

the privileges of the Act soldiers of other armies who were not ordinarily resident in Canada before the war, the Bill gives the Board power to exact a larger percentage of cash price than is exacted from soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. I think it will likely be the part of wisdom for the Board to exercise that power, because, however successful a man might have been in agriculture in another country, he will not, other things being equal, be as successful in Canada as a man who has been engaged in agriculture in this country, there is no back-to-the-land movement so good as the movement of the soldiers of the country back-to-the-land in Canada. That is the best back-to-the-land movement there can be in the world, and consequently we propose to push that to the fullest, and in admitting to the privileges of the Act other than the soldiers of this country we believe it will be the part of wisdom to lay down rather more strict provisions than are applicable to Canadian men.

Mr. PETER McGIBBON: Can we feel reasonably assured that the men who never went beyond Canada will come under this Act in the near future?

Mr. MEIGHEN: In the Bill as now submitted the only men who did not go beyond Canada who will be admitted to the privileges of the Act are those who were injured in Canada, or whose injuries, previously sustained, were aggravated in Canada.

Let me emphasize in this connection, and this has particularly to do with the question raised by the hon. member for Ottawa this morning as to extending these or similar benefits to other than farmers, that the great primary object of this Bill is not to afford a gratuity or reward to the soldier. If that were its basic principle and its first purpose, it would inevitably follow that the same gratuity or reward, or one on equal scale, would have to be extended to all. The primary and great principle of this Bill is to secure settlers on the lands of this country—to secure settlement of our idle lands, and to make settlers of those who have proven themselves the backbone and stay of the nation in its trouble. We believe that we cannot better fortify this country against the waves of unrest and discontent that now assail us, as all the rest of the world, than by making the greatest possible proportion of the soldiers of our country settlers upon our land. Of course, every class of citizen is necessary to constitute the national life, but the class of citizen that counts the most in the determination of the

stability of a country against such forces as I mentioned a moment ago is undoubtedly the basic class—the agricultural class. That class is the mainstay of the nation. So the purpose of this Bill is a national one primarily. Its purpose is to strengthen the fibre of this country by building into the basic industrial structure of the best blood and bones of our nation.

I stated at the opening that we were giving assistance at a scale more liberal than had ever been undertaken by any institution looking to financial profit, and that is essential. We believe that we shall in the main be protected against loss, first of all by the advantages that we give these men, leaving them free to discharge their obligations and make a living for their families untrammelled by the many burdens which the ordinary settler has to carry. That, we think, is our first security against loss. We believe that the system of supervision that we shall exercise will be the second; and the character of the men, as selected by our qualification boards will be the third,—the last but not the least. Nevertheless, with all these precautions we are certain to have some loss. It would be entirely chimerical to imagine that we can venture without some loss upon this field of activity, into which I think no other nation has ever yet entered, at all events on the scale which we now have in view. Indeed, no other country has ever yet attempted to do the work that is being undertaken by the board in the way of provision of chattels, stock, and equipment. So far as I know, this is distinctly a new venture not launched upon in any other country that conducts, either through the state or otherwise, enterprises of a similar character. As I say, it would be futile to hope that we can save ourselves from loss altogether, but it is a matter of encouragement to find, looking over the whole class of men who have come in and are now settlers by virtue of our law, that there are very few, indeed, who are not adapting themselves to their environment and who are not actually cultivating the land in the most promising manner. Of those who might be said to be not altogether promising—they are not many—most if not all came in and settled under the 1917 Act before any system of selection whatever was in force. The men had the right under that Act to go in and take homesteads, and once they took their homesteads they could come and get loans. Some of those are not succeeding, but so far even that proportion is not large. We find, however, much better results where the men have been first of