

*Supply—Soldier Land Settlement*

the position of enjoying the special privilege of having improvements made at the expense of other settlers' lands. The minister mentioned the representations he made and the advice he gave to the government when he sat on this side of the house. At that time he went the whole way, and I suggest to him, now that he is in a position to carry it out, that he take his own advice. Let him take the advice which he gave to the government while he was on this side of the house.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I should like to get some information from the minister with regard to the policy of the soldier settlement board in the matter of the treatment of the settlers themselves. Seizures are made sometimes, are they not? Under what conditions would seizures on a settler be made? Would he have of necessity to be in arrears?

Mr. FORKE: He would have to be in arrears and there would have to be evidence that he was trying to evade payment.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): In other words, one would not expect seizure to be made unless the man were obviously—

Mr. FORKE: Trying to evade his payments.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Exactly. I should imagine that would be the policy. I wonder why it has been changed.

Mr. FORKE: I did not know it had been changed.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Well, I may tell the minister that in the west, or at any rate in Alberta, I find a widespread dissatisfaction with the recently adopted autocratic attitude on the part of the board. I have asked the minister these two leading questions in order to get the situation clearly before the committee. Now what would the minister think of a situation like this? Here is a soldier settler, a splendid young chap who served as a captain in the Canadian expeditionary force, has one of the nicest, cleanest and neatest farms in the whole province, his buildings well appointed, and everything in perfect shape. He is a traction farmer—he uses a tractor and is thoroughly efficient. He is a married man though without children. He had some small arrears running up to September last, but on September 13 the arrears were all paid off by cheque and receipt given. On October 4 the supervisor from Calgary—really from Drummheller though he is attached to the Calgary office—came around to the man and said he wanted his payments. The current payments had become due on

[Mr. Campbell.]

October 1, amounting to some \$500 in round figures. The man was harvesting and threshing his crop at the time, the grain was running No. 6, the initial payment from the pool was very low, and he had only partly threshed his crop. He requested the supervisor to hold off the claim for a little while. The supervisor had known him for some time to be a first class man and willingly withheld the claim for the moment. Then the soldier settler said to him: "Don't you think it would be possible to secure a stay of collection over this year in order that I may seed some more grain next summer?" The supervisor said, "No; there is no chance of that." He stated that he had been instructed to make seizure. But, the man pointed out, he did not owe the board a cent. He said, "The current payments have only just now come due. How can you possibly make seizure?" The supervisor pulled out of his letter file the seizure papers filled in and dated and signed as of September 15—at a time when the man did not owe the board a dollar and when even his arrears were very small, and which arrears had been paid off in the meantime. Now here is a fine type of settler, a man who had never been in any financial difficulties with his neighbours, who had never had any trouble with the bank, and who had conducted his business on a high plane: here he is threatened with seizure. It was a blow such as most of us would not like. How would any hon. gentleman like to be threatened and indeed to be shown the seizure papers at a time when he did not owe a single dollar to the person who was going to serve him? As a result of his advice to the supervisor and the supervisor's knowledge of the man himself, he withheld the seizure until he could interview Mr. Woods, the superintendent, at Calgary. I think that interview took place somewhere near Hanna, prior to October 11, and on October 11 the supervisor again called on this settler and informed him that he had taken up the matter with the superintendent on October 4 and that the superintendent had instructed him to proceed to the settler's farm and execute the seizure.

Do hon. members realize the drastic action which was advised by the superintendent at Calgary? As I said before, on September 13 the papers were made out ordering the man off his farm; on October 12 the supervisor called again and said, "You will have to make the payments or I will have to seize the farm." It was too late that night to go to the bank, so the supervisor stayed over night and in the morning the settler went to the bank. This man asked the supervisor