

prairie to a place dotted with cities and towns, with ribbons of steel in every direction, and telephone and telegraph lines gradually going up everywhere. I know, therefore, what the early pioneer had to contend with in those days, and I can picture to myself very well what the pioneer in the Peace River district has to put up with when homesteading.

Now I will submit a proposition which, while some people may laugh at it, I believe can be worked out with careful consideration. Let me state it in a nutshell. Give any man or woman 160 acres of land on the strength of a guarantee to the government that they will break and fence 50 acres, build a house and barn according to plans and specifications laid down by the government, and at the end of three years secure clear title to the property. This is not impossible, because a man working for the railway or in a bank could stay on his job and have the work supervised by government managers of some description. At the end of three years he would have a farm worth not \$1,500, the amount he would have to pay in improvements, but worth, if the country were settled, \$5,000. Under present regulations however, a man wishing to acquire such a farm would have to quit his job and go on the farm, sleeping there, as I said before, for six months, so that when he came back he would find his job filled—in short, he would be fired. I think a scheme of that kind could be worked out to advantage; there are people in Ottawa to-day who would gladly invest in a savings bank proposition of that nature, because if there is anything a person likes to talk about it is owning a piece of land, a ranch or a farm.

With reference to the \$300,000,000 which the hon. member for North Vancouver proposes to gather in taxes, that could be used to good advantage if it were necessary—and it is necessary to a great extent—in building railways to the coast; to build an outlet; in building branch lines, which are badly needed; in building terminal elevators in the interior, of the Peace river country as well as on the Pacific coast. To-day farmers are hauling their grain from fifty to one hundred miles in four-horse sleighs to Spirit River, Grande Prairie and Peace River at a cost of 35 to 50 cents per bushel. I will ask the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy) if this is not so. When the farmers arrive at the rail head the elevators are very often blocked; they have no place for their grain, and the grain buyers have control of the situation so far as grades and prices are concerned. Terminals should be built in the in-

[Mr. Blatchford.]

terior where they have limited elevator space, and on the Peace river, a big, navigable stream; coal bunkers should be built on the Pacific coast for Alberta coal—the greatest coal fields in existence.

In addition to that, a great deal of this money could be used in assisting immigration into western Canada. We now assist immigrants from Great Britain, why should we not assist our own Canadians first, along with those who have gone to the United States? They are the cream of the earth, as we all know; they have gone to the United States during hard times but they are anxious to come back and would be glad to do so if they had a little assistance and a farm ready for them to work on. If an immigrant comes to this country with \$500 or \$1,000, he has enough capital to buy a team of horses, a plough and a wagon; he can go to work and get his crop off the first year, and fifty acres will support him if he is not too extravagant. I believe something should be done to bring back the Canadians who have gone to the United States; our own native sons should be assisted first, and then we should go to foreign fields. I do not think we should go abroad and spend a great deal of money in immigration when we have people here in Canada only waiting for a chance to go on the farms; they usually make good farmers.

I would go even further than the hon. member for North Vancouver has gone in opening up the west and the northwest. I have talked it over with the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart), and I suggest that the doors of the Northwest Territories be opened wide, and that persons interested in mineral development be allowed to enter that country and survey it thoroughly. I would suggest also that the country be checker-boarded as is done for homesteading; that 5,000 square miles be set aside for any man or group of men who will put up a \$50,000 bond with the government and guarantee to spend \$50,000 within three years. That man naturally would need a hydroplane with which to take his prospectors into the country; the day of the prospector with pick and shovel and grubstake on his back has gone. I worked in the Kootenay country in the early days when the prospectors who went into those hills were young fellows, but to-day they are all old men; the young chaps do not follow the former system. With the checker-board idea of developing the Northwest Territories, which no doubt is the best mineral belt in the world, every man or company taking over 5,000 square miles of land would need a hydroplane with which to transport his prospectors and his grubstakes, and the work