

VETERANS AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT OF LAND ACT TO ASSIST VETERANS NOW SEEKING TO ACQUIRE LAND

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, it is so long since you have recognized me that you have me over at the other end of the island.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marshall: I have built up a good friendship with the Minister of Veterans Affairs because we have had lots of time. In view of the difficulties being experienced by many war veterans in acquiring land for homes because of the restrictions under the Veterans Land Act, and particularly because of the October 16 deadline, would the minister indicate whether he intends to bring in amendments to the act to satisfy the needs of these veterans?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question may I inform the House that in 1965 legislation was proposed and enacted, with applications for qualification to be submitted by the deadline date of October 31, 1968. This gave veterans an opportunity to make a loan application. The closing date for loan applications is 1974, and there was also a provision for additional loans to be made up to 1977. In further reply to the question may I say we have not received many requests in this respect, and unless further interest is shown at this time my department does not intend to enact any further legislation.

Mr. Marshall: In view of the fact that many veterans now retiring as well as many servicemen now retiring wish to make application under the act but are restricted by it as to the location of their homes, would the minister reconsider, because many more applications are coming in, amending the Veterans Land Act?

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are always ready and willing to reconsider, and we will take a look at the number of applications coming in.

* * *

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

BAIL REFORM LAW—REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION IN LIGHT OF CERTAIN EVENTS

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Would the minister reconsider the answer he gave me a couple of weeks ago and take another look at the bail reform legislation in view of a grand jury recommendation made recently in Toronto, and also in view of the arrest today of a suspect alleged to be involved in over a dozen offences, including twice failing to respond to bench warrants while at large by virtue of this legislation?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we have indicated on many occasions that we would be willing to look at the bail act again as it began to be lived with and would make changes if they seemed to be required.

Oral Questions

However, I should like to confirm to the hon. member that I have followed up on the point I made to him on the previous occasion and have written to the Attorneys General across the country, drawing to their attention the need for appropriate action by both police and Crown prosecutors as well as the appropriateness of taking action against those who do not respond to summonses, so that in fact the bail law will work effectively.

ALLEGED IMPEDING OF INVESTIGATION OF NARCOTICS OFFENCES BY BAIL REFORM LAW

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Justice in connection with a story carried on the front page of this morning's *Globe and Mail*. Is the minister's department inquiring into the suggestion that the bail reform legislation as it now stands is impeding investigation of narcotics offences in the country? If so, is he or the government considering altering the instructions that went out to the provincial Attorneys General earlier last year respecting the treatment of accused persons appearing before the courts on possession charges?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, those are two completely separate questions and I certainly would not relate them in any way. We will be looking at any report having to do with the operation of the bail law. I have had and will continue to have discussions with my provincial counterparts about this question.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

INQUIRY AS TO AMENDMENT RESPECTING DECISION TO UNDERGO ABORTION

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. In view of the decision of the United States Supreme Court which will result in broadly liberalized abortion laws in 46 states, and in view of the Canadian Gallup poll published on January 4 of this year which showed that 61 per cent of Canadian adults agree that the decision on abortion should be made solely by the woman and her doctor, is the government planning to introduce legislation this session to amend the Criminal Code to this effect?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Is the government prepared to arrange for a debate on this matter, such as was promised but not had before, during the present session?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, there has certainly been no decision to have one at the present time. We would have to consider the time of the House and the other pressing business before us.