

present subject" in the resolution before us. So that while I did express some doubt as to the legal meaning of these words, I can see no difference whatever, and I do not believe that the law officers can prove any difference.

I had an unhappy experience with the law officers of the crown who drafted certain soldier settlement amendments some years ago. In 1928, an amendment was passed in the special soldier committee, the purpose being to provide that no homestead crown land entered upon by soldier settlers at a date subsequent to their receipt of the latest authorization of a loan from the board could be seizable or could be held for debts incurred before entry was made. The law officers of the department and of the Department of Justice so garbled that simple amendment that after it had been sent back two or three times from that committee, and after they had assured us finally that it was good law and good legal English, it came to the house and half a dozen legal men, among them the then leader of the opposition, who is in the same position today, attacked it, with the result that the whole amendment had to be returned in an effort to make it abundantly clear just what was intended.

I will admit, therefore, that I come to the house rather prejudiced against the drafting done by some of the law officers of the crown. In this instance I claim that the resolution is in all its essential features the same as the one we had two years ago, and if we pass it we have a right to assume that the minister will introduce a bill similar to that which was brought in on the basis of the resolution which was passed in 1936. On the other hand, I would have no objection to having the resolution withdrawn, if it is merely descriptive of the bill that is to follow, on the understanding that it will be reframed in accordance with the bill which it is proposed to bring down. But the department cannot have it both ways. Either the resolution is the same as the one we had before or it is different. If it is different, very well; in that event the bill will be different. But if the resolution is the same, then—perhaps, like one hon. member from British Columbia, I do not easily grasp these things—I must confess that I cannot see the difference.

Mr. NEILL: The government has set its hen on duck's eggs and now proposes to give us chickens, and we do not want chickens.

Mr. NEEDHAM: This resolution is not tackling the problem that the soldier settlers are up against; it is not giving them much hope for ultimately liquidating their obligations. I agree with many others who have

spoken that the soldier settler is getting discouraged. He has worked hard and tried to meet his obligations, but the problem is too great for him. I was talking to one man last fall and he presented a case which perhaps is a little peculiar. It is this. Two young fellows took over a section of land, half a section each, sixteen years ago. They put up their shacks and went to work; they paid to the municipality in taxes over \$4,000 and to the soldier settlement board over \$5,000, and now they owe more than they did at the start. Analyse that situation from the standpoint of what that land was bringing to the crown before these men took it over, and see where they stand now. Before that land was taken over, it was crown land that was rented for pasturage and it brought in \$25 a year. In the sixteen years, had it remained under the crown, the crown would have got \$670 from it. As a matter of fact they have got over \$5,000. To put the matter another way, if it had continued as pasture land it would have taken over 200 years for the crown to receive the amount it has actually received to date from that land. These settlers have been there sixteen years; they owe more today than they did when they first went on the land and, as they say, they would have been better off on relief; for they have worked sixteen years for the country for three meals a day.

Mr. DUNNING: Does my hon. friend mean to say that soldiers paid for crown land—that they paid the government of Canada for crown land?

Mr. NEEDHAM: In meeting their obligations.

Mr. DUNNING: What obligations?

Mr. NEEDHAM: In connection with the land they took over from the board.

Mr. DUNNING: But no crown land was charged for; that is a certainty.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It was school land, I suppose. It was land they took over from the board anyway.

Mr. DUNNING: School land? That is a different matter; that belongs to the province. Crown land, in the ordinary sense, no soldier settler has paid for at any time.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It was taken over from the board sixteen years ago, and that is the situation.

Mr. POOLE: Over ten years ago this land belonged not to the province but to the federal government.

Mr. DUNNING: What land? School lands?