

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speakman and Mr. Herridge, I presume you are putting this forward as a suggestion?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: As a proposal—a suggestion.

Mr. HERRIDGE: With the high expectation of its receiving some support.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion? We are on 64 (1) at the moment.

Mr. MONTGOMERY: Mr. Chairman, I think I should perhaps express my thoughts on it, because I heard there would be an amendment coming forward. Again, I must say that I feel that the people who know more about the whole administration of this act than anybody else—including the members of parliament—have come forward with a recommendation for \$20,000, and I think they must be pretty satisfied that that is the ceiling they require, maybe not now, but within the next few years.

Of course, I come from the east, and farmers are not so well off as they are in the west, and that sort of thing; but if you make this amount too high, what you are going to do is impose quite a burden, maybe—and I should like to hear from Mr. Rutherford on this—in keeping down loans where, in most cases, they should be held down. I think they know better than most of us; but if money is available, a man will get his member of parliament, or his friends, or anybody on the member's back to try and get him this money. It seems to me that, with all this veterans counselling and lending in the past, they have done a good job, because they were able to convince a man that he had to be satisfied with a certain kind of loan, and there was a ceiling on it. Now the ceiling is being raised, and they are going to have a hard job to keep many fellows down below the ceiling, when maybe they should be kept down.

I realize there is something in what Mr. Herridge and Mr. Speakman have said, maybe, as far as the west is concerned; but there will be a few veterans—I doubt if there will be very many—that would need more than \$20,000.

Mr. HERRIDGE: I know one farmer who bought \$40,000 worth of equipment alone.

An hon. MEMBER: It is too much.

Mr. MONTGOMERY: I should like to hear from Mr. Rutherford before I say anything else, because at the moment I am not in favour of it.

Mr. LALONDE: Before you put Mr. Rutherford in a very bad spot, Mr. Montgomery, I should like to explain our position. This is a matter of policy and, therefore, I do not think that, as civil servants, we are at liberty to express opinion as to government policy, and we are not at liberty to discuss it. The position that we are in is that we have made certain suggestions through our minister, and cabinet has made certain decisions. We are not in a position at this time to know what the amounts will be in either the Canadian Farm Loan Act or the Farm Improvement Loans Act; the only thing I can say is that the minister has authorized me to say to the committee that he wants to give you the assurance that whatever amounts are in the other two acts—whatever combined amounts are in the other two acts—he will insist that the veterans get the benefit, moneywise, of the same amounts. What those amounts will be, we do not know.

Mr. O'LEARY: Why, then, put a ceiling in here at all?

Mr. LALONDE: Because there may be other sources from which veterans may borrow, depending on the other legislation. At this stage, though, I am afraid that we are not in a position to help the committee in this respect, because you realize that we have no knowledge of what will go in the other legislation, but we know that this is what cabinet has approved with respect to the Veterans Land Act amendment.