

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, we will have to find out what the state of the emergency is before we can make any decision in this regard.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

REQUEST FOR ACTION TO DEAL WITH BACKLOG OF PENSION APPLICATIONS

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the numerous inquiries about the backlog of just over 9,000 applications for new and increased veterans' and dependents' pensions as indicated about two weeks ago, has the minister arranged for or is he considering a further increase in the number of new commissioners to help deal with this backlog of applications?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, answering the hon. member's question, as I indicated to the House before, considerable progress has been made in this regard. We have appointed new commissioners. For the information of the House, applications are being received and applications are being processed. In the month of February alone we received 700 additional applications. At the same time, I wish to inform the hon. member that I am reasonably satisfied with the progress being made. We know the matter is of an urgent nature and we are doing our very best to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker: Before calling Orders of the Day, the Chair will recognize the Leader of the Opposition and try tomorrow to recognize some of the members in the third, fourth and fifth rows.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps it will be their turn tomorrow.

* * *

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR BREAKDOWN OF ESTIMATED CASH REQUIREMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1973-74

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Finance the same question I asked him twice before. When is he going to be able to give me the breakdown of the cash requirements of the government of Canada for the next fiscal year? I find it difficult to understand his problem. I would have thought he would have to have a breakdown before he could compile a total.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what I am having difficulty with is putting the answer in a form that can be accommodated during orders of the day. I am looking for another way to respond to the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

National Housing Act

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It relates to four answers to four questions received today from the ministry which I find to be insulting in the extreme. The four questions are Nos. 1,034, 1,035, 1,036 and 1,037. Briefly, they relate to the question of what persons, companies or groups in two counties in southern Ontario received printing contracts during 1971 and 1972. The answer I received from the Minister of Supply and Services in each case is very brief. I quote it:

The records of the department are not kept in such a manner to readily provide information about contracts awarded to business firms in counties or constituencies.

In all fairness, I find these so-called answers to perfectly legitimate questions, and we have every right to have this information placed before us, insulting in the extreme. That is my question of privilege.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

PROVISIONS RESPECTING NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT, REHABILITATION, OWNERSHIP, NEW COMMUNITIES, ETC.

The House resumed, from Friday, March 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. Basford that Bill C-133, to amend the National Housing Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I did not conclude my remarks on Friday afternoon. As Your Honour is aware, shortly after you called private members' hour, the fireworks started. However, it is a privilege to again speak on housing and to try to put before the House the position of the people in the small municipalities and rural Canada. Those in rural Canada must look into every possible angle for new housing, no matter under what department it comes. I think they could be assisted further through the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

• (1520)

A few weeks ago I asked the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) a question concerning the number of late applications for assistance received from veterans under the terms of the Veterans Land Act. I had in mind those who had failed to file certificates before the expiration of the deadline. I also asked whether the minister planned to take action to have the deadline extended to accommodate veterans who would now like to acquire small holdings but who had failed to apply. A great many veterans did not take advantage of this generous plan when it was available, and I would commend the government of the day for having introduced this scheme. If this offer could be re-opened, much needed housing could be started at most attractive interest rates and rates of payment. Such housing could be restricted to "have-not"