

Soldier Settlement Act

before a judge. It is rather a more practical method, and for that reason in the western provinces—and I believe in some of the eastern provinces—there have been developed special tribunals, usually for the whole province, having to do solely with the assessment work, men skilled in the matter of land value, skilled in the matter of assessment. In Saskatchewan, for instance, there is an assessment commission of three men, all of them experienced in the matter of assessment and land values, having to do with that and that alone; and they are the court of appeal with regard to the value of lands generally. I think it would be the testimony of men from that part of Canada who are familiar with that type of settlement that this system works better and more satisfactorily than an appeal to the local county court judge, for the reason that the opinion of one judge as to the value of land may vary very greatly from the opinion of his brother judge from the district alongside of him.

In conclusion, I say that the government is not desirous of approaching this matter at all from the point of view of party advantage. There is no thought in the mind of my hon. friend the Minister of the Interior of creating a political machine; indeed the right hon. leader of the opposition accorded to the minister a certain political innocence which I fear he would not accord to me. But perhaps he will believe me when I say that I never had in my mind any idea that it would be possible to do with this measure what he suggested we are going to do, until he himself made reference to it this afternoon—he compels me to think about it.

But after all this subject is too great for even the friendly bickering which may take place across the floor of the House. It bristles with too many problems. If we cannot deal with it without political partisanship we certainly cannot solve it by the aid of political partisanship, and I feel sure the minister will be prepared to give consideration, on the further stages of the bill, to the constructive suggestions which have been made, with the object of dealing more effectively with what is admitted to be a most difficult matter indeed. I am not much enamoured personally of the suggestion with respect to the appointment of the district court judge. I recognize the difficulties of the district board of arbitration. I have personally a great deal more faith in the possibility of securing a proper settlement as between the Soldier Settlement Board and the settler than I have in any subsequent appeal. The machinery for subsequent appeals must be created, of

[Mr. Dunning.]

course, to deal with that class of case which cannot be settled by negotiation. But I do not believe that the appeal machinery should be set up in such form as to invite wholesale appeal, because costs will be involved in appeals. You may say, "Have no lawyers." Well there will be lawyers, and they will be needed. Usually they do a lot more than they are really required to do, and they charge a lot more than most of us like, but they are handy to have round in connection with matters of this kind.

The best solution may be to invoke the assistance of the district court, I feel sure the minister will consider that. But my object in rising was really to plead that we should attempt to deal with this matter on its merits. A general discussion on the tariff on which we cannot agree will not advance this matter, neither will a general discussion on old age pensions or rural credits help us in dealing with this practical question. We know this is before us. Australian butter is not before us at this moment, neither are Chinese eggs, but we are faced with the position in which we find ourselves in relation to the soldier settlement scheme. I feel sure that my right hon. friend will pardon my reference to his suggestion that we are going to get \$40,000,000 of a campaign fund out of this matter. We have no such intention.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Dunning) has evidently decided to import into this assembly methods that he has been accustomed to adopt in the legislature of Saskatchewan. It will be a kindness to him—I offer it not in any didactic spirit at all—if I advise him in advance that in this House argument is always of more value than loquacity and reason has much more effect than vociferation. He urges very strongly the abandonment of party spirit in the discussion of this measure and cites me as an instance of an offender. I will place the few remarks I ventured to offer to this House on the subject of this resolution by way of contrast to what we have just listened to from the Minister of Railways, and I will put myself in the judgment of those who certainly are not partial witnesses in my favour—say hon. gentlemen to my left—as to which was an example of heated and insane partisanship.

He is very strongly of the view that we should discuss this subject on its merits. With that we are in accord, but the first thing essential to a discussion of any subject on its merits is to really know that subject. It is this essential which the minister has yet to surmount. He does not understand the