

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): The object is that there shall be a fair settlement between the Soldier Settlement Board and the soldier.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is what I am objecting to, the fact that the minister can do this through his own appointee. It is true that he was appointed before the present minister came into office, but the minister can dismiss him and appoint another. The appointee is the minister's own agent, and can throw whatever sum he likes off the price of the soldier's land. It does not matter what his will may be, if he feels and is so disposed he can just use that soldier whatever way he likes, and if the soldier is looking after his own interests—

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): If he controls the committee he can. However, I am perfectly willing and I will be delighted to be deprived of the power of appointing even the janitor, if that will suit my right hon. friend.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is not the matter of appointment, it is the whole principle of re-valuation.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): If my right hon. friend has that in his mind please get rid of it because I do not want it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Then I have made considerable progress if we have got to the extent of discussing a new measure, instead of the one before us. I was discussing this measure. I do not think parliament should really put such power in the hands of any minister, no matter who he is, and if I were putting it in anyone's power, certainly in this government, I would rather give it to the Minister of the Interior than any other. He may value that compliment more highly than I do.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I am always perfectly willing to take it from the source from which it comes naturally.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The minister says that if they do not agree there will be an arbitration board. Well, if he goes low enough we will always agree; if he is generous enough with the soldier there will be no difficulty in agreeing. In a word, as it stands this puts the whole settler population of Canada right in the political hands of the minister. Let us pass on from that and assume the minister is not prepared to make reductions sufficient to satisfy the soldier. This involves the necessity of erecting an arbitration tribunal. Now what a tribunal! The tribunal is the minister's

representative, the official of the veterans association and someone else he names. I will not say that the other one will be president of the local Liberal association, but I know of ministers who would appoint no other, and I know this minister will appoint no other if he yields to the importunities of his colleagues. Consequently this bill will hand over to a long series of Liberal campaign committees all over Canada just thirty to forty million dollars of the money in the treasury of Canada. That is what it will do, and so sacrosanct is this tribunal to be that it is beyond all appeal. They know the final value of the land, and nobody else, and you cannot appeal from their decision to anybody, however high or however exalted. What they say finally ends it, and of course two of them could overrule the other. So that in the event of the representative on the committee named by the Soldier Settlement Board wishing to hold down the reduction, he would be utterly helpless and powerless in the hands of the official of the veterans association and of the Liberal named by the minister. The minister first of all takes all the power himself to distribute this largess, but if he is not willing to distribute it with a generous enough hand, he then puts it in the power of committees which he names, and whom he knows will be representative of the political interest of the party in power. I do not think the minister will seriously argue that any such thing should be done, or that we can justify before the people of Canada any such step. I know that he will contest the figure I suggest. I said thirty to forty million. The minister was good enough to tell me personally that he did not figure that this would cost over \$10,000,000. I do not know how in the world he arrives at that figure, for this reason. If you tell a man owning a farm, whether a soldier or whatever he is, who is having a struggle—and most of them are—that if he finds the reduction insufficient he can get a committee appointed with power to make another reduction, you cannot tell me there will be only 25 per cent who will apply for reduction. I will give my estimate of the percentage, and my estimate will be, that 100 per cent will apply. What is the situation? We have 17,000 farms to be revalued. I do not think it is very seriously questioned that there is a natural depreciation, which would average, it may be, 40 per cent—forty per cent on over \$30,000,000, because there is \$38,000,000 owing—but does anyone think that with this plan we will keep up to the actual depreciation? Never in the world.