

Veterans Land Act

of those who agreed to establishing the dates. We agreed simply because very few people were taking advantage of the legislation at that time. That was for two reasons. One was that we seemed to have reached a lull because of the age of the veterans and they were re-established in some form, and also we were not aware that at retirement the veterans might be engaged in a totally different vocation.

The second reason was that as veterans changed from one job to another, sometimes coming out of the armed forces at a late date, they would want to settle somewhere and probably buy a house. We did not know that, Mr. Chairman, and therefore we made the mistake of putting in a closing date. Secondly, we did not know then that houses in Canada would be almost impossible to buy at this time. This suggests that perhaps we should raise the ceiling from \$18,000 to between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

● (2010)

In this connection, I do not think we ought to be overly generous with the veteran; we should not increase his benefits under the legislation but should, instead, do three other things. I suggest that the veteran should not be required to obtain .4 of an acre. Instead, I suggest that we should accept a parcel of land which is ordinarily accepted as a municipal lot. I suggest that because, in Ontario as in other provinces, we are stopping strip development; in other words, we are not encouraging the development of smallholdings. We are stopping people going to the countryside and buying a few acres of land, and we are stopping them in two ways. First, of course, people cannot afford to buy two or three acres in the country: that is a luxury most people cannot afford.

Second, it is difficult in most municipalities, especially in Ontario, to obtain permits for sewerage and water for smallholdings. Municipalities want to draw some distinction between smallholdings and agricultural land. Municipal bylaws in Ontario make it mandatory in almost every instance for a person wanting to buy a smallholding to buy good serviced land on the edge of a municipality. In order not to be unfair to veterans but to make sure that veterans will not obtain an undue advantage from any increased amounts the government may lend them, I suggest that part I of the act should remain the same, but that under part III the contributions of the government should be increased from \$10,000 to \$14,000 and that the contributions of the veteran should be \$1 for every \$6 of government money, instead of the present \$1 for every \$5. This would mean the veteran's total contribution would remain at \$2,600.

I know that many veterans did not know of the cut-off date. Many did not care about the cut-off date because they were not interested, and many were not in a position to concern themselves about the cut-off date because their future, at the time they contemplated such date, was unstable. It is unfortunate that this piece of legislation was introduced into the House in the way in which it was. It is unfortunate that we are not able to move amendments which would provide three basic things which all members recognize as being fundamental. I am talking, of course, of the removal of the qualifying date, the removal of the March 31 deadline, the removal of the ceiling and, lastly, removal of the provision respecting reduction in the size of property. These things we cannot do in the commit-

[Mr. Peters.]

tee, and that is unfortunate. It is unfortunate, as I say, that the bill was introduced in its present form. Any suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to put it in a different form would have been ruled out of order.

Further, if the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe, the member who brought this subject before the House, had made suggestions similar to those I have just made, he too would have been ruled out of order. If that is the way democracy works, if the rules prevent members from making the kinds of changes they want to make, it is obvious that democracy is stagnant and the system must be changed. For that reason I urge the minister when he closes this debate to indicate that he intends to refer the subject matter of this bill to committee. The veterans affairs committee is fairly representative of all parties in the House and it has always been reasonably non-political. It should determine what proposals ought to be brought forward to bring this legislation up to date and make it apply more to today's conditions.

Further, I would urge that the Minister of State for Urban Affairs take a good look at some of the provisions of this legislation and see how they relate to those which governed the old Canada loan board. I ask him to see what this veterans legislation will do in the field of housing. If veterans could apply this legislation to the buying of houses we might see less speculation in this area. Possibly in that case people would not be talking about having to pay \$40,000 for a house.

It seems to me that the rules of the House will thwart members in their desire to do something further for veterans unless the minister, on behalf of the government, is prepared soon—certainly within the next few months—to refer the subject matter of this bill to committee. I know he has been deeply involved in this subject for a number of months. I know he is fully familiar with all the arguments being raised and I have reason to believe that he is sympathetic to most of them. I therefore hope that the bill will pass this evening, that we will not only give a small extension to the few veterans who were qualified and left over from 1968, but that we will open up this field so that this legislation will be available indefinitely for all veterans who can qualify under the normal conditions set out in the VLA.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Chairman, I think I made all the points I wanted to make on second reading. I was interested in hearing the points raised by the hon. member for Timiskaming. He could not have put them better. He indicated that it is unfortunate this legislation was introduced in the manner in which it was. He mentioned what needs to be done if we are to remove the remaining inequities in the act. He indicated that all members of the House would support the government if it would agree to take steps of that type. By doing that we could produce a bill of which we could be proud.

I wish, without taking too much of the time of the committee, to propose an amendment. I therefore move:

That the bill be amended by adding thereto the following clause:

All matters within the meaning of "application for a sale, advance, loan or grant under part I, II or III" and of "veteran who has not a subsisting contract," as mentioned and referred to in this act and in the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor General in