

## IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION

Amount required for soldier land settlement advances and cost of administration of soldier settlement, \$1,445,000.

Amount required for general land settlement advances and cost of administration of general land settlement, \$1,400,000.

Mr. LUCAS: I want to take up with the minister the case of a returned soldier in my constituency. It is in connection with a barn built on the Ogilvie farm. Ogilvie secured a full loan from the soldiers' settlement board for land and equipment. He ordered lumber to the value of over sixteen hundred dollars from a lumber firm in Edmonton, and engaged this returned soldier to build the barn. Ogilvie afterwards left the place. The lumber company lost the full amount of their account, not being able to place a lien on crown property. I am not fighting for payment of the claim of the lumber company. Like any business concern, they always set aside a certain amount for bad debts, and it was up to them to look after their own business. But the returned soldier is not in the best of circumstances. He was anxious to get the work in order to support his family, and when Ogilvie engaged him this returned soldier acted in good faith and built a very excellent barn. All he charged was four hundred and eighty dollars. The legion have done their best to help this man, and every time I visit the district they take the case up with me. When I was there last they drove me out to view the barn. This man not only built the barn, but he overhauled the house as well. The board resold the farm to a British family settler. The purchase price of the land to Ogilvie was fifty-five hundred dollars, leaving out the stock and equipment, which are separate items. The board resold the farm for fifty-two hundred dollars, or at a loss of only three hundred dollars. The officers of the department have assured me that the barn added a thousand dollars to the resale value of the farm. In other words, if the building had not been erected, the board could not have resold the farm within a thousand dollars of the price they received for it. I have placed the case before the minister on several occasions, in fact it has been pending for several years. He is sympathetic, but he thinks he has no means of getting the money to pay this claim. I would ask him if there is not some way by which he can take care of the debt owing to this returned soldier.

Mr. FORKE: Mr. Chairman, I admit this case involves considerable hardship to the carpenter concerned, but for the department to deal with it as my hon. friend wishes would

[Mr. Neil.]

open up a pretty wide field. For the information of the house I might read the statement from the soldiers' settlement board:

This settler was established about 1920, receiving the full amount as allowed by statute to be advanced to soldier settlers; viz: \$7,500. The following year he engaged to build a barn, obtaining the lumber on his own credit and hiring a man to build the barn. The soldier settlement board had nothing to do with the arrangement in building the barn. A year or two afterwards he left the farm and it reverted to the board. No purchaser was found for it until it was set aside for settlement under the 3,000 British Family Settlement Scheme in 1926.

The carpenter who built the barn made a claim on the board for his work, about \$480. The board, not being in any way responsible for this debt, have refused to pay same. When the farm was sold to the British family settler it showed a loss to the board of something like \$1,700, not including any interest. If interest was included it would be over \$4,000. The board has neither power nor authority to pay out any moneys on the private debts of delinquent settlers.

Now, to deal with this case as requested would establish a precedent for ten thousand soldier settlers to incur debts on their own responsibility, and their creditors would look to the board for payment. I admit the hardship in this individual case, but really I cannot see any other course open to the board than to repudiate the debts of soldier settlers incurred on their own responsibility after they have obtained full loans under the act. Unfortunately a principle is involved that we cannot ignore, otherwise we might stretch a point in this particular case.

Mr. LUCAS: The loss on the resale which is given in the statement read by the minister of course includes the original loan for stock and equipment. But the new settler who purchased the farm did not get any of that. The land in the first place cost fifty-five hundred dollars, and it was sold for fifty-two hundred dollars; so the actual loss to the board was only three hundred dollars on the farm itself. I think any officer of the department who has seen the barn will frankly admit that if it had not been on the farm the board would not have realized within a thousand dollars of the price on the resale. In order to aid our soldier settlers in 1922, we wiped out approximately eleven million dollars of interest, and the last revaluation will probably involve something like fourteen million dollars. Now here is the case of a returned man who did not go on the land. He is trying to support himself and his family, and in good faith he goes and builds a barn on government property; he does certain work and is not paid for it. He is not asking for