

know how difficult it is to reduce staffs. Unless that is done by Act of Parliament it is well nigh impossible. It would be possible, however, to reduce that staff to one-half of its present size, and it could still render good service under a responsible Minister. I place stress upon that point. The Board as a distinct creation should not be allowed to administer the Act except in consultation with, and under the control of, a Cabinet Minister.

I do not know that there is much more that I can add. I do not think it is advisable to do away with the Board altogether. I think that there should be some committee or board to look after the interests of the soldiers and to administer the 3,000-family scheme. Under the 3,000-family scheme the Dominion Government supplies the land and the British Government supplies loans to a maximum of \$1,500. The Dominion Government is undertaking to administer the scheme and is responsible for collections. The land is sold under long-term agreements, and the money is loaned for a long period, usually twenty-five years. That scheme has to be administered, the money collected, and an account given to the British Government. It should be under the jurisdiction of a Cabinet Minister who would be responsible to Parliament. I do not think that \$700,000 a year should be required for that work in the years to come. I think it might be carried on for perhaps two or three hundred thousand dollars at the very outside. It was my intention to make a very drastic change in this respect, though I do not say that I was going to do it exactly as it has been done.

I am rather sorry that the Bill has come before us in its present form. I think it could be improved upon, and I believe it will be. But I do not think it is practicable or possible to get along without an administrative board of some kind to look after our soldier settlement scheme.

Hon. G. V. WHITE: I understand that about 89 per cent of the personnel of the male staff of the present Board is made up of returned soldiers. What disposition would be made of those men if the Board were disbanded or reduced?

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I may say that a number of years ago I made a proposal to the various departments that they should absorb those men as far as was practicable. I think that could be done yet. There is no department but needs additional help of some kind at some time, and in my opinion the men on the Soldier Settlement Board should get the preference when positions become vacant. I know it would be a serious thing

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to discharge employees, many of whom have given ten years or more of service. I think they can be absorbed in other departments of the Government. Of course, as honourable members know, most of the Soldier Settlement Board employees were engaged on a temporary basis; they do not come under the Civil Service Commission, and the Government may at any time dismiss them. I do not think the Government would be inclined to deal with them in so drastic a manner. I made an inquiry some time ago as to what would be done with these employees, and I was given to understand they would be absorbed in other departments.

Hon. G. V. WHITE: Taken into the permanent service?

Hon. Mr. FORKE: Yes.

Hon. J. J. HUGHES: Honourable senators, would it be wise to let this measure stand over until the next session, when it could be more thoroughly examined? I ask this question in view of the remarks made by the honourable chairman of the committee which considered the Bill this morning (Hon. Mr. Black), and by the honourable leader of the Government in this House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand), and by the honourable senator from Brandon (Hon. Mr. Forke). If I understood the honourable leader of the Government rightly, he does not altogether favour this measure, but feels it his duty, because of the position he occupies here, to introduce and recommend it. I am not sure that I was able to follow correctly the remarks of the honourable gentleman from Brandon, but if I am not mistaken he does not entirely approve of the Bill. He is an ex-Minister of Immigration and had considerable experience with matters of this kind.

Another reason why I suggest that we should not pass this measure now is because it has just been sent to us, in the last hours of the session, and we have not had an opportunity to consider it properly. I think that Bills that are as important as this one should not be brought to the Senate a few hours before the end of a session, if it can possibly be avoided. It seems to me that this House would not be doing itself justice if it gave its approval to the practice of passing legislation which has been hastily and cursorily examined. There must be many honourable members in this House who have not had an opportunity to study the question that is involved here. I am sorry that I have not had such an opportunity, because I should like to be able to vote intelligently upon the question. I hold myself partly responsible