

be in existence until at least 1980 and probably, as was indicated, for many years beyond. It did not cost the Canadian people one extra red copper to serve the 2,740 veterans whose applications were being approved, in terms of administration. The only cost was that portion of the loans on which, I have to admit, they pay a preferred rate of interest at some cost to the government. But when one has seen the way money has been thrown around for questionable causes over the past many months, the cost of this preferred rate of interest is certainly money well spent because it provides some recognition to veterans who have served this country in time of need.

Certainly this debate gives me and some of my colleagues an opportunity to consider what happens now as the deadline draws near. I can find nothing in the rules which demands some action before the end of March. My colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), with his many years of experience, may find something in the Standing Orders to revitalize our thrust against the phasing-out of the act. Indeed, my House leader and many of the other senior members of my party will try to think of a Standing Order that will allow us to fulfil our commitments to the veterans. Representations still come in to members of the House of Commons and, I am sure, to the minister requesting reconsideration of the government's stand. But I guess our main hope is that the minister has indicated on more than one occasion, and as recently as two or three days ago, that new housing legislation is being prepared for veterans. I was hoping that the legislation would have been introduced long before now, because the needs of veterans are very clear to most of us, Mr. Speaker.

● (1710)

One of the most pressing and priority needs is to provide funds for those veterans who are dependent completely on their war veterans' allowances or their disability pensions to exist and maintain their homes at present inflationary costs. This points out the need for a program as a combination of the home improvement loans under the National Housing Act and the residential rehabilitation loans with forgiveness factors for those residing in rural areas.

Under the Home Improvement Loans Act and section 28 of the National Housing Act, it is stipulated that a veteran with whom the director of the VLA has a subsisting contract for the sale of land made pursuant to part I of the Veterans' Land Act may borrow up to \$4,000 under the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation guarantee to banks and approved lenders to repair, improve or add to his home. I should like to see a similar type of program made available to veterans but with the forgiveness factors that apply under the residential rehabilitation program, the neighbourhood improvement program and the rural housing program.

I think it is worthwhile mentioning in this regard that the minister, in consultation with the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson), should authorize a survey of all substandard veterans' housing in Canada. This was done by the provincial command of the Canadian Legion in Newfoundland and they should be given credit for the example they have shown in undertaking such a project on behalf of their veterans.

#### *Veterans' Land Act*

The reports are now in the hands of the minister—and I am sure he will agree that the efforts were worthwhile—and show the merit of such surveys. I hope that the funding will be provided as soon as possible, to let them get on with the important phase of rehabilitation that is so urgently required. Such an effort could serve as a pilot project to determine the needs for all regions of Canada. The minister should get the senior management team to start working secretly, if that is the way they work, on this worthwhile effort.

I will not dwell further on the various details of what new veterans legislation should contain, in order to give other members some time to offer their comments. I hope the minister will be ready, when he replies, to allow us to overcome our concern by giving us a resume of what his government's intentions are to provide improved alternatives to parts I, II and III of the present Veterans' Land Act, to provide a realistic mortgage loan ceiling which is applicable to today's requirements, to broaden the restricted land requirement and to ensure flexibility so that the veteran who still serves may build where it suits him and his family, to broaden the terms of the type of dwelling that he or she may desire such as condominium or mobile homes, and to remove the ridiculous inequity that now exists which inflicted discriminatory deadlines on veterans. I hope that the minister will keep in mind, too, one very important matter that has to do with the senior citizen veterans, the widow or the widower, and will include a plan in conjunction with veterans' organizations to provide housing with provision for the care required for those left alone.

In spite of the fact that I and my party will go along with a reasonable housing program for veterans, I still feel that the present legislation could be amended to include all these measures that I have mentioned, along with others. I am sure members interested and the veterans' organizations could contribute. By doing so, Mr. Speaker, then we who are responsible because we are elected to fulfill our responsibilities to all Canadians would uphold Canada's commitments made to the veterans of Canada. We could show them that we still hold dear our principles and faith even though so many years have passed, and that we will not set aside any sections of the veterans' charter because we have no right to do so.

I can only hope, Mr. Speaker—and I am sure we will hear the facts as they are—that my motion will be acceptable and that all the pertinent material contained therein will be referred to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, where in our usual non-partisan deliberations we can assist the government in evolving decisions as to what is best and deserving to the veterans of Canada in the critical area of the housing needs so critical, also, for all segments of our Canadian nation.

**Mr. S. Victor Railton (Welland):** Mr. Speaker, I enter this debate with a certain amount of trepidation. I think members on all sides of the House are trying to do what they can for veterans. We want to be reasonable and generous, and yet we want to be sensible about any legislation relating to them. The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) has espoused the cause of veterans for years and I think he has done a great job,