

section was added to the Dominion Lands Act, which grants homestead patents to aliens. We can make the homesteader take all the oaths we require, but we do not compel him to become a British subject, because, when he has put in his three years' residence, there still may be reasons why he should not become a British subject, and the great principle at the very foundation of our Dominion Lands Act has been departed from in a most important particular. I should like to know how far the minister has recognized that condition, and in what way he does recognize it, because circumstances have come to my attention where aliens were refused patents, or were unable to get patents, because they were not able to become naturalized. The man had put in his term; he had fulfilled the conditions of his entry, but still he was not able to get his patent, because the department was not willing to carry out the letter of the law, as it appeared on the statute; that is to say, while the law said: "this man is entitled to patent at the end of three years," as a matter of fact he could not get it. Has it been the policy, or is it going to be the policy of the department to grant patents to aliens on the fulfilment of their homestead duties?

Mr. ROCHE: The hon. member is not referring to alien enemies?

Mr. OLIVER: No, to aliens.

Mr. ROCHE: As the hon. gentleman states, since the Naturalization Act of 1915 was passed, we have been granting patents to aliens, and it was provided by an amendment to the Dominion Lands Act that patents would issue upon the declaration of their intention of becoming British subjects. There may be a certain weakness in that in not providing a penalty if a man does not take out his naturalization papers, but I do not know that any cases have occurred in which at the end of five years they have failed to take out naturalization papers. The alternative is that we should issue patent at the end of five years. We did not extend the time because we thought that if settlers had to put in five years' residence and do the duties, before they could get patent, that would probably retard immigration. We decided that the best way to deal with the subject was to issue patents at the end of the accustomed period of three years providing all the duties were done, and providing that the homesteader declared his intention of becoming a British subject. Whether, in the opinion of Parliament, it is necessary that

the time should be extended so as not to issue patent until the end of five years, or whether it is necessary to impose a penalty, is of course, another consideration. But even if at the end of three years we do compel an alien to become naturalized, there is no reason whatever why such person, as soon as he receives his patent, might not dispose of his land to another alien thus leaving the land still in the hands of an alien. If, however, it is considered there is a weakness in the existing Act, I am open to suggestions, as to the best methods of remedying the same.

Mr. OLIVER: I am not criticising from the point of view the minister has indicated, but am stating that in administering this Act during the past several years, the department has apparently, by raising impediments, refused to give to aliens the benefits of the Act. The alien, for one reason or another, was not able to get naturalized, and difficulties were thrown in the way of getting his patent, so that he did not get it. Was that an accident, or did it happen by design? What was the policy of the department in the past, and what is to be its policy in the future? Is it to be the policy that an alien—not an alien enemy—on fulfilment of his three years' duties, may get and will be given his patent?

Mr. ROCHE: Upon inquiry, I do not know of any cases of the nature suggested by the honourable gentleman unless the parties were alien enemies. During the war, of course, some difficulties have been thrown in the way of alien enemies. In war time, under the War Measures Act, alien enemies cannot secure patent. I am not aware that the department have thrown any difficulties in the way of aliens securing their patents. If the hon. gentleman can bring any such cases to my knowledge, I shall be glad to have them looked into. It is not the policy of the department to throw any obstacles in the way of aliens securing patents.

Mr. OLIVER: The policy of the department then is that if the alien has fulfilled his duty, and if he is not an alien enemy, he can get his patent. The other position is that the alien has received the material advantage of citizenship, although still an alien. What I want to get at is this: Is there any mutual obligation existing between the alien and the Government on the one part or on the other as a result of this material advantage which the alien has secured?