

sponsibility of recommending any individual for re-entry.

Mr. McTAGGART: How large is this area?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No area is laid out for that purpose. Choice would have to be made by the individual himself of any crown lands.

Mr. SALES: What becomes of the first entry?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): That is just the reason why the department does not want to take any responsibility. The indebtedness that undoubtedly will have accrued against the property will have to be looked after by the provincial authorities, and they will have to take the responsibility of recommending to the federal authorities any individual who is to receive that privilege.

Mr. McTAGGART: Possibly the minister misunderstood my last question. I wish to know particularly what are the boundaries of the area which has been withdrawn from homestead entry?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): This was an arrangement made by the previous government, and I am told it is an area fifteen miles wide along all existing railways.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Do I understand the minister to say that he has perfected arrangements whereby homesteaders within the province may have second homesteads upon the recommendation of the provincial Department of Agriculture; or is that only within certain areas?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): No, this matter has not been brought to a definite conclusion yet, but that is the proposal upon which we are now working. No specific area is set apart for that particular purpose. None need be set apart, because one will readily understand that although at first sight it may appear an easy matter to arrange, yet as one looks into it, it becomes somewhat complicated and difficult, as in most cases the applicant for re-entry has assumed financial obligations in respect to his original entry, which renders the transfer very difficult to complete. But if the provincial authorities, who understand the local situation, in their wisdom make the recommendation that the applicant be given a second chance, then we are prepared to get the necessary authority to meet such a situation.

[Mr. Charles Stewart.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: I fully appreciate that the question is surrounded with difficulties, because I have tried lately to think out some satisfactory solution. I hope the minister does not contemplate adopting a policy whereby any one having a homestead in these provinces may, if he secures the approval of the local government, have two homesteads, or abandon his first and get a second homestead, as I am afraid it would be an extension of the patronage system beyond the aspirations of even the most ambitious. I am aware of the difficulties to be encountered, in that homesteaders in these dry areas—and it is the dry areas that the minister must be directing his attention to—are in municipalities to which they owe taxes for schools and other local works, and the municipalities depend upon the contributions of these homesteaders just as they depend upon the contributions of their neighbours, and as a consequence difficulties are encountered which the municipalities and the provincial government will have to arrange between themselves. But let me warn the minister that the responsibility is on his own department, and that the final determination as to whether a second homestead is to be granted or not must rest there. It may be that he can work out a plan whereby responsibility as to local indebtedness will be assumed by the provincial authorities.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): There is no intention of the federal authorities taking that responsibility.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It may be the federal authorities cannot escape some share of responsibility even there. But after the provincial government has given its decision on that point, that must not end the matter; the minister himself must exercise supervision some way as to who are to get second homesteads and who are not. There must be some principle—there must indeed be regulations submitted to this House for parliamentary approval. Above all things, let it not become a matter merely for the imprimatur of provincial governments as to when second homesteads shall be given. And I would say as well, that there necessarily will have to be some geographical limitations in connection with the application of any policy to this subject.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I do not intend, Mr. Chairman, to get into a discussion of the difficulties of southern Saskatchewan or southern Alberta, but I quite agree with the right hon. gentleman that