenses extending over the very lands which they were led to believe had been given them out and out. (Hear, hear). If report could be believed, much of the land on which emigrants had settled was totally unfit—a good deal of suffering and hardship, if not of starvation, had been endured by some—and the tide of emigration had long ago turned from their shores to the United States, where faith had been kept with them. It was said to be a fact that emigrants from the Northern part of Canada had been writing home year after year, discouraging and gloomy accounts of the country; and the Government might send home as many agents as it pleased, but their influence was found to be in a large measure counteracted by gloomy accounts of settlers who believed they had been badly dealt with by the Government. The letters conveying this intelligence were doing the Province irreparable injury. (Hear). Now that they were starting afresh, it was absolutely necessary they should know what land, fit for settlement, the Province contained. It had been held that there were abundance of wild lands—thousands of acres—fit for settlement; but he was of opinion that this would not turn out to be the case—that not one acre out of every ten that remained would be found fit for agricultural purposes; and that much of that which was fit had been cut over by the lumbermen. Clearly, if they wished to encourage immigration, this system of licensing lumbermen to cut over their wild lands must be stopped—the timber must be reserved.

Mr. BOYD fully agreed with what had fallen from his hon. friend who had just taken his seat with regard to the important interests at stake on the question before the House. He (Mr. Boyd) thought that while it was their duty, as far as their knowledge and experience went as individual members, to throw all the light they could on the subject, still he felt that they should not throw any obstacles in the way of the Government in bringing down a policy on this question. His object in rising was simply to disabuse the minds of gentlemen representing western constituencies on one point. He represented a constituency in the Ottawa district, and would desire to correct the impression that the lumbermen in that district had received unfair special advantages. It could, he thought, be readily shown by statistics that gentlemen holding limits in that section had, by roads, slides and booms made at their own expense, done much to enhance the value of their investments and of the surrounding districts. They had done much to promote the future settlement of the country by pushing their operations far into the interior; and the large number of men employed by them, with carts, teams, &c., conducted to the prosperity of the home markets. It was a well known principle that a country to make rapid strides in progress must be a consuming as well as producing country; and these lumbermen consumed a large proportion of the products of the soil. Again, lumbermen contributed to the prosperity of the country by their employment of large numbers of persons rafting and again in carrying their timber out of the Province. They had a vested interest, which could not be ignored; and when this question of timber limits came up he hoped it would be treated dispassionately and with a due regard to interests which ought not to be lost sight of. (Hear).

Hon. Mr. RICHARDS said, there could be no objection to the address being granted. The returns asked for, however, extended over a period of six or seven years, and it might probably occupy some time to prepare them. But the concluding part of the motion touched on a question of which no notice had been given—as to what portion of the surveyed lands of the Crown was fit for agricultural purposes. And as to that he might say, it would be almost impossible to arrive at a definite statement. He believed that what his hon. friend from Lincoln had stated with regard to the position of immigrants coming to this country, was to a certain extent correct. If we compared the number of settlers who had been located on the various colonization roads, with the number of settlers now upon them, it would be at once seen that a large number of persons who had

settled on the lands adjacent to these roads had now left them. That might arise, however, to some extent from the fact that the persons who had gone upon those lands, had gone not for the purpose of actually settling upon them, but of obtaining the timber which grew upon them, and, as soon as the timber was removed, having got all they wanted, they left. The whole subject of the policy of the Government with respect to the Crown Lands, would be brought before the house for discussion during the ensuing week, and he thought it would be premature to enter upon the details of the question now. As regarded the number of licenses issued, &c., the Government could have no objection to giving the information asked for, but with reference to the concluding paragraph of the motion, he would repeat that it was impossible to form a definite idea of the quantity of lands fit for settlement; he might mention, however, with reference to the only large tract now surveyed and open for settlement—that lying between the Ottawa and the Georgian Bay, and amounting to some five millions of acres—about one and a half or two million of acres had been located; of the remaining three or four millions, there might be on a rough estimate a little over a million of acres fit for settlement; that was all the information he could give in reply to that part of the motion.

Mr. RYKERT said the latter part of the motion was the most essential part of it. What it was chiefly necessary for the house to know, in connection with our holding out inducements to immigration and the settlement of our wild lands, was the quantity of lands which we had fit for settlement. The Premier had announced that the policy of the Government was to give free grants to actual settlers, on condition of their performing certain settlement duties; a free deed, when these had been performed, being given after the expiration of five years; but that the Government intended to retain the timber land for financial purposes. He held that, before entering on such a policy, the Government ought to know how much land they had fit for agricultural purposes, and how much fit only for lumber purposes. There could be no doubt that a large portion of the land north of Peterboro and Victoria, and through the Ottawa country, was unfit for agricultural purposes. Yet our emigration agents in Europe were telling the people that we had large quantities of good land, and when immigrants came out here, they found they had been misled. The Government, to prevent this for the future, should bring down accurate information as to how the matter really stood.

Mr. CUMBERLAND said it was a very extraordinary announcement which had just been made by the Commissioner of Crown Lands—that it was impossible to tell how much of the surveyed lands of the Province was fit for settlement. If this were the case, it was the most serious reflection he had ever heard on the administration of the Crown Lands Department—that, after the Government had been at the expense of making surveys, the reports of the surveyors were not of such a nature as would warrant the Government in saying whether the lands surveyed were fit for settlement or not.

Hon. J. S. MACDONALD said what the Commissioner had stated was substantially correct; and, if the Government took the course suggested by the member for Lincoln, of waiting for accurate information as to what lands, lot by lot, and acre by acre, were adapted for settlement, this policy which the country expected at their hands would have to lie over for very many years to come. The Government having been only a few months in office, had not felt justified in incurring the expense of further surveys, until they properly understood what further surveys were required, and until they discovered how far the surveys which had been made would enable them to carry out the policy which had been announced. He agreed to a large extent in what had been said as to the injury this country had sustained by the reports sent home by the immigrants, who had come out here on the faith of representations by our immigration agents, that this was a country where the best of lands were to be found, on which they could settle with every satisfaction. It was true that these parties, when they came to this country found that they had been deceived; and the colonization roads which the Government had opened at a great expense, giving free grants upon them, had proved an utter and entire failure. With the experience we had had, it behoved us in the future to be careful not to make promises which in the end would prove fallacious, and, in offering free grants to immigrants and the young men of our own country, only to give such lands as could be profitably cultivated.