

which an appeal shall be made. It is only a few weeks since the doubt was removed from their minds and they know now what they may expect in connection with costs if they appeal. I discussed the matter with some of the members of the court and I think the minister will find that the court will fully concur in the suggestion that a good deal of leniency might apply in respect to the time limit, so that men who feel they have a grievance and who, on account of uncertainty as to the costs, did not appeal within the time provided, might have an opportunity of appealing now that that doubt has been removed.

Mr. CAMPBELL: With regard to the question of the activities of the local officials of the soldier settlement board in collecting accounts against soldier settlers and the apparent highhandedness, of those officials it is only fair to say this: I have had referred to me many cases in which there seemed to be rather officious and highhanded action on the part of the local officials, but I must say that in discussing these cases with the chairman of the board I received as fair treatment as I could expect under the circumstances. We must recognize the fact that these officials are responsible for taking care of a great deal of the country's property, and while we expect them to give all reasonable consideration to soldier settlers, yet on the other hand we must realize that they have a financial responsibility as well. I thought it was only fair to say that the chairman has given most sympathetic consideration to any cases I have referred to him.

While I am on my feet I want to ask the minister whether or not he will make a statement as to his attitude toward the suggestion made to him or his department by the Saskatchewan association of rural municipalities, as I think it is called, as to amending the act so that the department will be liable for the taxes on all lands that have been once occupied as well as the lands that have reverted to the crown, that have been deserted by settlers or on which the settlers have been foreclosed.

Mr. FORKE: I think the amount of land under this category is exaggerated. The board is selling about 100 farms a month, and in a short time there will be very little land left on the hands of the government. In regard to some very poor land—I have no authority to say this, but I am not at all afraid I can get it through when I want to—we will be quite willing to hand some of that land over to the municipalities for the taxes and let them do what they like with it. It is not worth more than the taxes. This,

[Mr. Speakman.]

however, is a matter of government policy. If the government is going to pay taxes on government property, the board will pay those taxes. Mr. Lamb and others have addressed personal letters to the Prime Minister in regard to this, and it is a matter of government policy.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That is all the association is asking for, namely, that in case the board are not prepared to pay the taxes, we permit the municipalities to foreclose on them for tax sales the same as they do with regard to privately owned land. If the land is not worth the taxes, they are quite satisfied to take it over.

Mr. BROWN: In view of the fact that there is a great deal of criticism, some of it fair and some of it unfair, of the board, I may say that I received a letter from one branch of the Canadian legion in my constituency, expressing their very hearty appreciation of the way in which the board had dealt with all the cases of the soldiers in that particular part of the country. I had occasion to visit that branch of the legion in the early part of the winter. They were then discussing the matter in my presence, and since coming to Ottawa I have, as I say, received from them a letter expressing their appreciation of the way in which the board has dealt with the settlers.

Mr. SPENCER: This item is a double-headed one. There is about \$1,500,000 for soldier land settlement advances and cost of administration of soldier settlement. Could the minister inform the committee as to the actual cost of administration outside of the advances?

Mr. FORKE: \$755,000. As regards vote No. 60, soldier and general land settlement, the amount to be voted is \$2,845,000. The total amount recoverable is \$1,090,000; that all comes back to the government, or at least it stands against the lands. The way in which those estimates are made up in the Immigration department and the soldier settlement board, is very misleading as regards the amount of money that is really being expended. Only about half of the vote is really being expended. Out of the total vote of \$2,845,000, \$1,090,000 consists of recoverable expenditures. As regards the general land settlement, the administration expenses amount to \$600,000 and as regards the soldier settlement, the administration expenses amount to \$755,000, making a total of \$1,355,000 that is not recoverable.