

unless he happens to be some one who is related to some one else who unfortunately has got in there himself. I do not see any principle in it. If it is right to select a certain area and designate it ranch land on which people cannot succeed as farmers, it is no kindness to let them go there; it is an injury. If such is the case, then no exceptions should be made, and people should not be allowed to go in merely because they are relatives of somebody who happens to be there already. The reason for the line of demarcation must be that it is bad not only for the country but for the individual as well to try to homestead the undesirable section. If this is the reason, then you are only frustrating it by allowing some one to homestead this particular portion of land because he happens to be the son of those who are unfortunate enough to be in the district. I have no doubt there are some portions of good land there; maybe there is an odd section or quarter section that can be farmed; and probably those who are there now are on the best of the land. But if there are a few more good sections left, the principle should not be to confine them to the children of those people who are already in the area. What ought to be done is to select whatever land is fit and throw it open in the ordinary way to any one at all. In other words, the division should be drawn on the line of merit of the land and not on the relationship between the persons who happen to apply and others who are resident in the district at the present time. Under the bill as it stands, any one who happens to be related to somebody there can go in and take his fate on some piece of sand or purely ranch land, and the minister will not protect him.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): That is not right.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Where is there any provision to protect him?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The provision is not in the bill, but the regulation deals with the matter. An examination has first to be made of the homestead.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There is to be an examination before any one is allowed to homestead that land?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Where is the provision to that effect?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): It will be in the regulations.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I should think that would be important enough to be embodied in the act.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): My hon. friend understands that it is not well to clutter up the act with regulations.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Not with minor regulations, no; but this is important. In fact, it is far more important to select the land than to decide upon the individual on the basis of relationship.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): My right hon. friend is partly right. The hon. member for Maple Creek stated the other day—and I agreed with him—that the whole of the territory south of township 16 in Alberta and Saskatchewan is not a dry area. From the eastern boundary of Saskatchewan over at least to the town of Assiniboia, which is a considerable distance westward in southern Saskatchewan, there is as good a piece of territory as can be found in the west. In the immediate vicinity of Maple Creek and to the southward there is a very bad strip, and then along the boundary there are some areas of fairly good land. But I do not think we should change the conditions in respect of the taking up by homesteaders of dry, sandy lands with failure a certain result. In the constituency of Medicine Hat there is a piece of territory along the boundary between Montana and Alberta where farming has been carried on with great success, and there has been a considerable demand to increase the homestead area in that vicinity. But there are not many homesteads even in those districts that our homestead inspectors would recommend as suitable for agricultural purposes. In that area, however, there are ranchers who are desirous that their sons shall succeed them in the ranching occupation, and to that end they would like them to be able to get a homestead within nine miles of the parents' residence. It was in order to meet that demand that I consented to recommend the homesteading of a few parcels of land in this limited area. It will be under the supervision of homestead inspectors who will report here to Ottawa before the claim of any applicant is granted. But to make it general would defeat the object that we are now trying to attain, because if a newcomer, unacquainted with the climatic conditions, went in there to engage in agriculture, he would be practically doomed to failure. He cannot make a living in that area on one quarter section in any case. For the reasons I have outlined, therefore, we have decided to try