

Hon. Mr. BLACK: Somewhat more than 2,900, I think. The administrative costs of the Board for 1930 are estimated at \$700,000. I think that if the Board were abolished and the supervision of the English settlers were turned over to the Department, at least three-quarters of the work that the Board is now doing would be eliminated. I understand there is no official responsibility assumed for the purchase of equipment and stock by the English settlers, for instance; so the work of looking after these immigrant settlers would be very small, compared with the total activities of the present Board. The Board's employees, whether temporary or permanent, could probably be absorbed into other departments, so that no hardship would be worked on any of the returned men employed. The annual cost of the Board's operations has run up as high as \$1,500,000. The sum estimated for 1930 is, I think, less than has been expended by the Board in any other year. So it is apparent that a huge saving could be effected if the Board were abolished. I guarantee that if the work of looking after the English settlers were assigned to the Department of the Interior, or some other administrative branch, the cost of looking after those settlers should not be more than \$100,000 a year.

I understood the leader on this side of the House (Hon. Mr. Willoughby) expressed objection to wiping out the indebtedness of the soldier settlers, on the ground that it would be an injustice. As far as the 12,000 soldier settlers are concerned, it would be doing them the greatest justice possible, although other soldiers, who had not gone on the land, would not be given any corresponding favour. The soldier settlers would no longer be subjected to calls from official collectors on dates when the interest fell due. If a soldier sold a cow, he would not have the money taken away from him as a contribution towards the balance owing to the Government. He would be given complete control over his lands and would be in a better position than ever before to make good.

I disagree with the statement that has been made here this afternoon that the wiping off of 30 per cent of the indebtedness of every soldier settler would not result in any loss of money to the Government, because the money is gone anyway. That is an erroneous statement. It is not gone in the cases of the 7,400 men who have kept up their payments. In their cases the assets are as good as gold. I want to make that point clear. We must be fair in our statement of facts. This Bill would result in the wiping off of \$11,000,000,

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and of this sum probably \$2,000,000, at the very outside, would be a loss in any event. There would still be \$9,000,000 of assets which would not be destroyed if this Bill were not passed.

I do not like this Bill at all. I think it is very unjust to the people of the country, and especially unfair to the returned men in general, who will not benefit by it. I am satisfied that the returned men will so regard it. I hope that during the coming recess the Government will take into consideration the advisability of wiping the slate clean by turning over to the soldier settlers all their lands and equipment.

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: May I ask for some information? We have had figures as to valuations showing that about \$37,000,000 is still left. Is there anything to show how much is owing from this family settlement scheme and from the civilians who bought lands?

Hon. Mr. BLACK: Those figures are not included in this statement at all. These figures are applicable only to the soldiers placed on the land.

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: There must be a large amount owing from these other people.

Hon. Mr. BLACK: There are a few million dollars. I do not think, however, that would affect the situation at all. Fewer than 3,000 settlers are coming in under this other scheme. The amount is not very large.

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: Would it be \$25,000,000?

Hon. Mr. BLACK: Perhaps the honourable member who was head of that Department (Hon. Mr. Forke) could say. I have the impression that it is a very much smaller amount.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I could not make any definite statement as to the amount. There were about 20,000 farms bought by the Government. There are now 12,000 soldier settlers on the land.

Hon. Mr. BLACK: That is not the question.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I am coming to it. That will leave 8,000 or 10,000 farms either in the possession of the Government or sold to civilians. Those farms have been sold on long-term payments. I do not think that question has received very much consideration in the discussion of the Soldier Settlement Board. I think the showing would be better if the figures were properly tabulated. Many of these