

Mr. MEIGHEN: It would all depend on the maximum advantage. We are not going to let any man sell unless we are assured that he is likely to fail and that it is in his interests to sell. In a word, the talisman in every case is the interest of the soldier.

Mr. MANION: What line of co-operation is being pursued at present between, say, the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, or any provinces which are not distinctly prairie provinces, and the Soldier Settlement Board, in the way of getting settlers on their lands?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Bill provides, as the Order in Council provided, that we may make arrangements with the provinces for utilization of provincial Crown lands. We have adopted the policy not to interest ourselves in provincial Crown lands unless they have been brought to such a stage as to clearance, etc., as to be reasonably fit for a man to make a living on it immediately. In other words, these lands must be on a level with ordinary homestead land as regards sustaining a family; and from the point of view of roads, schools, accessibility to railways, etc., they must be of such a character that it would be desirable to encourage settlement on them.

We do not intend to take provincial Crown lands and do the work of the provinces on these lands. We have enough to do with regard to our own lands. It is for the province to place the land in that position, and then, if they will permit that land to be handled by the board, we are ready to make any fair rate with them.

Mr. MANION: The reason I asked that question is that I noticed in regard to the details given by the minister in his very able exposition of this exceedingly large scheme, that out of all the soldiers who have so far settled on the land, numbering 11,518, 7,812, or roughly two-thirds, have been granted lands in the Prairie Provinces. I have no objection to settlers going to the three Prairie Provinces. It would naturally be to the advantage of Canada that these three Prairie Provinces should be settled and developed, but it is a source of regret to men from Northern Ontario, particularly, and probably from some of the other provinces, such as British Columbia and Quebec, which have large areas of bush land, to see that this scheme gives them so little benefit. In saying this I do not mean to imply that there is any discrimination, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that the bush lands

will derive very little of the benefits that are to accrue from the carrying out of this project. For instance, in Northern Ontario there are thousands of acres of good land—bush land, I admit—throughout the clay belt. There is an area extending a thousand miles from Winnipeg to north of Ottawa in Northern Ontario through which three lines of railway run. These three lines of railway pass through a territory which is practically unproductive in traffic except mineral. Those pioneers who have settled in the district of Cochrane, Cobalt and in my own district at the head of the Lakes, have made a very fine success of the land which they have taken up. I happened, by a coincidence, to get a letter to-day from a farmer in my riding about another matter, and I think it is worth while to put part of it on Hansard, because it illustrates the capabilities of that country. The writer of this letter says:

I am in my sixty-fifth year and while I have done nothing astounding yet I have been a useful citizen and the pioneer of this settlement. I started in 1893 with thirteen acres under cultivation, a team and wagon paid for, \$1,000 of debt, and a large family of small children. With frugality, sobriety and steady application, I have a few thousands to spare after making ample provision for the maintenance of my wife and myself during our lifetime; so I have no complaint.

Here is a settler who went into that country as a pioneer twenty-six years ago and made good. There are hundreds of other farmers in that district who can make an equally good showing and the reason I am taking up the time of the committee is that I would like to see some scheme worked out by the board, the minister and the provinces, such as the province of Ontario and the other provinces to which this argument applies, whereby they would get a portion of these lands settled up by these returned soldiers, because a better class of citizens could not be found.

Mr. ARTHURS: I would like to call the attention of the minister to a case of a number of soldiers who went overseas from Northern Ontario. They were locatees and had started work on their farms. They are in doubt as to whether they are entitled to receive assistance from the board. I would like the minister to make it clear whether any advance can be made to these men who have come back to their old farms which they are clearing. Can they get an advance, such as is made to other returned soldiers who are taking up land, or in case they do not ask for an advance, can they take advantage of those cheap prices for machinery, harness, etc? Provided a man