

my hon. friend opens the door for such friction by taking out of the law that provision which does not, and cannot in any way, interfere with the rights of the homesteader to get his patent, and which only establishes beyond question the date and place and circumstances under which his rights begin. That is what he is taking away from the homesteader, and that is what I object to. In the constituency I represent, and in the adjoining constituency, one of the hon. gentleman's officials, a land agent, has twice been a candidate in the provincial election. In another constituency in the neighbourhood one of his timber inspectors has been a candidate, and in the constituency I represent one of his timber inspectors was a candidate at the last provincial election, and was supported in his candidature by one of his homestead inspectors. Under those circumstances, while I am not accusing my hon. friend of sinister motives, he will pardon me if, representing a pioneer community, I have some question in my mind as to taking away

4 p.m. from those pioneers the specific right that they shall date the beginning of their right from a fixed point set down in the Act, and make them dependent on inquiry from the homestead inspectors or the land agent, or the timber inspectors, or some other officials of this Government, to find out when and where their rights begin.

Mr. ROCHE: The hon. gentleman overlooks the fact that there will be no more doubt in the mind of the homesteader under this section than there is at the present day under the old section. This Act is printed and available for any homesteader, and he can read the Act as it will be amended, just the same as he can read the present Act, and the Act gives him the privilege of having four options. He has one option more than provided under the present Act. There is no taking away of any right.

Mr. OLIVER: Would the hon. gentleman read the section of the Act with reference to options?

Mr. ROCHE: I have read it, but I am telling the hon. gentleman that he still has the same right—

Mr. OLIVER: Will the hon. gentleman read that portion of the section which sets out the additional options the homesteaders have.

[Mr. Oliver.]

Mr. ROCHE: The present Act provides that the time shall count, (1) from the date of entry, (2) or from the date of commencement of residence, either before or after date of entry. Now we propose to add to that.

Mr. OLIVER: Where do you add to it?

Mr. ROCHE: We add the words "six months in each of the three years."

Mr. OLIVER: Will the hon. gentleman read the paragraph where he makes that addition?

Mr. ROCHE: This is the explanation and object of the Act as it will be administered. The explanation of this section reads:

(3) Six months' residence in each of three calendar years.

(4) Homestead year and calendar year combined, or otherwise shifting the date for the commencement of the term as may be most satisfactory to the settler.

If this legislation passes it is intended to give these other two privileges in counting the time, in addition to the provision in the existing Act. That is the result of the Act.

Mr. OLIVER: My hon. friend has stated that certain intentions of the department in matters of administration are contained in the Act. They are not contained in the Act, and the omission does not interfere with the additional consideration that he suggests he is so ready to give to homesteaders. He takes away from the homesteader the fixed date upon which the homesteader knows by Act of Parliament that his rights begin, and he substitutes nothing for that, except the statement that he is going to administer the Act in a certain way.

Mr. ROCHE: Section (b) at present reads:

(b) To have resided thereon at least six months in each of three years from the date of entry, or the date of commencement of residence.

The amended section will read:

(b) To have resided thereon at least six months in each of three years.

And that leaves it—

Mr. OLIVER: Entirely in the hands of the department to say when it shall begin.

Mr. ROCHE: Exactly. The hon. gentleman must take it that the Act will be administered by the officials appointed by my hon. friend's (Mr. Oliver) Government in the best interests of the settlers. The officials the hon. gentleman appointed during his regime are still administering this Act.