

this is now on record of *Hansard* in the words of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council, who only a few minutes ago said that a resolution on an opposition day caused the government to change its mind. That was a Conservative resolution, Mr. Chairman.

This has been an unhappy affair from start to finish, where members of parliament have been placed in the position of voting against their conscience or of staying mute when they wished to speak, particularly those in the Liberal Party. I hope that whatever comes out of this can be settled in the standing committee composed of members who are interested in veterans affairs, who perhaps can present a united front to the government to show that not only must we have an extension of the act but we must have a better act.

This act was first written, I believe, back in 1919 to look after World War I veterans and to help them settle on the western plains. The amounts were geared to settlement on farms and extra sums of money were given for equipping farms. But times have changed and we are now in a position where the VLA is largely used to provide homes for veterans. This is the way it should be. There is such a small percentage of the population now living on farms, and the act has been changed to deal with veterans living in urban centres.

● (2120)

But some restrictions have been left in the bill. In 1965 the amount of money was increased, but land restrictions were left that make it almost impossible for a veteran to find accommodation through the VLA. Nothing in this bill is going to change that. In 1965 it was considered that \$18,000 was needed to settle a veteran in a home. He needed \$2,600 cash and could get a very reasonable mortgage for \$15,400. That \$15,400 represented 85 per cent of the value of the property that was envisaged for the veteran. That is what I think should be incorporated in the new act, Mr. Chairman; the mortgage portion should be around 85 per cent of the total cost of the holding. If we had such a ruling, then veterans could buy homes costing \$40,000 or \$50,000—and that is what an average home costs in certain urban centres, not excluding the one I represent.

Mr. Chairman, I find no difficulty in supporting the amendment proposed by the New Democratic Party. Really, it is stolen from the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe who proposed the same thing the other day. However, our party has had many ideas stolen in the last year and a half, as the Minister of Supply and Services said, that our role in this House is to sit and do the thinking. Indeed, somebody has to do the thinking. We can support the New Democratic Party's amendment and thank them too, because imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

The hon. member for Fraser Valley West had a good suggestion about condominiums. Many veterans are getting to the age when they are not eager to mow a half-acre lawn. Indeed, they do not have the money to buy a half acre and they will not get it under the VLA. Condominiums that sell in the \$20,000 range could be an answer, but I suggest to the minister that he investigate the legal ramifications of this type of purchase. This is an area where the fine print should be scrutinized. I hope that this

#### *Veterans Land Act*

government, perhaps through the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, will investigate the matter and then perhaps veterans could buy condominiums. Certainly, if the amount available for mortgages is not raised, something like this may be the answer.

I should like to mention a particular group of people who have not been included in this legislation. I refer to the Korean veterans, particularly those who are still serving. The Korean war took place in the early fifties, and many of the young men who volunteered served in just as tough a war as any other. When they came home, some continued to serve. Most of them have been posted all over the country and have had no opportunity to pick up the acreage and comply with the regulations. Now they are getting near the end of their service and have had no opportunity to become certified—I wish they would change that word—as eligible for Veterans Land Act mortgages.

I am glad that we have had this opportunity to examine the bill. I hope that in the months ahead those of us who want the veterans to get a better break will be able to get together and the next time we discuss the subject it will be a bill that will cancel the October, 1968, date for applications. I see no reason why this bill should stop while there is a demand or need for this money. It should continue until the supply of veterans dries up, not until the government gets tired. I hope the October, 1968, deadline and the March, 1975, deadline will be done away with, that the amounts available will be realistic and that the act will be extended to cover condominiums and strata type homes.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Mr. Chairman, after listening to this discussion tonight I think the veterans who are members of the House of Commons will have to conclude that we are fighting a rearguard action. The bill before us provides the bare minimum of concessions from a government that is really not interested in the welfare of veterans but is more concerned with its own survival.

It is a bill, Mr. Chairman, that gives the very minimum consideration to the needs of the veterans, needs that were demonstrated and made crystal clear in the discussion that took place in this chamber on March 12. As hon. members have been saying during the course of this committee's discussion, what has been said has fallen upon deaf ears. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear, and this is the situation we are faced with tonight. I am sure my friends in the NDP now regret that they did not seize fate by the forelock when they had the opportunity on March 12. If they had supported the motion of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe then, I am sure the government would have had to swallow itself and vote for a new amendment. In that case, we would not be faced with this niggardly token presentation this evening.

I do not suppose there is much that extended discussion and debate can do to resolve the dilemma in which we find ourselves tonight. I want to take the opportunity to remind the minister of some facts; I am sure I do not have to remind him as he is a distinguished veteran, but obviously there is need to bring the message home to his colleagues. They do not seem very concerned with the fact that the veterans of Canada occupy a very special position in the concern of the government of Canada, the parlia-