

Veterans Land Act

can see the technical problems involved in re-opening the act on a wholesale basis, but I am sure a way could be found to cope with the cases of many veterans who have a very justifiable grievance in not now being allowed a qualification certificate. These are the points we think ought to be covered.

We regret that the procedures of the House, and the fact that we have a Governor General's recommendation that is so narrow, will deny us the opportunity of moving the kind of amendment we would like to move, but I trust the minister realizes that we are giving him notice today that during the year of grace now granted we will be pressing for these things.

Perhaps at this time I might indicate that when we do get into the Committee of the Whole I have an amendment I shall be seeking to move, and in spite of all that we have said about amendments that would be out of order because they involve the expenditure of money, I believe this amendment is one that will be in order. It is lengthy and the language is legalistic and convoluted so I will not read it now, but I should like to indicate its purpose.

The purpose of my amendment is something like the purpose of a section of Chapter 29 of the statutes of last year, which was Bill C-192, which amended the Income Tax Act and provided certain tax reductions to corporations. Just the mention of that makes some of my friends think I am going to digress and talk about corporate tax rip-offs, but I will not do that at this time.

The fact is that in that act there is a provision under which 60 members, by signing a motion, can get a debate on a certain proposal, and the amendment I am going to present in the Committee of the Whole would add to this a clause under which if 20 members, anytime after September 30 this year, that is six months from now, were to present a motion calling for the terminal date to be reviewed it would be possible to have a debate on that motion and, if it were carried, the minister would be required to undertake such a review and report thereon to the House.

I should like to have drawn that motion in such a way that 20 members could sign such a motion and, if the House passed it, the extension beyond March 31, 1975, would be automatic. I realize I could not get away with that because it would involve the expenditure of money, but the amendment the way I have drawn it will have the effect of guaranteeing, sometime after six months have gone by, a debate on this issue, thus giving the House a chance to say to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) that we want a further extension to be considered.

As I say, I have that amendment drawn and ready. Since it does not involve directly the expenditure of money, and since it is within the ambit of this bill, I believe this amendment will be in order and I dare to hope that all parties in the House will accept it.

Let no veteran be misled into thinking that the passing of my amendment in itself guarantees a further extension beyond a year from now, but the passing of my amendment will guarantee the raising of this matter in the House sometime after September 30, 1974, and it will guarantee a debate and, if I know the mood of the House,

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

it will guarantee that the motion will carry and the Minister of Veterans Affairs will be required four or five months before the end of the period, not just on the eve of it, to reconsider the whole matter.

As I say, I shall move that amendment when we get into the Committee of the Whole. I believe the House will approve it and give its guarantee that there will be further debate on this issue this fall. In the meantime, as all of us will say during the debate today, we are not satisfied with this measure as it does not go far enough, but at least it lets a number of veterans in during the coming year and it keeps the legislation alive enabling us to fight another day for what, as the minister said, are rights under the Veterans Land Act which we believe veterans have earned.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the debates that have taken place lately were really very interesting since they have enabled us to see that the opposition can force a government to act.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) introduced today a bill to amend the Veterans' Land Act, following pressures exerted by the opposition parties. Those pressures could have become serious for the government but until now they have been beneficial to them.

I was listening a while ago to the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who confessed the mistake they made when they asked for an extension of one year or more in the deadline concerning that legislation as they failed to require that extension to be beneficial first to the veterans. A few minutes ago, they almost accused themselves of that omission.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the object of this bill is to extend for one year the deadline of this legislation, but its modes of application remain the same. The maximum loan that may be granted to a veteran to enable him to buy a small holding of half an acre and a house is still \$18,000.

Mr. Speaker, very important changes took place since that legislation was passed. At the beginning, it was believed that many veterans would settle down on the land and become full time farmers. At the end of the war, in 1945 or 1946, it was still a usual thing to take up a career in agriculture, but since that time, we know at what pace farmers have left their farms. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that veterans are not more interested in becoming farmers than those who abandoned the land.

It has been noted that it was also possible to purchase a piece of land and become what is called a part time farmer. So the idea is to provide shelter for the veteran and his family. In my opinion, such was the objection of that legislation. We realize today, especially during the past few months and weeks, how quickly the cost of construction materials is increasing.

● (1630)

Recently, while visiting home builders, I was told that the price of some materials such as plastic pipes, for example, had doubled. Last week, the price of nails went up from 6 to 7 cents a pound and copper pipes and tubes are also very expensive. If the price of gold had not increased so quickly, it would perhaps be easier to have