Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman will see that the question of sinking artesian wells and searching for water is a matter to be determined by the homesteader, and a man will not submit to the inconvenience of living off his homestead, when he is cultivating it, unless for good reasons. Cases of that sort might be reported upon, and I think there will be no difficulty in providing fairly by law when such parties might be allowed to have their homesteads on certain conditions.

Mr. WATSON. I do not agree with the Minister of the Interior that the amendment I moved is one which the Government could not possibly accept. Under the provisions of the Land Bill it is provided that a person who has made entry for a homestead shall go upon his homestead within six months; that he must break five acres the first year and ten acres the second year. Now in two and a half years he is supposed to have fifteen acres broken on his land, and he has also the privilege of taking a pre-emption. In the fourth year he is supposed to crop the fifteen acres and he has to reside, or is supposed to reside, on his land six months a year for the three years next to his application for a patent. Now, under the amendment, I propose that a man must hold his homestead four years; and he has to have 80 acres under cultivation and buildings to the value of at least $600. This ensures that some person shall live on and cultivate the soil; and that being our object, I think we ought to encourage all parties who have surplus earnings to put them into the cultivation of the soil. I believe this provision would be acceptable to a large number of settlers in the North-West in preference to the ordinary homestead provision. To my mind it would be much more in the interest of the country to have 80 acres broken upon a quarter section than 15 acres, and to have buildings erected to the value of $600 than to have merely a habitable house, which might cost not more than $75 or $60. I do not think this provision could be open to abuse, because a man could only obtain a quarter section of land in four years. I believe it would be a good thing for the country, and I hope the hon. Minister will accept it.

Amendment negatived.

On section 6,

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). This clause was laid over. The objection made to it, as it stands, was that it was going to delay considerably the issue of the patent, so that practically the settler would not get his patent until the end of four years after his entry. The clause is practically in the interest of the settler himself, with the view of securing an inspection of the homestead at the earliest possible moment, so that the patent may issue. In the United States a very expensive method to the settler is adopted. There every settler has to give three months' notice every alternative week in a newspaper, and in it he has to give the names of his two witnesses who are to testify that he has performed his duties. He must do that before he can get his patent. We propose to require a simple notice to be sent to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands or to the Land Board; but as the question of six months' notice arose, I would suggest this as a substitutionary amendment to the clause:

Every person who has obtained a homestead entry, and proposes to apply for a patent for such homestead, shall give six months' notice in writing to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands of his intention to make such application, and shall produce evidence to the officer who is authorised to receive the application that such notice has been duly given.

The effect of that would simply be that if the homesteader gives his notice to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands six months before the time at which he would be entitled by lapse of time to receive his patent, having at the time really fulfilled the conditions of residence and improvement, he would get his patent at the end of six months. But if he leaves his residence duties to the end of three years, it is his own fault if a longer time elapses. It does not at all follow that because the notice is given the whole six months will be consumed; he simply gives his six months' notice in order to give the inspector an opportunity to go to the homestead and see that the duties have been properly performed before the patent issues.

Mr. MILLS. When this clause was under discussion the other day, I pointed out that the six months' notice was altogether unnecessary. What the hon. gentleman desires is to put the necessary machinery into operation for the issue of the patent. He does that by authorising the party to give notice that he desires the patent, and once that is done, the Department will no doubt issue the patent as soon as it can. The party gives notice by making his application. What is the object of requiring him to give six months' notice of his intention to apply, and then requiring him to give a second notice after the report is made? His very object in giving notice is to state that he has performed his duties, and that he is ready for the inspector; and the hon. gentleman is compelling him to make two applications when only one is required. The conditions of the American law are altogether different, because the circumstances are different. The Government there does not depend on an inspector but it requires that legal testimony shall be furnished that the homestead duties have been performed, and that makes all these preliminary steps necessary. But the hon gentleman does not depend on testimony of that sort; he depends on the report of the officer of his Department. I think the clause will meet the object hon. gentlemen have in view by making it read as follows:—

Every person who has obtained a homestead entry and has acquired the right to receive a patent, under the provisions of the said Act or of this Act, shall, on giving notice to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands and providing he has complied with the settlement conditions, be entitled to such patent.

All that would be necessary is that the report should be made; there should be no necessity for six months' delay or for second notice.

Mr. WATSON. I cannot see why the Minister wants a homesteader to give six months' notice. If the homesteader proves that he has complied with the settlement conditions and is entitled to receive the patent, he ought simply to have to apply for his patent and receive it, as soon as the Government are satisfied he has complied with the conditions. If the settler expected, under this clause, to get his homestead at the end of three years, he would have to be qualified at the end of two and a half years, because he has to give six months' notice, or else wait three years and a half for his patent.

Mr. MILLS. The hon. gentleman ought to amend his clause and adopt it to suit the convenience of the population. Why require a settler, who has resided upon his homestead for three years and performed the necessary settlement work, to wait another six months before he can get his patent? Why should he be required to make a second application at all? A simple notice from him that he has conformed to the law and that his homestead is open to inspection should be sufficient. The hon. gentleman has made a cumbrous proposition, taken from a law based upon a wholly different plan and policy.

On section 9,

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). This is the clause for which I propose to substitute the clause of which I have given notice. Under the law, as it stands, any person can advance to a settler going into the North-West, and I think the Crofters were brought out under that provision. The law at present provides that any person or persons or companies can advance any immigrants coming into the country