

Mr. BLAKE. There is one point in the remarks of the hon. member for Middlesex (Mr. Cameron) to which the Minister did not allude, and which I must confess has very considerable weight. Nothing I think has given greater satisfaction and more relieved the apprehension than the adoption by the Department of the equitable rule that the conditions on which a man entered should be the conditions on which his title was to be considered throughout, no matter what subsequent conditions might be made. That principle, applicable to the conditions which the Government were authorised themselves to make and change, appears to me to have still greater force with respect to parliamentary conditions. We provided, during a year or two, that persons who came in and settled in the North-West should be entitled, under certain conditions, to a second homestead, and it will be considered to be a breach of parliamentary faith if we subsequently repeal that law in such a manner as to deprive those persons, who entered during the period of the existence of that law and came into the country upon the faith of it, of the right they had so acquired. So far as one can judge of the number that came in during the time when this law was in force, it is clear that the number will not be very many of those entitled to avail themselves of that privilege. What I would submit for the consideration of the Minister is whether it would not be better to repeal the law except with regard to those persons who came into the country and took up homesteads during the vigor and vitality of that law. The man who was in before finds himself deprived of a benefit which would have been conferred on him if he had seen fit to avail himself of it. He cannot however be said to have acted on it, but the man who came in while the law was in force and on the faith of that additional advantage, occupies a different position.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). As to the meeting held at Moose Jaw, at which this subject was discussed, it was in favor of abolishing second homesteading. I am speaking of the meeting at which I was present. I did receive a communication from a gentleman, a friend of my own, in which he strongly protested against the abolition; but the feeling of the people was generally against the principle of second homesteading.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. member for Middlesex did not deny it, but he said it was represented by the chairman of the meeting, who said that he was not himself entitled to come within the clause; that those who came into the Territory and took up homesteads during the time the law was in force, not unnaturally claimed that they were entitled to have their claim allowed, although the policy of Parliament as to other persons was altered.

Mr. CAMERON (Middlesex). It is represented that a meeting was recently held at Moose Jaw, at which this particular question of second homesteading was considered, and that whatever their wishes may have been as to the future, they were unanimously of the opinion that it would be unjust to permit those who had settled within the time when the second homestead was allowed, to be deprived of that privilege.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. WATSON. As I stated the other day I think there should be a clause in this Bill providing for homesteads under conditions of cultivation. I think such a clause would be in the best interest of the country, and I have prepared a clause which I think would meet a large class of cases. The conditions of cultivation are large and such a homesteader is not to get more than a homestead of 160 acres without any pre-emption. I move that the following be added to the clause:—

That homesteads of 160 acres be granted on the following conditions and entitled homesteads on conditions of cultivation that within the first year after the date of his homestead entry he broke and prepare

for crop not less than twenty acres of his homestead. That within the second year he cropped the said twenty acres and broke and prepared for crop not less than thirty acres in addition. That within the third year he cropped the said fifty acres and broke and prepared not less than thirty acres in addition. That within the fourth year he has cultivated the said eighty acres and erected thereon a dwelling house and out-buildings of not less value than \$600.

I think there should be no objection to a homestead being taken up on these conditions as they are large, and any person availing himself of such a provision will earn his homestead. I know of a number of people who I think would avail themselves of this privilege, and I think we should induce mechanics, who are perhaps making more money working at their trades than by settling on a farm, to put out their earnings into the cultivation of the soil. The fact that so large an amount of land required to be cultivated will always ensure the residence of some one upon it, and I do not think it makes much difference whether it is John Jones or John Smith who reside on the land, so long as the cultivation is done. As the country can only become valuable by the cultivation of the soil and the export of grain I think every inducement should be offered for people to invest their money in the cultivation of the soil, and therefore I hope my resolution will be accepted.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I hope the committee will not accept the amendment. The homestead principle in the North-West should be the principle of residence, and the moment you depart from that, we give up the great motive we have for giving away the land at all. We give, say, 160 acres, in order that we may have a settler on the soil, who contributes by his presence to the growth and progress of the settlement, and I think any principle by which we would allow persons from towns and cities to get land by simply coming out and performing certain settlement duties would be a serious mistake.

Mr. MILLS. There is a class of cases which impressed themselves very strongly on my mind in Manitoba, and I daresay they are to be found in the North-West too, for which no provision is made. There are cases where there is no good water to be found on the homestead or its immediate vicinity. I know parties who took up homesteads in Manitoba, and were obliged to build some distance away from their homesteads, simply for the convenience of obtaining water for domestic purposes and for the use of their stock. The house was perhaps one mile or two miles away; they cultivated the land, they used it for homestead purposes in every way except that the buildings, the actual residence, was not upon the land. Now, it seems to me to be a hardship to such parties to say that they cannot take that land as a homestead, but that they must purchase it. There were cases of that kind, I know; to the west of Rat Portage, where the parties had to build some distance away, in the vicinity of a spring creek, in order to obtain water. Now, I think the hon. gentleman would not interfere with the principle of homesteading, and he will perhaps consult the convenience of a very considerable number of the population in different parts of the country if he provided by the Bill that parties might be counted as homesteaders.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I am afraid the suggestion of the hon. gentleman would be open to great abuse. I know of some cases such as he describes, but the practical difficulty is how are you going to meet them. You cannot form any set of regulations to be of general application—and I think they should be open to as few exceptions as possible—without having some individual cases of hardship, but the moment you open the door to these cases—as in the case of the absence of water, which may be merely due to the absence of proper search and digging for water—you open the door to serious abuses. However, the matter may be held over and considered, but I do not think we should deal with it now.