

elaborate explanations, as to the various matters set forth in the Bill.

This legislation is not intended in any manner whatever as a substitute for any other form of recognition which may now or hereafter be extended to the returned soldiers; it is simply and solely designed to assist the soldier in locating upon the land and help him after he has done so. It has a two-fold object—to assist the returned soldier and to increase agricultural production. The members of the House are quite well aware that in almost every civilized country in the globe the trend of population for many years past has been to the large towns and cities, and I am sure we are all desirous of doing our utmost, so far as is possible by legislation, to stop that trend city-ward and to direct the flow of our population to the land in order to ensure greater production. If this legislation shall have the effect of attracting back to the land those soldiers, not only of Canada but of the rest of the British Empire, who originally came from the land, and of encouraging a great many of those others who have never had any agricultural experience to take the desired instruction and to locate upon the land, our object will have been attained. This legislation is not meant as an adequate reward to our brave lads who have so bravely acquitted themselves in the trenches at the front.

We realize that nothing this Parliament can do, whether by way of land grant or by financial assistance, adequately compensates those brave lads of ours who have gone from our country and who have been subjected to such terrible hardships. They have acquitted themselves in a manner that has won the admiration of the world. They have gone to the front and done their duty like men, and this offer is meant as some recognition on the part of a grateful country by way of preferential treatment such as has not been held out before to other settlers. If by offering this assistance we can place the soldiers upon the soil and increase our production we shall have accomplished what we have in view. This proposal is not presented as a model of perfection. It is a complicated question, and I have no doubt whatever that sentiment will play a very large part in a discussion of this kind, and very properly so. At the same time, there is a business side to it, and it is our desire to do our utmost to place the soldier in a position where he may help himself. I submit the legislation therefore, in this form to the

[Mr. Roche.]

House with the desire of getting the views of hon. gentlemen when we reach the committee stage, and I am sure the Government will be only too pleased to receive any suggestions, and possibly amendments.

Mr. GERMAN: I see that it is proposed to grant a free entry of not more than 160 acres to the soldiers. Is it proposed to grant this land without settlement duties?

Mr. ROCHE: Oh no, not at all.

Mr. GERMAN: What more are you offering to the soldiers then, than to an ordinary settler.

Mr. ROCHE: We are granting them financial assistance.

Mr. GERMAN: That is another thing. But so far as free entry goes, any person can enter for 160 acres and obtain his patent by doing settlement duties. I wanted to know if settlement duties would be dispensed with in the case of a soldier.

Mr. ROCHE: I forgot to say that it is the intention of the Government to have the administration of this Act placed under a commission, which will recommend a set of regulations to be approved by the Governor in Council. We do not think it would be wise to burden the Act with a lot of details, which experience might show the wisdom of changing from time to time. We think the personnel of this commission a very important consideration in the administration of this Act. The commissioners should be big men of great experience, who will command the confidence of the people of this country. They will draw up a set of regulations to be approved by the Governor in Council, by means of which the Act will be administered. The soldier gets an entry for 160 acres of Government land if he so desires.

Mr. GERMAN: But he can get that now.

Mr. ROCHE: Yes. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say we should charge him for it?

Mr. GERMAN: No, no. I wanted to find out what the minister is offering the soldier more than he is offering to any other person.

Mr. ROCHE: We are advancing him \$2,000 at a very low rate of interest to carry on his farming operations.

Mr. GERMAN: As regards entry, the soldier has no advantage over any one else.

Mr. ROCHE: We could not be more generous than giving him the land for nothing.