

Supply—Veterans Affairs

understand, Mr. Chairman, that it is not likely that a pensioner or a war veterans allowance recipient would want to settle on a small holding in the Acadia riding, but many of them are very much taken with the southern interior of British Columbia, particularly on account of our climate. That section of the country contains a large number of good lake locations where one can settle on a few acres of land beside some of our excellent lakes and enjoy the location, scenery and so forth. In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I do want to suggest that there is a splendid opportunity for the Department of Veterans Affairs to take even more positive action in this respect. The minister's officials can acquaint themselves with the opportunities in the southern interior of British Columbia. Many of the locations are still held within forest reserves. As the minister knows, the minister and the deputy minister of lands of British Columbia are sympathetic toward this sort of thing and are willing to co-operate with the department here in taking land out of the forest reserves wherever it is indicated as suitable for the settlement of veterans for full-time farming or for small holdings. I am bringing this to the attention of the minister again to emphasize the unusual and particular opportunities in the constituencies of the southern interior of British Columbia for settlement under this section of the Veterans Land Act.

Mr. Gregg: I should like to comment on that. I thank the hon. member for that suggestion. I can assure him that there is no intention whatever to cut down on these loans provided the veterans want to qualify for the work. In 1948-49 the appropriation was \$4 million, and we spent only \$2,620,809. The figure given here is an estimate of what will be required for this year. If it is not enough we shall certainly ask for more.

With respect to the other point, there are more things going forward in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and with the province of British Columbia in regard to settling veterans on provincial lands in the interior of that province. I can assure my hon. friend that the Veterans Land Act officials will be glad to follow that up.

Mr. Quelch: Some weeks ago I discussed with the minister the question whether or not an agreement had been reached with Alberta to pay a grant where land is leased in special areas on a ten-year basis. Has anything developed since that time?

Mr. Gregg: I am not in a position to answer the hon. member now, but I shall get him an answer.

Item agreed to.

[Mr. Herridge.]

549. To provide for the payment of grants to Indian veterans settled on Indian reserve lands under section 35A of the Veterans Land Act, 1942 (as amended by order in council P.C. 2122, dated 13th April, 1945), \$600,000.

Mr. Harkness: I am interested in the success of the scheme of rehabilitating our Indian veterans on their own reserves under the Veterans Land Act. Can the minister tell us how many of our Indian veterans have taken advantage of the act? Can he give us a breakdown of the number who have used the act in order to get into full-time farming operations on the reserves, and the number who have used it really as a small holdings scheme in order to secure homes and thus improve their living conditions? Is the limitation, imposed in the ordinary small holdings scheme, of three acres to enable a man to take advantage of the act, imposed upon the Indians on their reserves?

Mr. Gregg: The number of full-time farming Indians is 505; small holdings 179; provincial lands, 3,474.

Mr. Harkness: That has nothing to do with Indians.

Mr. Gregg: I am sorry. The last figure was wrong. The number of Indians settled under the act is 1,014.

Mr. Harkness: Where are the remainder settled? The number given as settled on full-time farms and in small holdings on reserves is 684. Then the minister gave a figure of 3,474 which was applied to something else.

Mr. Gregg: My hon. friend should cancel the breakdown I gave on full-time farming. I have not that breakdown here. The total number of Indians, which is the only figure I have for all purposes is the one I gave, 1,014, in which the first figure would be included. The amount of money involved is \$1,123,560.

Mr. Harkness: What about the matter of limitation of buildings in which three acres were available? What is the situation in regard to that on the Indian reserves?

Mr. Gregg: I stand corrected on this. In this connection we work in close co-operation with the Department of Mines and Resources under which the Indian administration comes. In the first place, the dominion government owns the land and our department furnishes the money. Offhand I am not aware of the limitation in regard to acreage.

Mr. Harkness: The limitation of acreage was being enforced in so far as the Indians building houses on the reserves were concerned. I know the thing is under consideration. I had hoped that by this time the limitation would have been removed on these people because it is not a limitation which