

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest, and Mr. MacNeil has also made the suggestion to me, that clauses 5 to 16 inclusive be taken up with the sub-Committee, and be not discussed meantime in the general Committee. The sub-Committee will report back in some concise way. If that is agreeable to the Committee, we will pass on to number 17. A. (Reads):

“That the period during which pre-emptions may be converted into soldier grants be extended from September, 1921, to September, 1922, and that all retroactive adjustments be permitted of payments made on account of pre-emption.”

This matter relates to the Dominion Lands Act. During the year 1918 and up to the end of September, 1919, the ex-service men who held a homestead and also a pre-emption could apply for a soldier grant of 160 acres Crown lands. At the end of September, 1919, it was decided that no ex-soldier could have more than 320 acres of Crown land. (A homestead and a pre-emption or a homestead and a soldier grant.) At the time however the holder of a pre-emption could convert his pre-emption into a soldier grant, the advantage being that he did not have to pay the pre-emption price of this quarter section. On the 13th September, 1921, a regulation was issued by the Department of Interior that in exchanging a pre-emption for a soldier grant the pre-emption price of that quarter must be paid. Many ex-service men did not anticipate this regulation. A number of men were in hospital or not demobilized in 1919 and did not have the opportunity of securing a soldier grant in addition to the 320 they might hold as a pre-emption and a homestead. For various reasons they did not convert their pre-emption into a soldier grant before September, 1921, and lost this privilege. Some ex-service men have paid the pre-emption price of their quarter section to the Department of Interior, other ex-service men have taken a loan from the Soldier Settlement Board and the Soldier Settlement Board have paid the Department of Interior the pre-emption price of a quarter section from the loan granted. All applications for a refund of the money so paid for pre-emption quarters have been refused. It is suggested that all ex-soldiers who held pre-emptions and failed to convert to soldier grants in time to escape payment for same and all settlers under the Soldier Settlement Board that have paid for same out of loans acquired should have the privilege extended to them that was theirs before September 13th, 1921. All money paid on pre-empted lands should be refunded unless in addition to this quarter they accepted a soldier grant. This should apply equally to soldier settlers under the Soldier Settlement Board.

Q. Any questions on number 17? What is the next one?—A. We now come to the miscellaneous resolutions on page 12.

Q. Are these in the form of a broad resolution, and can you explain briefly their terms and intent?—A. (Reads):

“1. That whereas a large number of men were actively engaged in military duties under the Militia Act at the Port of Halifax, including out forts and out posts, during the Great War and were thus prevented from serving overseas,

And whereas the present military regulations are not broad enough to assure proper recognition of such services,

And whereas such services were necessary in the defence of the Dominion, Resolved that the Dominion Veterans' Alliance, urge upon the Government of Canada, that immediate steps be taken to grant to all such men the same privileges and benefits accorded the members of the C.E.F., in the recognized theatres of war, and failing this full recognition, that such men be granted leave to wear the General Service and Victory medals and that such medals be issued to them.”

[Mr. E. S. Keeling.]