

*Supply—Veterans Affairs*

expected perhaps to engage in part-time orchard operations or a berry farm, something of that nature: three acres is actually too much for a veteran who has another job, such as working on the railway. Three acres is too much for him to handle on a part-time basis. On the other hand, three acres is too little for a veteran to make a living from it on a full-time basis. It seems to me the limitation on the size of the holding is, in effect, defeating the initial purpose of the act when it was introduced, which was not to ensure that veterans got country homes but that they got places upon which they could carry on part-time farming. The size of the holding he must have now makes it impossible for him, in many cases, to do that. I am not going to make reference to a specific request which I forwarded to the minister involving some veterans working for the Canadian National near Kamloops, because that is being considered at the moment. I bring forward this general consideration, because I think it is important that the act be reviewed to see whether that limitation as to size cannot be eliminated.

While I am not one who generally approves of leaving things to the discretion of the minister, I think this is a case where, if the limitation is insisted upon, the only proper solution is to leave it entirely to the discretion of the minister. The act should merely provide that, in approving a scheme for settlement or an individual application for settlement, it must be borne in mind that approval will only be given if it is for bona fide small holding operations. By removing that figure of so many acres from the regulations, then genuine cases, which at the present time cannot be helped, could be helped.

**Mr. Gregg:** Mr. Chairman, I am sure the hon. member has expressed very well an opinion which is held on all sides of this house. This subject has been fully discussed in my department. The hon. member makes some important points. I would, however, like to mention that the idea behind the small holding of two to three acres is finding expression this last year more fully than it did at the beginning. Early after demobilization there was an urgent need for a roof over the veteran's head. All hon. members will recall that before my time, 1946, there was a period when the subdivision came into being for that specific purpose, and to utilize half-acre patches of land. The subdivisions were built, and after a year that practice was discontinued and we went back to the original intention.

This year the applications for small holdings are greater than they were immediately after demobilization. It appears as though

the interest is going to continue. I do not give that as an answer to the suggestion made by my hon. friend, but I do say that the intention behind that section of the act is being carried out. To put it plainly, that intention was to bonus the veteran to get out of the big cities, and to establish outside the large cities a new, pleasant way of life. After the war, when wages were high, that extra patch of land was looked upon as waste. I can tell my hon. friend that in the last year, when there have been sections of approaching unemployment down in my part of the country and in other parts of the country, the lad who had that patch of land was beginning to look upon it with a good deal more pleasure and satisfaction than he did before. If we do run into a recession in sections of Canada, I believe these men will be glad they have this land. That is that. I am going to add to that the statement that my colleague the Minister of Resources and Development under the bill which passed last year, in association with the provinces, is getting his plans under way. There comes up under that the question of what degree of veterans preference there will be in it. His officials and my officials, and he and I, have had a good deal of discussion on this matter. The director, supervisors and field men of V.L.A. have been carrying out winter courses for great numbers of veterans in the building of houses and acting as their own contractors. We have discussed whether we might not capitalize on that work as an auxiliary both to his scheme and to our own.

As is known we hold—it is in the estimates here and we have to pay taxes on it—patches of land, near centres of population across Canada, areas which have not been developed. It is just lying there as an asset of the crown. Some of these the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation could use and arrangements have been so made. Some of them have been taken into expanding cities but we have quite a number of others. I do not want to make this announcement yet, but I want to state that we are seeing if we cannot find out whether V.L.A. could assist, guide and direct the veteran in the construction—rolling his own, as the lads call it—buying a patch of that ground of an appropriate size but not getting the conditional grant at the end of ten years, and then under an arrangement with the National Housing Act administration getting his loan. If he can do that on these pieces of property that we own, it might lend itself to help to solve the problem which I know is in my hon. friend's mind as it is in mine. In a small town such as Campbellton, New Brunswick, which will never enter into an arrangement