

lands which we will have to expropriate; consequently this Bill vests power in the board to take lands by expropriation. There is no intention, nor does the Bill evidence any intention, of taking from any man land for soldier settlement which is now reasonably utilized; the only purpose is to compel the owners of lands of which an unreasonable proportion is idle to place those lands at the disposal of the board at a fair price. Consequently in this Act provision is made whereby the board can declare settlement areas in various portions of the country wherever there appears to be land being withheld from utilization and the holders of which are not disposed to sell at a reasonable price so that the lands can be settled under this Bill. When a settlement area is declared, the Bill provides that certain results ensue. It becomes the duty of the owners of the land within those areas to state a price to the board at which they will sell, and to answer questionnaires which will give to the board an adequate knowledge of the land owned by them—of its character, the terms of holding, all the parties interested therein, and so forth. So the whole country, immediately this Act passes, will not become subject to expropriation without discrimination. The board must first of all, by gazetting, declare a certain sphere of land a settlement area, and the land within that area so defined then becomes subject to the operations of the board, and the duties that the Act prescribes fall upon the owners of the land within that area.

Mr. GRIESBACH: These provisions do not apply to land that is settled.

Mr. MEIGHEN: They refer only to land that is not being settled. The fact that only a negligible percentage of land was under cultivation would not protect it from expropriation. If the owner is not using very much of the land now, he must show that he has facilities in sight with which to cultivate it in the near future. If he is a farmer, for instance, with some sons growing up, he will be dealt with differently from the speculator in the city who is merely withholding the land from cultivation for speculative purposes. The principle the board will follow is embodied in the Act. It would be manifestly impossible to prescribe hard and fast rules that would be applicable everywhere, and indeed, impossible to prescribe hard and fast rules that would be applicable anywhere, but the principle is embodied in the Bill, and it will be the duty of the board to live up to it.

[Mr. Meighen.]

I should have said this morning, in connection with the operations of the board, that the total investment of this country in this plan up to the 14th of June was \$14,467,974. I should also have explained when giving the figures as to the number of horses and other animals sold, and the average price per horse, and so forth, that those figures were not by any means the totals for the provinces concerned.

Another feature of the Bill that will require some discussion is the class of men who are to come within its pale. Under the terms of the old Act the soldier of the armies of Great Britain or of any of the Dominions was entitled to the same rights as the soldier in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and the soldier in any of the armies of the Allies was entitled to equal rights, providing he was ordinarily resident in Canada. If in the army of Great Britain, or of the other Dominions, he did not need to be a resident of Canada; he was defined and included in the term "settler" just the same as the Canadian soldier. In this connection I want to explain that in the actual operation of the Act we have never yet got to the point of admitting any of the soldiers of the Imperial army or of the armies of the other Dominions, for the reason that the onrush of applications was always sufficient from our own soldiers to exhaust the capacity of the Board to take care of them, and we deemed it our duty first to take care of the soldiers of Canada, for the reason mainly that Canadian applications—almost eighty per cent of them had had experience of farming in Canada—came from men who were more likely to succeed in this country even than successful farmers out of the British army. As a consequence, the doors have never yet been opened to any other class of men except those ordinarily resident in Canada who served in the Canadian army or in the armies of the Allies. That is to say, we have dealt so far only with Canadian citizens, or citizens from the United States, let us say, who served in the Canadian army.

The definition of "settler" as it will be found in this Act if accepted by the Committee and the House will be virtually the same as under the old Act. There is some alteration, but that can better be discussed when we come to details. It is not, however, the purpose of the Board to admit at once to the privileges of the Act settlers from other countries in the armies of Great Britain or the Allies, and in admitting to