

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: Does subsection (b) of section 5 apply to lands in all the provinces of Canada?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, it is intended to apply to the work that is gone on with in any province by arrangement with the Provincial Government. That is the intention. I would not like to indicate that it was likely any arrangement could be made, or that it would be wise to make it. This Act is for the purpose of reclaiming lands in the Dominion of Canada for the benefit of the Dominion.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Will the minister say in what year the Dominion purchased the swamp lands of Manitoba?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Dominion took back the swamp lands in the year 1912. That was part of the terms of the settlement of 1912, by which the subsidy provisions applicable to Manitoba were raised to the standard of those of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): It seems to me that we incurred a liability at that time that we were not expecting. Prior to that date the swamp lands belonged to the province of Manitoba, and it would have been better for us, perhaps, if, as was insisted at the time by hon. members on this side of the House, the Government had left the title of those lands in the provincial government instead of vesting the title in this Government. It was done, as I understood at the time, as a pretext to enable the Dominion Government to give some money to Manitoba, to conciliate Manitoba by handing out to it Dominion cash. In that way we incurred the liability of looking after those swamp lands, which has now come back on us and is going to be a bill of expense for some years to come.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman should not get the impression that because the lands are capable of improvement they are a liability. If they were not capable of improvement they would be a liability, but the very passage of this legislation is an assumption that the lands are capable of improvement. The great part of the swamp lands of Manitoba are valuable; and I have not the slightest doubt that they are much more valuable than they were in 1912 when taken over by the Dominion. If this Bill passes it will make them still more valuable.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): My object was to point out to the hon. gentleman that the policy advocated on this side of
[Mr. Meighen.]

the House at the time was to leave those lands to Manitoba to drain and look after. By refusing to accept the course advocated by hon. gentlemen on this side, the Government has assumed the ownership of these swamp lands, and we are required to spend large sums of money in making them fit for occupancy, which liability should have been undertaken by the province of Manitoba.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We will get the money all back, perhaps a hundred or two hundredfold more. What will the hon. member say then?

Mr. McMASTER: Does the minister say two hundredfold?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Perhaps a hundred or two hundredfold, I would expect so. If these lands are worth \$25 an acre, the price at which some of the lands in the neighbourhood are sold, it would represent two and a half times the estimated cost of reclamation.

Mr. KAY: Where reclaimed lands are sold by auction, is it intended there shall be an upset price?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, always.

Mr. MURPHY: Has anything been done towards the drainage of lake Manitoba, or is it intended to do anything of that nature in the near future?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Nothing has been done, nor can I say that anything is intended immediately in that direction. It is possible that Manitoba may pass an Act which would enable us to operate in that province, in which event we would take into consideration the possibility and the wisdom of draining that lake, among perhaps other experiments that may be tried. For myself I would not like even to indicate an opinion that it would be the part of wisdom to attempt to drain the lake.

Section agreed to.

On section 6—Director of Reclamation Service.

Mr. ROBB: Who is that officer?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Mr. Drake, who is sitting in front of me.

On section 7—Annual Report.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): I do not see anything in this Bill which authorizes the expenditure of money. Is there any limit to the amount which the Government should spend? Will the minister point out the clause bearing on this point?