

policy, and I condemned it as a bad policy. But I say that the fact of its being a bad policy does not always relieve you from your obligation that you entered into, which obligation you must carry out, even though it is under a bad policy. Now, Sir, it is not a good thing to drink champagne, for instance. If you drink enough of it, and drink it often enough, it will tear your liver to pieces. But if a man who is fond of champagne were to order some from Mr. Bate, and then, when Mr. Bate sent the bill, he were to sit down and write to him and say: "Dear Sir, drinking champagne is a mistake; it is bad for the liver; it is not conducive to general health; I have given up drinking champagne and as a matter of principle I won't pay your bill." Why, what would Mr. Bate say to him? He would say, "You are under obligation to pay, and I will hold you to it." Well, I will not trouble the House with the letters, but I have letters here from a number of these men who say they came in here having before their eyes pamphlets in which this very North-West Act of 1883 was quoted; they came in here with that promise of a second homestead playing on their wills, and what did they find? Why, they had scarcely fulfilled the conditions for getting a second homestead—three years it takes; on the 25th of May the clause was put in and it requires three years to perfect the conditions to get a second homestead; and on the 2nd June, 1886, the second homestead was done away with. They, of course, point out what a very unjust thing it is. You see how irritating it is to those who came in, in 1884, 1885 and 1886. The men who came in from the 25th May, 1883, or before, up to the 2nd June, 1884, could go, owing to the change that my hon. friend the late Minister of Interior made, and get a second homestead. The principle has been acknowledged. But men who came in in 1885 and 1886, with this same Act on the statute-book, cannot get a second homestead, because, as I tell you, the amendment that I was able to effect in 1887 only went the one year. Last year I did not bring it up, for a lamentable reason—because we had lost the man who had been such an ornament to this House. It may be said—I know that arguments of this kind are sometimes used—that this was permissive. I will say this for the late Minister, that he never attempted to press that objection; but I will call the attention of the Minister of Interior to the argument on that head. The 37th clause of the Dominion Lands Act, 1883, reads as follows:—

"Any person who has obtained a homestead patent after two years' residence, or a certificate countersigned by the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, as in the next preceding clause mentioned, with the additional statement that there has been three years' residence, may obtain another homestead and pre-emption entry."

Of course it would be quite unworthy of a Government to rest anything on that word "may"; but if anybody attempted to do so, what have we? We have that declared by the statute to be a right, so that any difficulty on that head is entirely removed. If we look at section 2, chapter 54 of the Revised Statutes, we find that pre-emption entry means:

"The entering on the books of a local agent for a preferential claim to acquire by purchase, in connection with the homestead, and on becoming entitled to the patent for the homestead, a quarter section, or part of a quarter section of land adjoining such homestead; and existing pre-emption right means the right of obtaining, and right to such quarter section."

If we turn to section 3, what do we find? It is declared with regard to pre-emptions:

"And further, such person shall forfeit his homestead and pre-emption right."

So that in one part of the Act, in regard to a matter where it is said he may obtain pre-emption, we have it declared that that is a right. But mark the language of section 43:

"No person who has obtained a homestead patent or a certificate countersigned by the Commissioner of Dominion Lands or a member of the Dominion Lands Board, as in the next preceding clause mentioned,

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shall be entitled to obtain another homestead entry; but nothing contained in this clause shall take away the right of any person who, before the 2nd day of June, 1886, had received such certificate or recommendation for a patent."

So that the Act of 1886, in so many words, declares that it was taking away, not a possibility of getting a second homestead at the discretion of the Minister, but taking away a right which it acknowledges in express terms. It is hardly necessary to take up the time of the House with the second branch of the second homestead question, because the Minister can deal with that administratively. But I will say this, as I have pointed out before, that I can see no advantage and no magic in the six-mile limit, and I pointed out, when I had the honor of an interview with the Minister of Interior when I first came down, that one of the best settlers north of Pense, Joseph Young, who has cultivated every acre of his homestead and pre-emption cultivatable, has next to him a cancelled homestead, but he cannot enter on it. It would be a very desirable thing for him if he could do so, for he has two stalwart sons and a family, and he is one of our best farmers. He came into the country with nothing and he is a well-to-do man to-day, and in no year, not even in 1886, did he fail to have a crop; he has had a crop every year, but he is a thoroughpaced farmer and is a first-rate man. He cannot, however, homestead that cancelled homestead adjoining his own, and what is the use of his going away? He is forty-five years old and does not want to go away six miles. But that, I repeat, is a matter which can be dealt with administratively, and so I will not trouble the House further with it beyond calling attention to a petition I have here which was presented to the Minister. It was sent to him by a large number of agricultural societies, urging this question of second homesteading, and also urging that time be given for payment of pre-emptions. I will say this, as I said to the farmers, that I think there is no need of their being very anxious about their being allowed time. So far as my experience of the department goes, no *bona fide* farmer has ever been pressed for his pre-emption payment if he could show that he was going along in a *bona fide* manner. I have always found that Mr. Smith, and the department here, the moment they were satisfied that the man was a *bona fide* settler, were willing to agree to any reasonable representations made, provided the matter was all right. So I never felt nervous in regard to that matter. I will only add this further, that the farmers around Moose Jaw and elsewhere are very anxious they should be given five years in which to pay for their pre-emptions. I will make a further comment on this resolution, because there is one clause in it with which I do not agree. It reads:

"Should it be found necessary in the future to withhold public lands from homesteading for railway purposes, it should be provided that alternate quarter sections be granted instead of alternate sections."

In the same resolution it is stated:

"It has been proved that for the success of the settler it is necessary for him to engage in both stock raising and grain, and it has been demonstrated that for this purpose a settler requires not less than 320 acres."

So one part of the resolution is, inadvertently, contrary to the other. In one part it says that 320 acres are necessary, and in another part it states that alternate quarter sections should be given to the railway. I have here a long communication that I received this morning from the agricultural society of Moose Jaw, referring to this part of the resolution and strongly condemning it, strongly emphasising this view, that they require to summer fallow, to go into mixed farming, and that farmers cannot raise crops profitably in the North-West unless they summer fallow. Part of the land has to be fallowed this year while crops are raised on another part, and crops should be grown this year on land which was summer fallowed last year. If you do not adopt that you will not farm successfully, and