

actuated the returned soldiers largely in going on the land were chiefly these: In the first place, during the war high prices for agricultural products had prevailed; and in the next place, unless the soldiers had occupations in the professions or in industry to return to they had no alternative open to them. What I want to point out here is that although the soldier settlement scheme primarily was for the purpose of assisting the soldiers during the period of demobilization and reconstruction, other people in Canada received direct and immediate benefit from it. In the first place it lessened the competition for employment; in the next place it largely solved the unemployment question in Canada and in the third place it gave to people that had land holdings in the Dominion immediate cash for lands that in former years they had not been able to sell. What is now asked for is not a further bonus or relief for soldiers, but a recognition of the fact that so many of them were charged prices for land bought on their account by the government far beyond their actual value. It is not a bonus, but a recognition of a wrong done to them, and remember that many of the men who received those prices are the men who to-day complain that they are paying too much in the way of taxes in Canada. That money was not lost to Canada. It was largely paid out to people in Canada.

Another phase of the matter to which I wish to refer is that the soldier settlement scheme was of immense value to the Dominion of Canada. As the hon. member for West Calgary (Mr. Bennett) pointed out the other day, with his customary fair-mindedness, the soldier settlement scheme increased the value of lands in Canada above what it would otherwise have been and added to the present wealth and productive power of Canada. Some of the lands had been used at a prior time by farmers who had actually tilled them, but a large portion was new, virgin soil. These lands were brought into production but they would not have become productive had it not been for this scheme. For seven or eight years, these soldier settlers have been adding largely to the wealth of Canada. I desire to point out to this House that year after year, government after government have spent large sums of money for immigration, the expenditure having been principally outside of Canada. They are to-day adopting other schemes for settlement in Canada which involves the outlay of money. I maintain that even if the treasury takes a loss with respect to part of the price paid for the land, Canada still will have a bigger

[Mr. Hannesson.]

return than she has received from the money spent on immigration or will receive from the proposed expenditure for securing settlers on the land.

I wish to give the House some figures with regard to the settlement scheme. As a result of the scheme 30,846 men were placed on the land. Of this number 24,342 were placed as a result of loans advanced, and 6,504 on soldier grants. Of the number so settled on this land 819 have paid their loans in full, 6,635 have been foreclosed or have abandoned their farms, leaving approximately 17,000 settlers still on soldier settlement land owing money to the government. The total paid out under the scheme was \$105,750,831. Something like \$23,000,000 on account of principal and interest have been paid, and the principal now owing under the whole scheme is \$88,228,890.65. Of the foreclosed land 1,789 units have been sold—that is land and chattels—at a profit to the Soldier Settlement Board of \$625,949.35. Then in the case of 168 units where the land without the chattels has been sold, giving a surplus to the government of \$19,396.75, and 182 units have been sold—but the sale not closed yet—with a prospective profit to the government of \$6,293.43, there remained 4,496 of the units of the foreclosed lands still undisposed of. Last year this government made a bargain with the Imperial government to set aside for them 2,500 units for the empire settlement scheme. Five hundred families were brought out last year, and it is hoped to bring out 1,300 this year. These lands under the empire settlement scheme have all been revalued, and I am credibly informed that, although in some instances they have been sold for approximately the amount of the debt, in a large number of other cases they have been sold for one-half the amount owed by the soldier settler or less. The soldier settler has to pay the whole and is ejected from the land if he is unable to pay it. But in addition to the loan advanced by the Imperial government of \$1,500 per unit, Canada makes further advances to the empire settler which are added to the purchase price.

From the foregoing several things are quite evident. Every time a unit was taken back from a returned soldier as a result of abandonment, or by foreclosure, there was a direct loss of productive power in Canada to the extent of that unit. In the next place there was a loss in the value of that unit. As soon as the land was abandoned or left, it reverted and became wild land again. Last year I understand some effort was being made to lease some of these lands. The next best