

VETERANS LAND ACT

PHASING OUT ON MARCH 31, 1974—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS
CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am still here and I should like to present a motion under Standing Order 43. Perhaps the government House leader, who is also still here, might second it for me.

My motion, Mr. Speaker, relates to a matter concerning which the House has already rejected a motion this morning, but because it is in more general terms and because I have left out anything provocative I earnestly hope the House will consider it. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso (Mr. MacEachen), or by the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters):

That the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs be authorized to consider the implications of the phasing-out of the Veterans Land Act and to make any recommendations with respect thereto.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and seconded by the hon. member for Timiskaming. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity.

• (1120)

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1974-75—AMOUNT OF INCREASE OVER
1973-74—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Finance. Last summer and subsequently he called upon his own colleagues to exercise restraint with regard to the preparation of estimates. I should like to ask the minister whether the approximately 20 per cent increase in the estimates tabled by the President of the Treasury Board yesterday complies with or is consistent with the policy the Minister of Finance was calling for, or whether these estimates with their 20 per cent increase in expenditures perhaps represent a change in the policy of the government and the Minister of Finance?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the House were to compare the main estimates tabled yesterday by my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, with the main estimates for last year, it would be seen that the increase in expenditure amounts to 11 per cent.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: No, 18 per cent.

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am talking about forecast expenditures.

An hon. Member: No—the main estimates.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): As my colleague explained yesterday, the increase in the estimates is primarily attributable to the increase in statutory items and the increase in items which were destined and meant to protect those in our society on fixed incomes and with families, by larger transfer payments to protect Canadians from erosion of their purchasing power. I can say to the hon. gentleman, as the government has said on several occasions, that we do not intend to fight inflation in this country on the backs of the poor or the weak.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, it is pretty hard for the Minister of Finance to fight anybody when he does not know what he is talking about. I should like to address a question to the President of the Treasury Board. This is a matter of record. Is it not correct that the estimates tabled yesterday by the President of the Treasury Board are some \$3,621 million above the corresponding estimates tabled one year ago or about 19.6 per cent? Is that not correct, and is it not clear that the Minister of Finance does not know what he is talking about?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the President of the Treasury Board to reply to the question but I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that a question in those terms is hardly in order. From a procedural standpoint I will perhaps disregard the last part of the question and assume that the minister will reply to the first part.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is asking whether the figures in the blue book tabled yesterday are correct. They are. Sometimes the arithmetic he applies to them is correct and sometimes it is incorrect. What he is endeavouring to do is to make assumptions regarding the future course of supplementary estimates in the current year. The government, in every year, endeavours to prepare as farsighted and complete a plan of expenditures as is possible. In the last year, the year 1973 that we have just been through, there were, as I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition will agree, rather extraordinary economic dislocations.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bell: The weather.

Mr. Drury: These called for quick and substantial measures. The government provided those measures and this led to substantial modifications of the estimates' plan laid down much earlier in the fiscal year. He is then comparing, in a sense, apples and oranges—

Mr. Bell: Rotten eggs!

Mr. Drury: —given the two different sets of circumstances.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.