

The veterans themselves thought that would be final. There was a report submitted; there was a recommendation of a twenty per cent reduction; and they all believed that this would be a reduction to the veteran of the cost of the house. Later on in the year the then minister of veterans affairs tabled a report of a committee which he had sent out to investigate this committee. He had sent the deputy minister of veterans affairs, the director of the Veterans Land Act and another adviser. They turned in a lengthy report which was tabled, I think, on March 21, 1947; and they quoted parts of the report which had been handed in by the first committee. They quote the final sentence very much as I have read it. It is in inverted commas and is in part as follows:

... and we recommend that the house cost—

And then these words are added:

—to the director ...

Those words do not appear in the report which was handed in by those independent gentlemen who first investigated this project. The sentence reads:

... and we recommend that the house cost (to the director) be reduced by twenty per cent throughout the twenty-eight houses.

I have letters from those gentlemen who were there, who say most emphatically that they were under the impression that the cost of these houses could be reduced to the veteran. I hold in my hand one of the letters signed by one of that original board. It reads in part:

... it was thoroughly understood by our committee that a 20 per cent reduction would be made to the veterans.

In my estimation any reduction to the government would be a matter solely between the contractor and the government.

The other one says in part:

... we unanimously agreed that a 20 per cent reduction be made to the veteran and further that all necessary repairs be made to houses ...

Matters dragged on all during the summer. The houses needed more repairs. Some of the veterans became disgusted, and seven of them left that project and went to live in emergency shelter. Then on December 10 I asked the then minister of veterans affairs whether any adjustments had been made to the veterans who have occupied these houses on the Braefoot project. I sent him notice of my question, and he replied that there had been downward adjustment and that there would be further adjustments by way of write-off. Then he uses these words:

This includes the cost of remedial repairs to the houses, a revised selling price.

Mind you, I had asked him about any adjustment made to the veteran. What happens then? Well, I do not know. Very shortly after that he went to the senate. But before doing so, he sent me a letter in which he completely changed around, and he says that this write-off which he refers to now as being \$24,000 "will not mean a downward revision in the sale price already quoted to the veterans. It means that the write-off in the cost of these houses, inclusive of repairs will have to be borne by the taxpayer." That is, you are simply transferring it into the red. That is discouraging to the veterans. I do not understand it. This would seem to be a complete change-around. Only the other day the present Minister of Veterans Affairs announced in the house that a committee had been appointed and had carried out an investigation into the project close to Windsor, and that the government was prepared to accept the recommendations of that committee. Why is there such discrimination when an independent committee reviews the project at Braefoot? Why is its report discarded and a special committee sent out, headed by the deputy minister, to rewrite the report? What is fair for the veterans of Windsor is fair for the veterans of Braefoot. I do not think it is necessary to appoint another committee. The files of the Department of Veterans Affairs have been loaded down with reports and statements regarding the Braefoot project. Let the minister go through those, and let him now give a fair deal to the veterans at Braefoot in the same way as he has given a fair deal to the veterans at Windsor.

Mr. CLARENCE GILLIS (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Eleven o'clock.

Mr. GILLIS: No, it is still five minutes to eleven. I am not going to ask you to call it eleven o'clock because of the great opposition from the other side of the house last evening when I made that request at one minute to eleven.

I have a good deal to say in this debate. I have listened attentively to most of the speeches that have so far been made. Most hon. members are able to rise in this house and talk about their constituencies, and everything appears to be rosy. I am sorry I cannot do that for the part of the country I come from, and I do not think the government can say that, because today the maritime provinces are classified by the government as depressed areas. Those are not very nice words.