

relation thereto, are hereby referred to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs for examination, inquiry and report.

● (2020)

This would give the committee an opportunity to investigate all factors, including the need for an increase in the loan ceiling, the need for a review of the minimum lot requirements and the October, 1968, deadline which is now hurting many veterans. They would be able to call as witnesses members of various veterans' organizations and eventually come up with a plan before the new deadline so that we can have an act of which we will be proud.

The Chairman: The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council on a point of order.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I have had an opportunity to look at this amendment. I must confess, however, that I find some procedural difficulty with it. I point out that the amendment does not seem relative to the bill. It proposes to send the subject matter of parts of the bill, which are not amended, to a standing committee for examination and report. This is not the right stage for this proceeding, if indeed such a motion can be moved. It strikes me that the right time to move a motion for reference of a subject matter to committee is during consideration of the bill.

If the amendment were to be accepted, it would be part of the permanent law. That strikes me as being somewhat of an anomaly. I simply argue that the motion proposed by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe is out of order at this time because it is not relevant to the bill. If it can be said to be in any way within the scope of the bill before us, it is certainly not relevant to what we are presently discussing.

The Chairman: Are there any further contributions to be made on the point of order that has arisen as to the admissibility of the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe? If not, the chair will proceed to make a ruling.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a procedural point. I think it should be noted that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre gave notice that he would introduce an amendment asking that the minister review the matter and report thereon to the House not later than the end of the fifteenth sitting day next after the day of the motion, with or without amendments as approved by the House. I am sure all members would agree to this amendment because it goes a little along the way that we want. My motion asks for consideration of the points to which 264 people evidently agree. This was referred to by the hon. member for Timiskaming. I am sure other members who contribute will agree. I offer that comment for Your Honour's careful and due consideration.

The Chairman: The hon. member for Fraser Valley West on a point of order.

Mr. Rose: I do not wish to speak on the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: I thank the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe and the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council for the arguments they

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have made on the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe.

I would have to say that the course being suggested by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe is an unusual one in that he seeks to enshrine in legislation a reference to a standing committee of this House. To the best of my knowledge, and according to the advice of the Chair's advisers, there are no circumstances where such a clause or one similar has been successfully presented in committee.

I also draw the rule of relevancy to the attention of the hon. member, that we are proceeding, in effect, in this committee on the reference that has been made to us through second reading of this particular measure. It cannot be said that the proposal of the hon. member is really relevant to that to which the House has given its approval. It might be relevant at another stage, perhaps as a reasoned amendment on second reading or at a further stage of our proceedings, but I cannot find that it is relevant now.

I also have to make the point that this committee does not and should not have the power to refer a matter to any other committee of the House, because we have to regard ourselves and all other committees as equivalent and not possessing superior power. For these reasons I rule that the proposed amendment is out of order.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a few remarks because, as one hon. member observed, nearly every member of parliament has in his constituency veterans who served their country in a distinguished way over the years. We are therefore entitled to speak on behalf of their interest. I, like a number of other members, regret that the Governor General's recommendation is rather narrow. With the best will in the world, the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe introduced an amendment a moment ago to expand the terms of reference. Your Honour, however, ruled that the amendments' thrust to broaden the Scope of Bill C-17 to better serve the needs of the veteran in today's changed world was out of order. I regret that.

I am extremely pleased that the minister is here with us tonight. The representations made on behalf of veterans by various members of parliament, I am certain will be listened to with a great deal of interest and respect by the minister who is a veteran and a man of distinguished service.

One thing we should recognize is that this bill merely seeks to extend the present legislation. That has caused a great deal of frustration for hon. members who feel that in order to meet the needs of veterans in today's changing conditions, much more than a mere extension is needed. There should be greater response on the part of the government than grudges by extending the present legislation. VLA has been extremely helpful over the years, but because we are living a generation or more removed from the original articulation in the form of legislation, VLA no longer serves increased and altered needs as well as it did when it was first passed by this House.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has drawn our attention to the fact that the legislation was perhaps drawn with the romantic myth of a continuing rural