

If the hon. gentleman could not read my writing, he could probably read print.

Mr. SPEAKER. I would like to say to the House that I am very glad that the misunderstanding which occurred in reference to this Bill has been set straight—that the hon. member for Assiniboia took the first opportunity in his power to withdraw from the mistake which he had made, and that the hon. member who gave notice of the Bill has had an opportunity to introduce it.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). I observe that this is a public Bill, and, therefore, the motion is not regular, as the necessary notice of it has not been given; but, as the Bill has already been moved once, we can receive the motion with the consent of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER. It can only be done with the unanimous consent of the House.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

DOMINION LANDS ACT.

Mr. DOUGLAS moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 60) in further amendment of the Dominion Lands Act. He said: The chief object of this Bill is to relieve the settler from the burden of actual residence in obtaining a second homestead. The application of the Bill is limited to this class of settlers. Parties who performed their homestead duties and received homesteads in 1889 are entitled by the Act to receive a second homestead. As the law now stands, they are compelled to reside on the second homestead, which obliges them to abandon the improvements they have made on the first. This is a very great hardship. Again, homesteads are often taken up by the sons of the settler, and this provision has led many to evade the law by spending six months of the year on the homestead, not in actual residence, but simply sleeping on it, making the improvements, and then applying for their patent. I may say that this provision has always been a fruitful source of insanity in Manitoba and the Territories imposing upon people the necessity of living alone for six months each year for three years. In many other respects the results have been very injurious. Therefore, it is sought by this amendment to remove this difficulty. It does not involve any loss to the Government, financial or otherwise, but is simply to relieve settlers of this burden of actual residence under such circumstances.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

DOMINION LANDS ACT.

Mr. DAVIN moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 61) further to amend the Dominion

Lands Act. He said: The object of this Bill is different from the object of the Bill which my hon. friend has just introduced. Its object is to still keep on the Statute-book certain privileges that were taken away by the Act of 1891 as to homesteading affecting what is called the two-mile limit; to continue for a few years more the two-mile limit which was abolished by the Act of 1891. Clause 6 of the Dominion Lands Act enabled a homesteader, when residing two miles from his homestead, to fulfil his duties and then enabled him, by cultivating a little more, to get a homestead. They cultivate a little more than was required from the ordinary homesteader—15 or 25 acres more, making altogether 40 acres. This also provides certain privileges for the ranchers. At present a rancher, no matter how much cattle he has, no matter what the size of his herd, and what number of sheep he may have in his flock or what may be the number of his band of horses, cannot, under the construction placed on the Dominion Lands Act, get a homestead entry unless he cultivates a certain number of acres. Some of these gentlemen have their ranches on lands not capable of arable cultivation at all, and it would be useless for them to fulfil these conditions. Therefore what I provide is this, and it is a new provision; but I may say that although the construction which has been placed on the Dominion Lands Act has been adverse to those gentlemen getting a patent, my own belief always has been that no difficulty need necessarily have been found in arriving at the conclusion that under that Act, a patent might have been given. However, the ruling has been that these men cannot get a patent, and some of the best men in the Territories, men of wealth, men who have improved our stock, men who have been living in the country fourteen or fifteen years do not own an acre of land. That is a condition of things which ought to be got rid of. This Bill provides that he will be entitled to a homestead if he has resided on the quarter section which was the subject of his entry for three years prior to his application for a patent:

That within the first of the three years and in each of the two succeeding years he has cultivated not less than one acre for garden purposes;

That he has fenced sufficient land to be considered a bona fide settler;

That he has fifty head of stock;

That he has erected stables and outhouses sufficient to winter fifty head of cattle.

If he has fulfilled these conditions, though he may not have ploughed an acre, he is clearly a settler. That is not asking very much, and I may tell the hon. First Minister, who is a lawyer himself, that if he should turn his attention to the clause he will come to the same conclusion as I have reached, that under existing clauses probably a patent might be given. Those ranchers might be able to have it as a