

the date of entry, but we desire to take the opportunity of allowing the woman to have her residence count even before she has received her entry if she has been residing upon the land subsequent to her desertion. This particular provision means that where the husband has made certain improvements under the existing Act, those improvements may be collected from the next entrant. We do not desire to collect from the deserted wife, but to have authority to pay over the value of the improvements to the wife.

Mr. NESBITT: Less the amount of indebtedness?

Mr. ROCHE: Yes, if there was anything due. The second change is in connection with the advance of seed grain, fodder and relief made in 1914 and 1915. In some cases the party obtaining the advance failed to complete the duties in connection with his entry, and such entry has been cancelled. In cases of this kind it has been decided that any one taking up the land later on will have to pay the amount of the advance. In every case, a person obtaining entry for cancelled land is required to pay the value of the improvements remaining upon the land at the time he secures the entry. The amount so collected for improvements is applied on the seed grain debt, but if the value of the improvements is not equal to the amount of the seed grain indebtedness, the party securing the land is required to make up the remainder of the indebtedness. For instance, we have a lien on the land of any one who received advances from us in 1914 and 1915 under our seed grain distribution. If the homesteader abandoned that land and we had no lien upon it, the next entrant who applies for cancellation would receive a free entry for that homestead. But when we have a lien upon the land, in order to protect the treasury we insist that whoever takes up the land must assume the indebtedness over and above the value of the improvements.

Mr. OLIVER: If I have been able to correctly gather the purport of the minister's remarks, I would say that the first change with regard to the dependents of a homesteader is a very proper one. But there is no doubt in my mind, in regard to the second change, that the charging of the whole indebtedness against the subsequent entrant for an abandoned homestead will in many cases have the effect of preventing the entry from being made. There

[Mr. Roche.]

are many cases in which a large indebtedness has been incurred on account of seed grain and fodder, and if another bad season occurs this year—and I am afraid that some parts of the country may be facing a bad season—many homesteads may be abandoned, particularly those on which the Government has a lien. I think the Government would be well advised not to charge against the incoming settler the indebtedness incurred by the previous homesteader in regard to seed grain and fodder relief, beyond the fair value of the improvements upon the homestead, because if more than the value of the improvements is charged against the incoming settler he will to that extent be deterred from taking the homestead. I am quite sure that the amount of the lien will not be sufficient to deter the homesteader in all cases, but I am equally satisfied that it will be sufficient to deter him in a large number of cases if the indebtedness is greater than the actual value of the improvements. In that case he will be required to pay for something that he does not get, and there are very many people, of course, who object very strongly to paying for something which they do not get, but which somebody else gets. That sentiment, apart from the actual values, will have a serious effect in deterring the re-occupation of abandoned land. If, on the other hand, the Government undertook to collect from the incoming settler the value of the improvements only which the previous homesteader had made, and which the incoming homesteader would have the benefit of, there would be no such impediment to the re-occupation of the land, and the Government would in all probability get all they possibly could get out of the transaction in a large number of cases. That would encourage the re-occupation of the country, and not deter it, as I am afraid it will be deterred by the provision which the minister is placing in the Act.

Mr. ROCHE: Unless we take some means of protecting the treasury, we are liable to lose a very large amount of money. I do not think we should leave any stone unturned to protect the country against such loss when we have at our hand this method of collecting the indebtedness. I do not look at the matter in exactly the same light as my hon. friend, when he says that the subsequent entrant is paying for something that he does not get. In one sense that is true, but the incoming settler does get the land, and land in a thickly settled portion