

tention that I have spoken of. The minister has, no doubt, heard of cases where the incoming settler has come forward and offered to take over the land at that price, but he has not heard of the number of cases where the land has lain vacant year after year simply because of the lien against it, which is a condition very much more detrimental to the welfare of the country than the mere matter of the collection of the balance of the money. Of course, I do not wish to see the money lost if that can be avoided, but neither do I want to see the land kept out of production, or settlement deterred, because of this condition. It very often happens that a business man has to take the position that the first loss is the best, and that it is better to close the account, take the loss, and start afresh. This is my view in regard to this matter. It is better not to hold the land out of occupation in the hope of collecting the balance of the lien. I admit there are special exceptions, but they are a very small minority.

In regard to the suggestion that the land should be sold for the purpose of realizing the seed grain lien, I would protest most strongly against any such action, because I think it would create a most unfortunate condition of affairs.

Mr. SCHAFFNER: How does the hon. gentleman expect the Government will obtain repayment of the money it has lent to the farmer on the security of the farm? Does he suggest the Government should relinquish the security?

Mr. OLIVER: Yes. Take the case of a farmer who owns a piece of land which he leases to a tenant on crop payment, and this tenant, by some means or other, finds a means of beating him on the deal. What does he do? He takes the loss and re-leases the land to a man who will produce from it at the first opportunity. He does not hold the land vacant until somebody comes along who will pay him the loss he made through the previous tenant and also assume obligations for the future, which is the position the minister is taking on those abandoned homesteads against which seed grain liens are outstanding. My hon. friend (Mr. Schaffner) would not do it in his own business, and it is not good business for the Government.

Mr. SCHAFFNER: The case suggested by my hon. friend is not a parallel one. I could understand the argument in regard to other debts apart from the Government

[Mr. Oliver.]

loan, but in the case of the seed grain lien, for which the land is security, it is practically money belonging to the state.

Mr. OLIVER: Surely.

Section agreed to.

On section 2—Holding by husband deemed holding by wife in certain cases:

Mr. PUGSLEY: Will the minister explain that section?

Mr. ROCHE: My experience has shown that the department should be given authority to issue patent for a homestead within three years from the date of entry. In the case of a deserted woman, the department grants her an entry upon proof being furnished of not less than two years' time. In the meantime she is required to make the land—for which her husband held entry—her home and also to keep up the improvements. As the law is now constituted, a woman in this position is not entitled to patent until after the expiration of three years from the date she is granted legal entry. Inasmuch as she is required to make the land her home for two years before being granted entry, it is desirable that the department should have the right to grant her a patent immediately on proof being furnished that she has completed the required six months' residence in each of three years calculated from date of desertion, in addition to the other requirements of her entry. It seems too bad not to allow the time she has spent doing the duties prior to the date of entry in her own name and therefore we desire to issue the patent three years after the date of desertion.

Mr. PUGSLEY: A person might put in five years on the land, or five years might pass, and if he actually put in six months in three of these years he would be entitled to his patent. The amendment is not limited to the case of a wife deserted by her husband; it is general in character and it provides that a patent may issue after six months' residence in any three years, not three years immediately preceding the date of entry. Therefore one might go on the land, be in occupation this year, perhaps spend a month on it next year, then go off to work somewhere else, probably in the United States, come back, remain a little time and the next year after that put in six months, be absent again the following year and the year following that again put in six months. As long as he puts in six months in one of the three years before he applies for the patent he will get it. If