

come under that class. The land agent at Winnipeg, I am sure, will know it. Anyone connected with the work will know where the unsuitable quarter sections are, and my suggestion is that the department might modify their regulations a little. I do not think it would involve any expense at all, and no one, I am sure, would object if these regulations were modified a little so that these men might be allowed to go somewhat further north and take up land that is really fit for agricultural purposes.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The hon. member is asking something that is very difficult of accomplishment. I have had many requests for second homesteads, but this opens up a big question. I know there are many cases where this might result in keeping people in the country; but when you open up the consideration of the this question, you open up a pretty wide problem. We have done it in Saskatchewan and Alberta upon the recommendation and authority of the provincial government. Where a man was tried out for a series of years, made a failure and was desirous of settling in the northern portions of the province, if he was recommended by the provincial government, we met their request, not in very many instances, not as many as one would think. In some instances that has been done. Possibly something of the same kind could be done in Manitoba, but I have looked into the matter pretty thoroughly and a tremendous amount of difficulty is entailed. I think the leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen) two years ago, when we were discussing this matter before, enumerated a number of the difficulties and pointed out how dangerous it would be to embark upon a policy of that kind. It might, however, be worked out in the way I have mentioned.

Mr. BANCROFT: The minister surely knows these are peculiar cases where immigrants who are unable to speak English are settled on land without being given any opportunity of selection at all. If the minister has ever been in that district, he will know my description of it is fairly accurate. The land after the bush is taken off is stony, scrub land, and the stones are coming up every year. You do not get rid of the stones by taking them off the top as in some districts. The soil is a very shallow loam on a gravelly subsoil, and it is absolutely unsuitable for farming operations. I am referring to certain ridges and there are not a great many cases. The minister states that this is not a new departure, and I am sure there is not a more deserving case in the whole of western Canada than the district of which I speak.

[Mr. Bancroft.]

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I shall be glad to discuss the matter with the provincial authorities, if my hon. friend will interest them in the matter.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: In endorsement of what the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Bancroft) has said, I know that country and I believe a great deal of it ought never to have been homesteaded. Some of it is fit for cattle raising; it is not fit for grain growing, and yet these people were placed upon the land. Their children are spending half their time in picking up stones, and when they get the stones off there is nothing beneath that is worth cultivating. I also know, speaking of the cities, that many of these people, driven off these homesteads, are drifting back to the city of Winnipeg. We have them there, unaccustomed to work in the city, unemployed, and on the relief, whereas they came to this country with the earnest expectation of making good, and if they were given a chance in a new locality they would make good. It seems absolutely absurd to go to the ends of the earth in order to get more immigrants, while we have in Canada people who would make good if they were given a chance. I would urgently request, under these circumstances, that the suggestion made by the hon. member for Selkirk be carried out.

Mr. WARD: I support very strongly the stand taken by the hon. member (Mr. Bancroft); I do not think that any more worthy suggestion has been made in this House. But I would not confine it to districts such as he has described. I believe that literally thousands of settlers who have left this country after becoming insolvent could have been retained if we had had some such policy as has been suggested. I do not underestimate the difficulties that might be encountered in evolving some new amendments to the Homestead Act which would implement this proposal. I have received this session a number of letters from observant business men in my constituency who have watched the trend of events during a number of years, and they strongly urge upon me to make representations to the Minister of the Interior in this regard. This I have done on one or two occasions; I have requested that this matter be considered. These farmers have become insolvent not always it is true, because they have been settled on a stone pile, but very frequently they have failed through no fault of their own and they have been forced to leave their farms. I think that they should be enabled to re-settle. We must not forget that many of those settlers coming in from