

tion with another member of the board. I have always been impressed with the great difficulty of that position, for I used to feel that the task would have been much easier had I known that there might be an appeal from the decisions we gave. I have had a good deal of experience in Manitoba in the valuing of lands. I used to equalize all the assessments of land as between the various municipalities in the province, comparing one municipality with another, and as a result of the work I put in at that time I realize, perhaps as well as any one else can, just how difficult it is for one individual or a board to arrive at a fair and correct valuation of any given piece of land.

The hon. member for Yale (Mr. Stirling) referred to the valuation of land going down rapidly in British Columbia simultaneously with a fall in fruit prices. He said that the bottom fell out of the fruit market, so that fruit was practically of no value. It struck me as he made this statement that it was rather strange that the price of fruit did not vary very much in the prairie provinces at the time to which he referred. I mention this in passing to show that something is wrong with the economic system when the fruit growers in British Columbia must sell their fruit at very low prices while the consumers in the prairies never realize the fact that the value of this commodity to the growers in British Columbia is on the decline. Someone was evidently making far too big a profit out of the fruit growers.

Coming back to the question of valuing lands, I think we all realize that one of the great difficulties in connection with the matter is the fact that these lands were purchased during a time of inflation. As a matter of fact that is the trouble with the rural credit schemes in most of the prairie provinces. Rural credit was undertaken when land and stock were at peak prices, and when the security offered for loans seemed ample, although in a year or two it was not sufficient to cover the amount of the loan. When the soldiers came back from the war, an arrangement was made to have them settle on lands which unfortunately were being sold at very high prices. The soldier returned weary and worn from war service, and he was looking for a home immediately; he wanted a place in which to settle down and build a home for himself. I claim therefore that he was not then in the best condition to take care of himself. He was ready to take the first place that apparently suited him, and he entered into an arrangement which since he has found himself utterly unable to carry out. It is

therefore the duty of parliament and of the country to see that justice is done to these men who have gone on the land.

I hope that we shall get some really constructive criticism from every quarter of the House. The measure having been introduced by the government, I do hope that the leader of the opposition will lend his constructive ability to make the act as fair and satisfactory as possible. We do not want it to prove a failure; we do not want it made an instrument for the aggrandizement of either one party or the other: we want a bill that will work to the advantage of the soldier settlers themselves and do full justice by them.

As to the appraisal of land values, I do not think that it would be the best thing to leave it to the superintendent of the board to decide upon the values. I must admit that while the leader of the opposition was speaking I could see some room for criticism in this regard; it seems to me that probably this would not be the very best method to adopt to begin with. I do not see why we could not adopt some system similar to a board of arbitration. The local superintendent acting with someone appointed by the soldier settlers might comprise the first board of appraisal. I do not think that the soldier settler's representative ought to be a lawyer or a businessman—well, I would not say that he should not be a businessman, but I would insist upon his being well acquainted with land valuation. These two might not agree; and while I was at first opposed to the idea of carrying an appeal to the county court judge, I have come to the view that if the two appraisers forming the first board could not agree then the appeal might be made to a judge. I would not be entirely averse to such an arrangement. It has been argued of course that a county court judge might not be a judge of land; he might not know very much about land values. But I am inclined to agree that he could perhaps come to some satisfactory decision, after listening to the evidence submitted to him on appeal, and strike a reasonable balance between the differences of opinion upon which he might adjudicate. So that I am not standing firmly against a proposal of this kind. In fact, Mr. Chairman, before the bill is passed I would be willing to accept almost any proposal, no matter how I might have regarded it at the outset if I thought it was an improvement on my own idea. The great thing after all is to enact a really good piece of legislation that will do justice to our returned men on the land. I know that this will be very difficult to accomplish. I shall not at-