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In 1896, the last year of Conservative administration, the homesteads taken up by Canadians totalled 570; while in 1902-03, under the Liberals, the homestead entries by Canadian totalled 6,536, or nearly six thousand more than during the last year of Conservative rule.

THE LAWS THAT MADE THE CHANGE.

The changes made, in regard to the lands of the Dominion, by the Hon. Clifford Sifton when he became Minister of the Interior, involved many details. Mr. Sifton had lived in the West for many years and was familiar with the conditions prevailing there. He had been a witness of the injustices and hardships suffered by the settlers during the Conservative days and was thus in a position to know what remedies to apply.

At the very outset he took a notable step by stopping the promiscuous selling of public lands. He thus cut out the speculators who, under the Tories, bought the Government land for a trifle and then held it at such high prices that settlement was greatly interfered with. Since the Liberal party came into power Government land has been retained for the settler alone.

Among the many changes in the homestead laws to encourage settlement and help the settler in every way within the means of the Government, were the following:—

A settler who has acquired the right to a second homestead may perform the residence duties connected therewith by living on the first homestead. It was found to be rather an absurd condition to require a man who is given the privilege of making a second homestead entry—especially as many were allowed by the late Government to second homestead their pre-emptions—and in order to relieve the settler from the inconvenience and expense of erecting another house within perhaps less than half a mile of the house in which he was living, or even a longer distance, the Department decided that the residence condition of the second homestead would be considered as completed by living on the first homestead. This was provided by the amendments of 29th June, 1897, but afterwards this provision by amendment of 23rd May, 1901, was restricted to lands in the vicinity of the first homestead. A settler may perform the residence duties in connection with his homestead by living with his father or mother, if they occupy farm lands in the vicinity. This is also a change for the convenience of young men who live near the homes of their parents. It gives them the right to perform the homestead conditions by living with the father if he is living on a farm or, if the father is dead, with the mother if she is residing on a farm.

Of course, the other conditions to entitle the applicant to a free homestead must be complied with.

A similar privilege is allowed, whereby a settler may live on purchased land in the vicinity whilst performing homestead duties. In such cases the settler must cultivate 30 acres on homestead or substitute 20 head of stock, with buildings for their accommodation, and have 80 acres substantially fenced.

When a homesteader having made entry by agent or without seeing the land, or for other good reason desires to abandon and make fresh entry, he is now allowed to do so, and if, within three months, this is allowed without extra charge.