

men would not be able to continue in the position they are in and they would have to leave altogether. While it is quite possible in the active operation of the law there might be an individual here and there who would reap a benefit he should not reap, yet, weighing one consideration against the other, it seems to me there is a greater danger in failing to pass some such legislation than there is in passing it. I think this legislation is very wise and very necessary in spite of the objection the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) has raised.

Mr. McTAGGART: Under section 1 would it be necessary for an entrant on land to comply with the homestead regulations in regard to cultivation duties?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): Yes, the same regulations will apply which apply under the general provisions of the act. He can perform his duties at home, but he will have to perform the cultivation duties.

Mr. McTAGGART: And as to the three years?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): He will have to perform these duties during the three years, but he does not require to live on the homestead.

Mr. KELLNER: What would be the use in making him plough up forty acres of sand that is not worth farming at all? Why not allow him to prove it up in some other way?

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I think it would be a mistake for him to get land he could not plough. Every rancher must have land of some sort. Every rancher is cultivating some land sometimes, to carry him through the winter, and it will be a mistake to let anyone have sandy land for the purpose of breaking it up. I would be very much opposed to that. There are lands all over the country that are very acceptable and they can be found in almost every locality. They may be limited in area but they are there.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Referring to section 3, I have discussed this matter with the minister. Ever since it was proposed it has given me some trouble. I regard it as a most important and very dangerous step. I admit its merits. I know there are cases where without it considerable hardship would result, but let us see where we are going to land if this section passes. If a man buys land or buys anything else he is liable on his purchase. If a man buys grain and pays a small margin, ten per cent just as he does on land, it would be a grand thing for him if, having bought a

[Mr. Brown.]

hundred thousand bushels, he afterwards could narrow it down to ten thousand bushels and apply what he had paid to the ten thousand, and pay it up. Speculation then would have no terrors for anybody. He would risk virtually nothing and his chances of profits would be immense. In other words his chances of profit would be ten times his chances of loss. It is exactly the same with school lands, and it is the very same for the actual farmer as for the speculator. If men are to be allowed to buy school lands and afterwards to narrow down their purchase to a quarter section, and apply what they have paid to the quarter section, the element of risk is virtually gone. Take the case of the farmer purchasing. He buys a half section. His neighbour, or many neighbours, bid against him. This man was a little more venturesome than the others and he outbid them. He was taking the risk and he had a perfect right to any profit he might make; but now the minister comes along and relieves that man of his risk—relieves him of his loss. What is going to be the result in the future if this provision becomes law? Why a man making purchase will very readily outbid his neighbours. The speculator, in a word, will have a big advantage over the actual farmer, because the speculator knows that his chances of winning are ten to one over the chances of his losing, or whatever proportion the purchase bore to the quarter section of land, and the chances of the farmer are exactly the same. It seems to me it is a dangerous precedent. If you do it in this case, why not carry it further? Why not carry it into the soldier settlement scheme? Here is a soldier settler; why not relieve him of part of his obligation as well, and apply everything he has paid on a small part of it? He is just as much entitled to it as the school land purchaser. They have only got quarters, it is true, but it is a case of degree. If it is a case of degree, many of them would like to bring it down to forty acres, and have the payment applied on a small part; but if we begin this, where are we going to end? In a word, it is a case of one party to a bargain relieving the other party of his obligation. I know it is the provinces who are mostly concerned. They are the beneficiaries of the school land fund but I do think that they have not very fully considered this matter before giving their consent to the legislation. I know that when I was minister of the department—and in those days the applications would not be anything like the number they are now, in the very much more difficult farming times—