

ernment in the 40's, namely: the Veterans' Land Act, the rehabilitation benefits and also the possibility of furthering college or university education.

The Americans have set a loan and scholarship program for those who will be released. According to a survey made among long-standing members of the U.S. Armed Forces, those career members and also those who joined the Armed Forces over let us say, the past two years, chose rather than benefits to settle on a piece of land, as what is being considered in this debate, scholarships in order to complete their university or college education, or to take vocational training, which will provide them with an opportunity for a much quicker and easier re-integration into society, and they can already prepare their return to civil life even before their release.

Mr. Galloway told me that a great many members of the U.S. Armed Forces, as in the Canadian Armed Forces, are already taking night and holiday courses to prepare for their retirement even before that time comes. I wonder whether it is not in that direction, Mr. Speaker, that we should be looking rather than reexamining the Veterans' Land Act which seems to me a legislation that is difficult to enforce, especially when one considers that the 1939-1945 and the Korean War veterans average around 60 or 61.

There are also a lot of regretful difficulties in establishing someone without the proper training for that kind of operation. It is fine to imagine that a veteran can settle on a farm but for the one who has no training, Mr. Speaker, or who has never lived on a farm when young, the chances of success are very dim. If one looks at the rate of failure of those who go into that kind of operation without the proper training, one finds that it is very high. I wonder if it is not good not to encourage veterans to go into a business which could turn sour on them.

I said at the very beginning that this kind of debate and the motion introduced by my colleague from Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) also provided us with an opportunity to reiterate our concern and our gratitude for those who answered the call in the 1940s. It also gives me an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to say how much veterans with whom I talked or met appreciate the benefits that the Department of Veterans Affairs has made available to our war comrades, as well as the efforts the Minister is making. These do not cease praising the Minister and, being a veteran myself, I want to praise him publicly too, Mr. Speaker, and pay tribute to this distinguished veteran who is fighting to defend the interests of Canadian veterans.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that these problems are being very closely looked into by the Minister and his departmental officials, to find ways and means to raise the interest of veterans, while helping them start a business of their own which will not necessarily fail, as it is so often the case of those who start a farming operation without proper training.

● (1750)

[English]

Mr. Gus MacFarlane (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, just as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) mentioned, we should put this matter in proper perspective. Those of us on the veterans

Veterans' Land Act

affairs committee, particularly those of us who have a veteran's background, find it very difficult in most situations to disagree on matters pertaining to veterans. We generally come together.

I understand, not having been a member of previous parliaments, that in many cases when extensions of the act were given, the House did not come to a vote. In the committee, although members disagreed, they stated their point of view, ministers acquiesced, House leaders co-operated, but there was no such thing as serious division vote which had to be won before extending, say, the Veterans' Land Act or other measures.

At this point there is some serious division, however. There are veterans in organizations who are willing to stand up and say they do not think that the act should be extended. I will try to follow the leadership given by the hon. member, who pointed out that we should not really be discussing the Veterans' Land Act but, rather, the presentation of papers, so perhaps I should address my remarks to that fact.

If that were all we were addressing ourselves to, and we knew that we were going to vote on the matter, then it would be very easy for anyone to discern that the vote would be lost and that the papers would not be called for now. Therefore, I would have to say that the main responsibility for extending this debate, and for indicating that there is a difference of feeling among the members on the veterans affairs committee, is the responsibility of the hon. member who presented the motion and of the member who spoke in favour of it.

It was these remarks which asked whether we on this side of the House or they on that side of the House were politic so far as the lives of our veterans are concerned. I, for one, would say that in most cases I am willing to stand in full support of measures that benefit the lot of the veterans. I have said before, and I repeat, that having had a father who himself was a totally disabled veteran from the first world war, when pensions were very small and when, during the depression, if a pensioner so much as shovelled snow and was reported by some close friend he would be taken off the pension roll, I am well aware of what a family of five, living in two rooms in Ottawa, had to live on at that time. Thus I am quite concerned that we do not make this an imposition on anyone.

In coming to the subject at hand we have to remember that the real objective of the veterans' legislation was to re-establish our veterans. We have entered veterans' halls in our constituencies without fear. I recall we debated the last extension just two days prior to Remembrance Day. We then went back to our constituencies and attended cenotaph ceremonies, circulated among veterans, sang some old war songs with them, and never once heard one veteran ask why we had not extended the Veterans' Land Act.

The situation may be different in other areas, and it is terribly important that hon. members speak for their constituencies. If there are many veterans—though I do not know of any—who feel they are being dealt with unfairly at this time, it is most important that they be represented. But I would caution hon. members to remember that there are many of us who are receiving plaudits for the stand of our minister, great pats on the back for the fact that we