

build homes without any help from any government agency. I talked to twelve or fifteen of these men; some of them told me that they had their excavations in; a few had finished their foundations and some had part of the framework up. Some of these men told me that they had gone to Niagara Falls, New York, to buy five pounds of nails at ten cents a pound plus one cent a pound duty. That was all they could get. That is the story they told me. If there are the nails in the country that we have been hearing about, then there is something wrong with the distribution. I am going to see these men again on Saturday; I have written to several of them, and I want to have a group of them there so that I can tell them some of the things I have found out.

As I say, I learned about the 32,487 kegs of nails which have come into Canada in addition to what have been manufactured here. The hon. member for Frontenac-Addington (Mr. Aylesworth) had his car here and he was good enough to drive me to one or two jobs which are in progress in this city. I went to one very large job and I counted 247 kegs of nails being used. A workman told me that the original order had been for 1,000 kegs of nails. I was told the name of the local hardware man who had the order, as he supposed. I called on that local hardware man and I begged him to give me a keg each of two and a half inch and four-inch nails for a veteran who is in dire need. I will not relate the circumstances, but they would almost bring tears to your eyes, Mr. Speaker, I wanted just one keg of each size and I could not get them.

This hardware man admitted that he had tried to get the order for 1,000 kegs but someone else had got it. He told me he could not give me any nails. He admitted that that amount of nails had been concentrated on the one job. When I visited the job I found that the nails came from the Bethlehem Steel Company in the United States. I saw the nails myself. They were splendid nails and were doing a good job nailing together the hundreds of thousands of feet of lumber which were being cut up in short length for a particular purpose. Thousands of feet of lumber and tens of thousands of feet of wallboard and panel board are being used. I did not go over the entire job, but I suppose I could have found several hundred more kegs of nails.

What I maintain is that the distribution is wrong. That lumber which is being cut up will never reach veterans' homes. You cannot cut lumber up into one, two, three, four or five foot lengths and expect to use it in a veteran's home. I am appealing to someone

to try to find out whether this thing cannot be done in a more equitable way. I ask the government to try some way to channel lumber and nails into the hands of veterans or private contractors who are building homes for veterans. That is their only hope; there is nothing left. It is the last hope the veteran has. I appeal to the government not to permit the concentration of tremendous quantities of essential materials in the manner to which I have referred.

There certainly appears to be surpluses of materials in some places, and my point is that we should get behind the veteran, we should try through private enterprise to see that these goods, particularly lumber and nails, are channelled so that these homes can get under way. The veteran is up against an absolute stone wall today because he cannot get these materials.

I have no hesitation in criticizing this concentration of materials on large jobs which might just as well have not been proceeded with. I am pleading with the government to see that something be done at once to remedy the situation. I believe there was a tinge of sadness in the minister's voice when he made his announcement; I really believe he intended to see the veteran taken care of. However, he has failed. My plea to the government is to give the veteran this last chance. Bring about the proper distribution of the essential materials and then I am sure that we shall have, through the veterans themselves, by their own resources and through the resources of private enterprise, far more homes and far better homes than we have ever had under these government housing schemes in the last two or three years.

Mr. J. E. MATTHEWS (Brandon): Mr. Speaker, I have always admired the quality of the budget speeches and the tone of the budget debates in this house. I want to congratulate the hon. member who has just sat down (Mr. Lockhart) on the forcefulness of his speech. I have on several occasions had the pleasure of tendering my congratulations to that prince of finance ministers, the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Ilsley). I say without hesitation that our people are coming to realize more clearly every year our debt to the former finance minister for his able administration during the war years.

If we keep in mind that Canada's first parliament lasted only forty-three days and that the first budget speech in April, 1868, forecast an expenditure of \$14 million, it is interesting to recall budget estimates for some later years. For instance, for the year ended March 31, 1915, Hon. Thomas White